

**2019 / AUG**

Venezuela Report

# **SIEGING CONGRESS**

**HOW DEMOCRACY WAS  
DESTROYED USING THE  
SUPREME COURT**

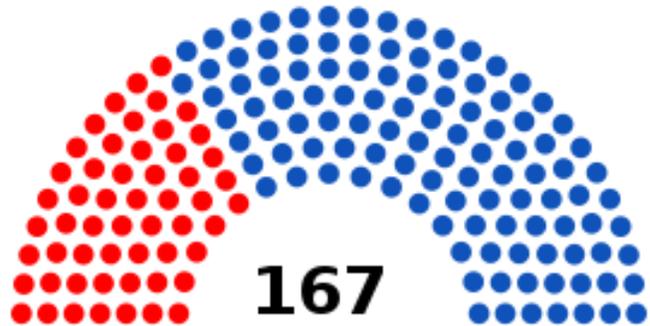
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# SUPERMAJORITY STOLEN

On December 6th, 2015, the **opposition in Venezuela won 112 representatives** to the National Assembly versus 55 won by the government. It was a major defeat to Maduro's government.



In a record 17 days, without complying to constitutional procedures, before the newly elected National Assembly took office, on the 23rd December, the still pro-Maduro National Assembly named 13 principal Supreme Court members (from 32 total) and 21 substitutes. They were supposed to be in congressional recess.

When the newly elected National Assembly took office, the **Supreme Court (recently designated by Maduro's government) took the decision to ban 3 National Assembly indigenous members**, on the excuse that there were irregularities in their elections. That decision meant the loss of the supermajority of the opposition in the National Assembly.



Julio Ygarza, demanding to be recognized, after winning National Assembly Representative election in Amazonas State.

# POWERS KIDNAPPED

**From 10 laws** approved through January to October that year, **only 1 wasn't rejected** by the Supreme Court. Also, 27 court decisions were approved against the National Assembly.



The Supreme Court also ruled – violating the Constitution – that **government budget would be approved by themselves** (Supreme Court) instead of by the National Assembly.

Pro-Maduro Supreme Court with Nicolas Maduro in a ceremony.



In August 2016, the National Assembly fought back swearing the 3 indigenous representatives previously banned. Since then, the **Supreme Court and Maduro's government decreed the National Assembly in rebellion** and the Supreme Court assumed the Legislative responsibilities.

# DISSOLVING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (AUGUST 2019)

On August 12, 2019, the Maduro regime approved trial (unconstitutionally) against 4 congressmen. The regime is also expected to call for early elections to dissolve the National Assembly. It will be a death blow to democracy and a final attempt to remove the parliamentary immunity of the remaining opposition leaders in Venezuela.



Inside the Assembly Palace.

Pro Maduro mobs assault the palace and attack several opposition congressmen.

Since 2017 the National Assembly has been under the threat of being dissolved. The regime tried to stop the National Assembly with violence and with political intimidation.

To usurp the legislative responsibilities of the National Assembly, the Maduro regime called for elections to a Constituent Assembly. All the members were designated by the regime, before the so-called elections.

The elections turnout numbers are still at doubt. According to Maduro, this Constituent Assembly has powers over any other public power.

# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS PERSECUTED

## UNDER ARREST



### **EDGAR ZAMBRANO (63)**

The regime unconstitutionally removed his parliamentary immunity on May 2, 2019. On May 8, he was intercepted by the Intelligence Police in Caracas. After refusing to come out of his car, he was taken on a truck inside his vehicle. Zambrano is accused of treason after his participation on the April 30 protests supporting the military uprising against Maduro. Since January 5, 2019, Edgar Zambrano has been the First Vice President of the National Assembly. He is also Vice President of the Venezuelan Opposition Party Acción Democrática (Democratic Action). Before his illegal detention, he was threatened on national television by PSUV Vice President Diosdado Cabello, who accused him of the charges before time and without any information from the Supreme Court of Justice.



### **JUAN REQUESENS (30)**

Requesens was detained by the regime's political police (SEBIN) without a court order on August 7, 2018. He served as the President of the Student Government of the UCV, the country's most important student-led organization. When he was 27 years old, Requesens was elected as a deputy to the National Assembly and became one of its most vocal speakers. In 2017, he was one of the main leaders in the anti government protests and was attacked by violent groups. The regime accuses him without proof of being an accomplice to an attack on Nicolas Maduro.

**ASSEMBLY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED  
WITHOUT A JUDICIAL ORDER AND  
UNCOMMUNICATED FOR SEVERAL DAYS**

# WERE ARRESTED AT LEAST 1 TIME



## **GILBER CARO (45)**

Caro is an example of growth and improvement. Originally from a violent slum, he was imprisoned for 10 years after refusing to testify against an acquaintance on a murder trial. After serving time, he studied law and dedicated his time to promoting prisoners' human rights. He was elected as a deputy to the National Assembly in 2016. Since then, Caro has been detained twice by the SEBIN, in violation of his congressional immunity; both times he was held without due process or any form of communication. He's accused of possession of military weapons and treason, but no further proof has been presented against him. Caro was released recently.



## **GILBERTO SOJO (53)**

He was elected as substitute representative to the National Assembly while being under custody of the Intelligence Police. He was detained in 2014 and released in 2016 after being tortured during his time as a political prisoner. After receiving a call telling him about an award he had just won, Sojo was arrested together with his wife and 3-year old daughter. They both were detained for 32 hours, and Sojo was accused of attempting to bomb the court to free Leopoldo Lopez without any proof.



## **RENZO PRIETO (32)**

Prieto was elected as substitute representative to the National Assembly while being under custody of the Intelligence Police. He was detained from 2014 to 2016 when he was released after being tortured during his time as a political prisoner. His trial was postponed more than 31 times for two years while he was in jail without any court sentence.



## **ROSMIT MANTILLA (36)**

He is an activist for the LGBTI community rights. The regime's Intelligence Police illegally arrested him in his home during the protests of 2014. In 2015, during his detention, Rosmit became elected for the National Assembly and became the first openly gay officer elected in Venezuela. Amnesty International declared him as a prisoner of conscience and pushed for his liberation. In 2016, he was released for health reasons and found political asylum in France, where he currently resides. From Europe, he has described and denounced the conditions in which the regime keeps the political prisoners, as well as the tortures that he and his peers were victims of under custody of the Intelligence Police.

# IN HIDING / RECENTLY ESCAPED TO EXILE



## **CARLOS PAPARONI (30)**

Paparoni is the president of the National Assembly's permanent commission for Finances and Economic Development, working to protect Venezuelan assets abroad. Since being elected, he's been vocal about the systematic destruction of the country's agricultural apparatus and the corruption cases associated to it as well as over priced imported food by Maduro's regime. During the 2017 protests, Paparoni was a victim of multiple aggressions in the hands of regime officials. He's being accused of organizing violent crimes and is currently in hiding.



## **HENRY RAMOS ALLUP (73)**

Henry Ramos Allup is a Venezuelan lawyer who started his political career in 1984. In January 2016, he became President of the National Assembly for a year. On May 7th of 2019, Maduro's Constituent Assembly ripped him off his parliamentary immunity. The regime's Supreme Court of Justice charged him of treason, conspiracy, instigation to the insurrection, civil rebellion, usurpation of functions, and public incitement to the disobedience of the laws. Ramos Allup is a permanent member of the Internal Policy Commission, and he is a Venezuelan Representative to the Latin American Parliament. In 2016, two members of his team were illegally detained by the Intelligence Police.



## **JOSE SIMÓN CALZADILLA (52)**

Calzadilla is a Venezuelan economist and politician. He was president of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change Commission. Calzadilla was second vice president of the National Assembly in 2016. The National Guard injured him with rubber pellets during the protests of January 23rd of 2019 in Caracas. After the military uprising on April 30th, he was accused of treason. Later on May, the Intelligence Police ransacked his house looking for him and tried to take one of his assistants as a prisoner.



## **JUAN ANDRÉS MEJÍA (33)**

Mejía rose to prominence in 2007 as a Student Union leader protesting a Constitutional Referendum propelled by Chávez. After that, he was named Voluntad Popular's National Political Coordinator in 2014. In 2016, Mejías was elected as a deputy to the National Assembly, where he lead the "Plan País" Special Committee, and the Credit and Public Debt Subcommittee. In 2019, after the failed military uprising, Maduro's Supreme Court revoked his congressional immunity —along with Sergio Vergara and Freddy Superlano's— and accused him of treason, conspiracy, and civil rebellion.



## **JUAN PABLO GARCÍA (59)**

García was elected for the first time in 2010, and was member of the Permanent Commission for Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change. Is member of VENTE Venezuela political party, one of the most critic and radical against Maduro. A trial against him was approved on August 12 from 2019, to remove him from his position as National Assembly deputy.



## **MIGUEL PIZARRO (31)**

He comes from left-wing movements and started out as an activist while in college. He became notorious during the 2008 campaign against indefinite presidential reelection, and again in 2014 for denouncing police brutality and illegal detentions during the protests. In 2015, Pizarro was elected as a National Assembly deputy for Petare, the largest slum in Venezuela. He has pushed policies such as the Sports Law, and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for HIV patients and families' Law. The regime suspended his parliamentary immunity after accusing him of organizing violent crimes across the country. He is currently in hiding.



## **RAFAEL GUZMÁN (47)**

In 2009, Guzman served as an attorney for Miranda's Governor's Office and uncovered irregularities in former governor Diosdado Cabello's administration. He was elected as a deputy to the National Assembly in 2010, and reelected in 2016. After his reelection, Guzman was named president of the Subcommittee to reform the Venezuelan Central Bank Law. Finally on August 12th, 2019 a trial was approved against him, violating his parliamentary immunity.



## **TOMÁS GUANIPA (47)**

Guanipa has a BA in administration. He is the Secretary General of the party Primero Justicia and has worked for years in building political teams all over the country. He is a member of the Permanent Commission for Defence and Security. As a lawmaker, he has been persecuted by pro-regime violent groups and his family has been threatened, which has forced them to live in clandestinity at times. Regime's Supreme Court ordered for his parliamentary immunity to be stripped on June 12th, 2019, following the events from April 30th. Finally on August 12th, 2019 a trial was approved against him, violating his parliamentary immunity.

# IN EXILE



## **ADRIANA D'ELIA (55)**

She is an urban planner and held a successful career as a professor. She worked for years in the public sector as part of Henrique Capriles Radonski's team. She was the frontrunner to be governor of the State of Miranda when the regime started prosecuting her. She was accused of supposed irregularities in Miranda's government during the two periods of Capriles. She lives in the United States, after the regime's Supreme Court banned her for 15 years.



## **DINORAH FIGUERA (58)**

Figuera has been a member of the National Assembly since 2010. Figuera has a long history of social struggle and comes from Venezuelan left-wing movements. She was President of the Science, Technology and Innovation Commission of the National Assembly and member of the national leadership of the Primero Justicia political party. She denounced the decrease in the budget for the health sector and the hospital crisis in recent years. Figuera was attacked by armed groups linked to the Nicolás Maduro regime and is currently in exile in Spain.



## **GABRIELA ARELLANO (34)**

She was an history student at the University of Los Andes and Deputy of the National Assembly since 2016. As a deputy she works in the Committee on Political Rights and Electoral Affairs, as well as the Special Commission for the Borders and Humanitarian Corridor. On April 9, 2018, she was threatened by the military police and intelligence bodies of the Maduro regime with a warrant related to the violation of her parliamentary immunity. Arellano was accused with charges of conspiracy and being linked to destabilizing plans. Gaby Arellano is in exile after various persecutions, contributing to the work of humanitarian aid from Colombia.



## **GERMÁN DARIO FERRER (75)**

Ferrer has served as deputy from 2006 until 2017 in the state of Lara. On June 2, 2017, together with his wife, the national prosecutor Luisa Ortega Díaz, he denounced the rupture of the constitutional order in Venezuela after the creation of the National Constituent Assembly. On August 16, 2017, a warrant for his arrest was issued by the new prosecutor, Tarek William Saab. Darío Ferrer was accused of being part of a network of extortion, money laundering, corruption and presumed offshore accounts. On August 18, 2017, Ferrer and his wife, prosecutor Luisa Ortega Díaz, arrived in exile in Mexico and then Colombia on August 21, Colombia, where Juan Manuel Santos granted them political asylum.



### **ISMAEL GARCÍA (65)**

Garcia has been a deputy to the National Assembly since 2000, when he was a member of the alliance that supported Hugo Chávez. Until 2006, he led the most important Chávez allied party. In 2007, it separated from the government alliance after Chávez' proposal to impose a single party and indefinite reelection. Garcia is currently Vice President of the permanent commission of the Comptroller of the National Assembly. He revealed cases of corruption in the governments of Chavez and Maduro and presented evidence against Diosdado Cabello. He was later accused by Cabello of being involved in the alleged attack against Maduro in April 2019. Garcia is currently in exile in Panama.



### **JOSE MANUEL OLIVARES (34)**

He is an oncologist and was elected as a lawmaker in Venezuela's parliament in 2015 representing the State of Vargas. He was the president of the subcommission of Health in the National Assembly, where he promoted a law to address the national health crisis and the receipt of the humanitarian aid to counteract the effects of medicine shortages in Venezuela. Due to threats by the regime to his family (especially to his wife), he lives in exile. Olivares was one of the student leaders of the protests in 2007, and as a lawmaker, he was one of the most important spokespersons of the National Assembly.



### **JULIO BORGES (50)**

Borges is founder of the Primero Justicia political party. He has been a Deputy to the National Assembly for three periods and was elected president of it in the period 2017-2018. Borges participated in the Santo Domingo dialogue, he was the only one who did not sign the agreement and is currently an ambassador to the Lima Group. He is one of the main leaders of the opposition. In August 2018, the Maduro regime accused him of the alleged attack against Maduro, which caused the withdrawal of his congressional immunity. Borges is accused of attempting to assassinate Maduro and is currently exiled in Colombia.

**THOUSANDS OF GRASSROOTS ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN ALSO JAILED AND PERSECUTED. MANY ARE CURRENTLY IN EXILE.**



### **LUIS FLORIDO (63)**

In 2015, Florido was elected as a representative for the National Assembly and became President of the Foreign Policy Commission. The regime's Supreme Court of Justice accused him of rebellion, conspiracy, and treason. On May 7, Maduro's Constituent Assembly ripped off his congressional immunity. Florido is recognized for his international work by participating in all the negotiation and mediation efforts of the Venezuelan opposition until 2018. On May 2018, he had to leave Venezuela after he received death threats from armed regime groups. He is in exile in Spain.



### **FREDDY SUPERLANO (42)**

Superlano is an engineer and educator who served as Voluntad Popular's Regional Coordinator. He was elected as a deputy to the National Assembly in 2016, where he served as the Oversight Permanent Committee's President. In February 23, 2019, Superlano and his assistant —Carlos José Salinas, also his cousin— were poisoned in Cúcuta, Colombia. Salinas died from the incident. Superlano has been in hiding since the event. In May 2019, Maduro's Supreme Court revoked his congressional immunity — along with Sergio Vergara and Juan Andrés Mejía's.



### **JOSE GUERRA (62)**

He is an economist and a recognized economics professor. He held a brilliant career in the Central Bank of Venezuela, and he was a presidential campaign advisor of Henrique Capriles Radonski. He has denounced high inflation rates and government debt, after years of the regime not publishing official numbers. Regime's Supreme Court ordered for his congressional immunity to be stripped after April 30th. Finally on August 12th, 2019 a trial was approved against him, violating his parliamentary immunity.



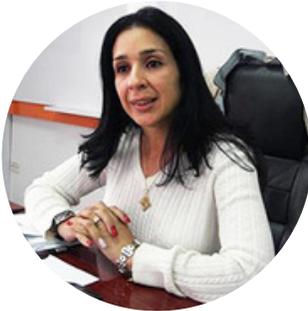
### **RICHARD BLANCO (55)**

Is a Journalist and Lawyer. Blanco was director of Citizen Management of the Mayor of Caracas and prefect. Blanco was arrested by Maduro's regime in 2009 after being charged without evidence for alleged injury caused to a police officer in a protest. Blanco is accused of treason crimes and civil rebellion in April 30, 2019 protests against Nicolás Maduro. Blanco is president of the Alianza Bravo Pueblo Party and is an opinion columnist for one of the country's largest newspapers "El Nacional". Blanco is under asylum at the Argentine Embassy in Venezuela.



### **SERGIO VERGARA (45)**

Vergara is a lawyer and Deputy of the National Assembly since 2015. Vergara is vice president of the Permanent Defense and Security Commission and member of the Permanent Commission of Finance and Economic Development. Vergara is one of the main allies of Juan Guaidó. On March 21, 2019, the military police raided his house while they arrested his neighbor, Roberto Marrero. On May 14 of the same year, his congressional immunity was violated after the events that took place on April 30 when Venezuela's military police who raided his home.



### **SONIA MEDINA (46)**

She is a lawyer and was a member of the Permanent Commission for Indigenous People and of the Permanent Commission for Foreign Policy. In 2017, she denounced that Maduro's Supreme Court was illegitimate and corrupted by the regime's interference. She backed the report presented by OAS Secretary Luis Almagro to accelerate the implementation of the Democratic Charter to Venezuela. She is accused of instigation of rebellion and lives in exile in the United States.



### **WINSTON FLORES (48)**

On May 14th, Maduro's regime started investigations on Flores for his participation in the protests of April 30th. Since he was elected as Substitute Deputy, the regime argues that he doesn't have congressional immunity. Maduro's Supreme Court of Justice accused Flores of treason, conspiracy, instigation to the insurrection, civil rebellion, usurpation of functions, and public incitement to the disobedience of the laws. Winston Flores is one of the Venezuelan Representatives to the Mercosur (Southern Common Market). He is in exile in Chile.

**JOURNALISTS, RADIO AND TV STATIONS,  
NEWSPAPERS AND DIGITAL NEWS SITES HAVE  
BEEN CLOSED BY THE REGIME.**

# UNDER PROTECTION IN AN EMBASSY



## **AMERICO DE GRAZIA (59)**

De Grazia denounced the exploitation of the Orinoco Mining Arc and administrative irregularities in Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). Also denounced the links between government officials with mining mafias in the State of Bolívar and the Tumeremo massacre. In April 2013, he had to be hospitalized after being beaten by five pro-government officers. On July 5, 2017 he was wounded after an attack by armed groups who assaulted the National Assembly. On May 8, 2019, De Grazia's congressional immunity was lifted at the request of the prosecution for accusations of treason against the fatherland and conspiracy to commit a crime for participating in the protests of April 30, 2019. De Grazia is currently a refugee at the Italian Embassy.



## **FRANCO CASELLA (46)**

Casella is the president of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law of the National Assembly, which oversees the revision of the re-institutionalization process of the national Armed Forces. On May 14, 2019, the Supreme Court of Justice of Nicolás Maduro charged him with various crimes and then referred the case to the National Constituent Assembly which waived his immunity. Casella is accused of crimes such as treason, conspiracy, instigation to the insurrection, civil rebellion, conspiracy to commit a crime, usurpation of functions, public instigation to the disobedience of the laws and continued hatred. Casella took shelter in the embassy of Mexico in Venezuela.



## **MARIELA MAGALLANES (46)**

In 2015 she was elected as a Deputy of the National Assembly. Mariela Magallanes is president of the Permanent Commission of the Family and was a member of the Permanent Oversight Commission. Magallanes is also a member of the national leadership of La Causa R, a leftist party with several decades of experience. On February 6, 2017, she denounced that the handling of food in the country is a large form of corruption overseen by the military. On May 8, 2019, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Maduro regime decided to remove her congressional immunity for the events that occurred on April 30. Magallanes was received at the residence of the Italian ambassador in Caracas.



### **FREDDY GUEVARA (33)**

On December 6, 2015, Freddy Guevara was elected Deputy of the National Assembly. Guevara participated in 2007 as leader of the Student Movement, which had a decisive effect on the rejection of the constitutional referendum of Venezuela in 2007 proposed by Hugo Chávez. Guevara was First Vice President of the National Assembly, member of the Permanent Commission of Culture and Recreation. Guevara is a founding member of Voluntad Popular, a party of which he was national coordinator. On November 3, 2017, Venezuela's Supreme Court violated his parliamentary immunity accusing him of public incitement and other crimes related to the 2017 protests. Guevara is currently a refugee in Chilean embassy in Venezuela, where he has been since November 2017

## **PERSECUTED IN VENEZUELA**



### **JUAN GUIDÓ (35)**

Juan Guaidó is an engineer. In 2015, he was elected as a representative to the National Assembly for the state of Vargas. He currently holds the presidency of the National Assembly and since January 10th he is constitutionally the interim president of Venezuela. In January 2019, Maduro's Supreme Court of Justice prohibited him from transferring, assessing, and traveling outside Venezuela. In March, the regime also banned him from running for any public office for 15 years. Later in April, Maduro's Constituent Assembly ripped him off his parliamentary immunity and authorized the Supreme Court to start a trial against him. Guaidó was initially accused of "threatening the constitutional order." Now, he is also being charged with violating the imposed measures and usurpation of power.

**IN 2017 THE SUPREME COURT RULED THAT ALL POWERS VESTED UNDER THE LEGISLATIVE BODY WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO ITSELF. IT SPARKED PROTESTS AND MANY WENT TO EXILE.**

# ELECTION REJECTED



## **JULIO YGARZA (48)**

He is an economist elected in 2016 as Deputy to the National Assembly for the state of Amazonas. The regime's Supreme Court of Justice ruled that his election in 2015 was invalid for alleged electoral fraud, as well as for other two indigenous representatives. With this, the opposition lost the 112 seats needed to elect new public officers. In 2017, he asked to be incorporated to the National Assembly or to repeat the elections for his state, since the Supreme Court never determined any detail about the electoral fraud he was accused.



## **NIRMA GUARULLA (52)**

Nirma is a Venezuelan educator and politician first elected to the National Assembly in 2011, and later again in 2015. The regime's Supreme Court of Justice ruled that her election in 2015 was invalid for alleged electoral fraud, as well as for other two indigenous representatives. With this, the opposition lost the 112 seats needed to elect new public officers.



## **ROMEL GUZAMANA (42)**

Guazamana is a lawyer from the Baniva indigenous community. He was elected in 2016 as Deputy to the National Assembly for the state of Amazonas. The regime's Supreme Court of Justice ruled that his election in 2015 was invalid for alleged electoral fraud, as well as for other two indigenous representatives. With this, the opposition lost the 112 seats needed to elect new public officers. Guazamana requested the cancelation of the agreements made by Chavez and Maduro that allowed China to extract gold, diamond, and coltan from the Venezuelan jungle.