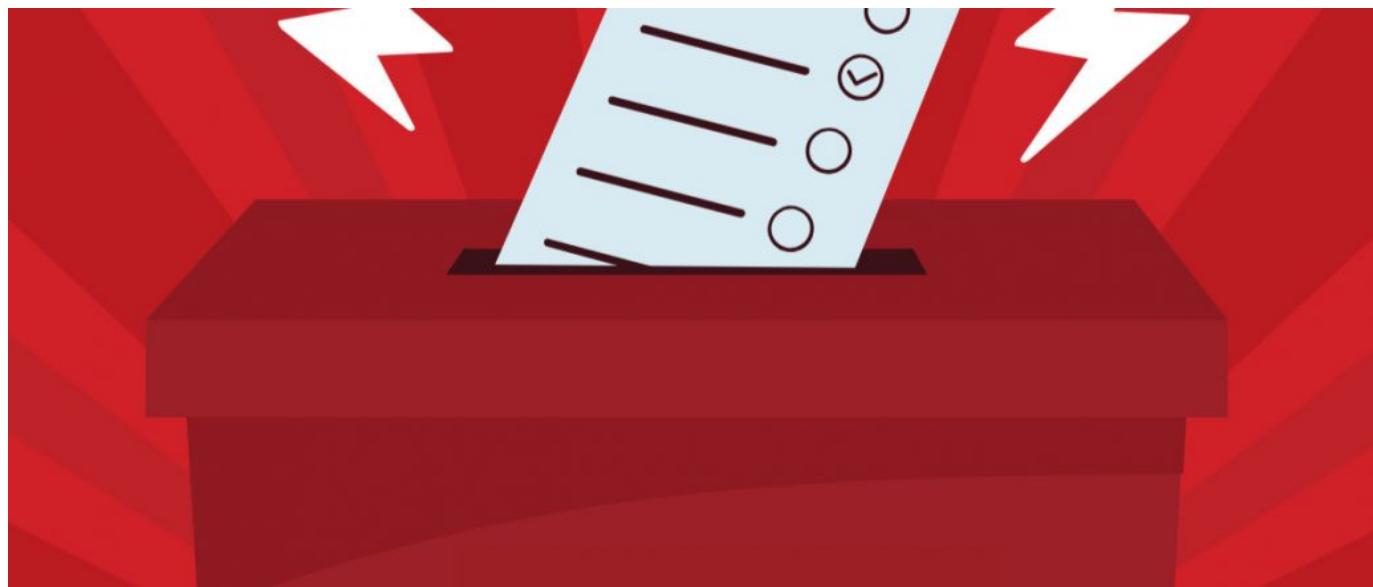


The scam behind ‘free elections’

written by Andreína Chávez Alava

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Hillary Clinton went on a late-night talk show and told U.S. voters to “get over themselves” and choose between Genocide Joe and Donald Trump in this year’s U.S. presidential elections.

“Get over yourself. Those are the two choices,” she said. The smirk, the arrogance, and the “we don’t care about you” eye roll reminded me of psychopaths profiled in crime shows. The complete lack of empathy, the sense of superiority, the fake pleasantries and charisma. It’s the same attitude Biden displays when dismissing

questions about Israel killing children in Gaza while casually licking an ice cream cone.

To be honest with you, she is right. Nobody should care about Biden or Trump because they both belong to the same ruling political and economic elite, they represent the interests of corporations, they are both professed Zionists, and share a profound love for imposing murderous sanctions against sovereign countries like Cuba and Venezuela.

The U.S. “democracy” is, and always has been, about the elite’s bipartisan rule. A circus that allows for the same warmongering government to continue spreading corporate greed and eliminating any resistance or political alternatives around the world.

Hillary’s words are a reminder, in case somebody needed it, that Washington does not care about democracy or freedom inside the U.S. or anywhere else. These are just tools to drive their neocolonial agenda. The formula is quite simple: Elections are only “free” and a country is only “democratic” when a U.S. puppet rules. Otherwise, collective punishment is coming for you until you capitulate.

For over two decades, Venezuela has been the target of the “free elections” broken record alongside regime change operations and economic sanctions, leaving a long trail of destruction behind. How does the U.S. get away with this “free elections” scam? With the unconditional support of the remorseless corporate media. Remorse, another emotion psychopaths lack.

For years, we have read the same lie over and over again: the 2018 presidential vote was “fraudulent” because the U.S.-backed far-right opposition decided not to participate and called for abstention (although anti-Chavista candidates still ran and got a sizable amount of votes). The election was preceded by U.S. financial sanctions against Venezuela’s oil industry to cause economic instability and pressure people

into voting Maduro out of office.

When that strategy failed, more sanctions came raining down in the form of a full-fledged blockade while media stenographers piled one lie on top of another to set up the stage for more intervention. For example, according to [The New York Times](#), the upcoming July 28 presidential vote is only happening because of a “commitment [made by Caracas] to the United States to hold elections this year in exchange for a lifting of crippling economic sanctions.”

There's a lot to unpack in that small sentence.

The dialogue process and electoral agreement signed between Caracas and the U.S.-backed opposition in Barbados was entirely meant to steer the opposition away from fascist violence and into the electoral path. Presidential elections were constitutionally mandated for 2024, with or without the dialogue or the far-right participation.

While the government (and every human rights expert/organization) has demanded the lifting of sanctions, the relaxation was not a consequence of the Barbados Agreement. It was the result of a migration wave that came roosting home after years of economic aggression against Venezuela. Not to mention years of lobbying by corporations like Chevron that wanted to recoup debt from their Venezuelan joint ventures.

The “crippling economic sanctions” were also not lifted, just the energy and gold sectors’ [measures](#) were suspended for six months. As that period has now come to an end and Venezuela approaches another election we are once again tormented with threats of reimposing all sanctions because electoral conditions are still not “free.”

This time, the “free elections” campaigners focus on María Corina Machado’s [ban](#) on

running for office. Anyone might think people are rallying in the streets demanding this Venezuelan heiress and sanctions enthusiast candidacy, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Then why is she promoted as a crucial factor that would finally make elections “free” according to Western liberal standards?

First, she represents the elite that would guarantee two things: U.S. economic interests and the extermination of popular power that shows socialism is viable. It is no surprise that Washington would cheerlead for Machado, but it’s surprising to see the Latin American left or even the Venezuelan left that opposes Maduro choosing her political rights to take a stand.

Are we supposed to pretend we live in a classless society? For decades, if not centuries, the upper crust has banned the working class from political power. This was the case in Venezuela until Hugo Chávez arrived and with him, the wretched of the earth finally tasted and began to transform power.

From my point of view, nobody like Machado should ever be allowed to run for office, especially when they openly admit their intentions to exterminate a grassroots force like Chavismo. She is on the record calling for a foreign invasion of Venezuela. Should fascists and oligarchs have political rights? Doesn’t that completely contradict the struggle for social justice and humanity’s well-being and survival?

Haven’t we learned how the far-right instrumentalizes hate speech and the “othering” of the poor, the Black and Brown, the different and the left, to rally support to achieve power? False promises and manipulation to turn our countries into U.S. vassal states again. Just look at the recent heartbreaking examples of Ecuador and Argentina. It seems to me that the only thing worse than being a country targeted by U.S. imperialism and resisting is being a U.S. neo-colony with no dignity.

I know that some might say, “But democracy means all political options should run and people can choose freely.” Venezuela is honoring that principle to the core. There are 13 candidates of which 12 are opposition, between newbies and old foxes, and they come in all flavors. You have free-market lovers, religious conservatives, businessmen, and libertarian comedians. Some might drop out of the race, but most will likely to plow ahead. Some have been pre-campaigning for quite some time now.

What is it about them that does not contribute to “free elections”? According to corporate media, they are Maduro allies because they don’t openly support U.S. sanctions and regime change. It’s either be a shameless servant or don’t even bother.

The reality is that Maduro is in a strong position to win the July vote, though not overwhelmingly, so Washington is preemptively delegitimizing the possible results. The United Socialist Party (PSUV) has superb electoral machinery and solid grassroots bases, while the far-right will most likely do what it does best: sabotage the election unless one of them, the creme de la creme of society, is set to rule. Otherwise, remaining out of power is better as they can continue to rely on U.S. funding.

As my mind continues to ponder the scam behind the “free elections” campaign and how it’s just a facade to impose Western-style democracy, I can’t help but wonder what would it feel like to participate in elections without having to worry about U.S. imperialist retaliation. Yes, we have learned to resist and we are in a much better economic situation than five years ago, but that does not mean that our situation is not PTSD-inducing.

Will the U.S. fascist agenda take more lives? How can we have (truly) free elections and free lives when we have a guillotine five millimeters from our already strangled necks?

I would love to be able to measure up Maduro's government without factoring in sanctions to make a decision as a voter based entirely on how well or badly people are living exclusively because of government policies. It has become an agonizing exercise of self-control not to make rash decisions about the future and trust our leaders.

A lot of people like me are not entirely happy with the government's liberal overtures in the name of circumventing the U.S. blockade that moves away from the socialist alternative. We have felt ignored when making criticisms or requesting information regarding salaries, socioeconomic data, and the real state of healthcare, education and the electrical system and what investment is going (if any) into them.

We don't want to surrender our country to the U.S., but we also need guarantees about the next six years if Maduro wins. Will the government continue trapped in its echo chamber? Will they weed out the opportunists and corrupt? Will the socialist project be revitalized?

No matter what goes down on July 28, only the Venezuelan people can save themselves and guarantee real democracy on the ground and hope for the future. As Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once wrote: "Hope is not the opposite of despair. Perhaps it is the faith that springs from divine indifference that has left us dependent on our own special talents to make sense of the fog surrounding us. Hope is neither tangible nor an idea. It is a talent."

Andreína Chávez Alava was born in Maracaibo and studied journalism at the University of Zulia, graduating in 2012. She immediately started working as a writer and producer at a local radio station while also taking part in local and international solidarity struggles.

In 2014 she joined TeleSUR, where in six years she rose through the ranks to become editor-in-chief, overseeing news, analysis and multimedia content. Currently

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Source: [Venezuelanalysis](https://www.venezuelanalysis.com)

