



OCCASIONAL REPORT ON VENEZUELA'S  
POLITICAL ELECTORAL CONTEXT

CARTER CENTER VENEZUELA

APRIL 26 – MAY 21, 2015

**EN ROUTE TO THE 2015 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS  
THE MUD HOLDS ITS PRIMARIES**

*Executive Summary*

Two developments in the realm of law had major repercussions during the period covered in this report. First, after a postponement of the proceedings involving political leader Leopoldo Lopez and Met

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team representing these leaders, suspended his trip to the country until a hearing date is announced.

then, in the context of the case against the Venezuelan media outlets

*El Nacional*, *Tal Cual*, and *La Patilla* for “continuous aggravated” linking him to drug tra

With respect to the economy, on May 1

st President Maduro announced the second minimum wage increase so far this year, approving a 30 percent scaled raise. While it’s difficult to quantify the state of the Venezuelan economy given the lack of official data from the Central Bank of Venezuela, analysts pointed out that continued wage increases are indicative of the difficult economic situation facing the country.

Concerning electoral matters, at the time this bulletin was published the CNE had yet to set a date for parliamentary elections, though in a TV interview, the institution’s president, Tibisay Lucena, gave assurances that they would be held in the last quarter of the year. The electoral management body also announced that, pursuant to a decision handed down by the National Assembly, the CNE would not hold elections for representatives to the Latin American

Parliament (Parlatino), therefore from now on these representatives will be appointed by the National Assembly.



former chief bodyguard, Leamsy Salazar, now living in the United States, linking the president of the National Assembly to drug trafficking<sup>4</sup>

Spokespersons for the newspaper unanimously characterized the move as an attempt to silence the press. Tinedo Guía, president of the National Association of Journalists, said the aim of the lawsuit is to “intimidate the owners of media outlets” as part of the government’s escalating policy of “communicational hegemony introduced by Hugo Chávez” ([see note](#)).

By the deadline for this newsletter, the Cabello case had once again seized public attention as a result of news published May 20 in *The Wall Street Journal*,

***Wage increases and the state of the economy***



***Equality for***





### ***Balance of forces within the MUD***

According to the results provided by the MUD, the opposition coalition parties getting the most votes and candidates selected were *Primero Justicia* (PJ) and *Voluntad Popular* (VP). *Primero Justicia* got a total of 125,916 votes, accounting for 19.7 percent of the vote, while *Voluntad Popular* earned a total of 116,371 votes, for 18.2 percent of the total vote. In terms of candidates, PJ got 11 nominations, VP eight. While, vote wise, the Social Christian party COPEI was the third political force with 82,920

### ***Self assessment of MUD member parties***

MUD leaders stated that the primaries had been a success and that participation was “higher than expected” ([see note](#)). Miranda state governor and *Primero Justicia* leader Henrique Capriles said that the people “gave a clear signal (to the government) in the primary elections” and that “Unity won” in this process ([see note](#)). Meanwhile, *Acción Democrática* Secretary General Henry Ramos stressed that “without electoral propaganda, the campaign consisted entirely of activism,” which is why he deemed the primaries “a success” ([see note](#)). MUD Secretary General Jesús Chúo Torrealba argued that while 316,000 people participated in the Democratic Unity Table primary for the 2010 parliamentary elections, the MUD doubled that figure in 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Also, Torrealba said that while the international average of internal participation in party primaries is 3.5 percent of all registered voters, the MUD far exceeded this average. Returning to the comparison with the 2010 primary elections, Torrealba stressed negative changes in the media, which made conditions for opposition leaders “much tighter and more demanding.” The context of 2015, he added, is also characterized by “a much more exacerbated persecution” ([listen to audio](#)). Regarding the media coverage during the primaries, Torrealba denounced the existence of an information blackout, on the part of government run media outlets and the local press. He also called into question the use of the presidential blanket broadcast aired that day ([see note](#)).

While on a television program with President Maduro, Rodríguez, said that the MUD had refrained from using fingerprint capturing devices so as to “inflate” participation figures, ([see note](#)), technicians linked to the MUD confirmed to the Carter Center that these devices had indeed been used, as stipulated by the CNE.

***The Presence of UNASUR as a partner***

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