

The Elders call for UN-backed independent commission to probe Venezuela election

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The Elders today call on United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to establish an independent commission to investigate the presidential election held in Venezuela on 28 July and make recommendations on the way forward.

Such a commission, by reviewing the evidence to be provided by all pertinent parties, would be an important step for restoring democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela.

The Elders condemn the widespread repression and violations of human rights of recent months, which have left dozens of people killed and thousands arrested.

Leaders of the opposition, including Presidential candidate Edmundo González Urrutia and María Corina Machado, have been forced into hiding and their supporters arrested and assaulted. On 2 September, Venezuela's attorney general filed an arrest warrant against Mr. González grotesquely accusing him of usurpation, forgery, instigation and sabotage. This is illegal and reminiscent of previous dictatorships that have scarred the history of Latin America.

The Elders call on President Nicolás Maduro to provide vote tallies to enable a transparent verification of the result of the 28 July election. Neighbouring countries in the region including Brazil and Colombia have urged the regime to take this step, and its refusal to do so has been condemned by the Organization of American States.

Maduro's persistent refusal to release the vote tallies suggests he intends to stay in power at any cost, defying the democratic will of the Venezuelan people.

In this atmosphere of worsening violence, repression and polarisation, it is imperative to have independent, objective and authoritative analysis. Hence our call to the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint an independent group to investigate the reality of the recent Venezuelan elections.

The world will draw its own conclusions based on how the different national stakeholders and their allies respond.

All states must adhere to the highest standards of electoral accountability and transparency, and incumbents must respect the outcomes regardless of the result. The Maduro regime should not be exempted from this obligation.

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