



Pence Wants Venezuela to Cancel Scheduled Election and Get Out of OAS

As life under Venezuela's Marxist dictator Nicolas Maduro becomes increasingly unbearable, members of the nation's military, including many officers, have joined the exodus of thousands of people fleeing the country for a better life elsewhere.

Since Venezuelan law requires the military to maintain custody of election materials and voting machines at the polls, the declining strength of the military may complicate security during the country's upcoming presidential election on May 20.



The election was originally scheduled to be held in December, but in January Maduro's government moved the date forward, first to April, then to May. He told his supporters that if the United Socialist Party, which he controls, wants him to run for reelection, "I'm ready to be a candidate." There are two nominal candidates running against Maduro, Henri Falcón of the Progressive Advance Party, and independent candidate Javier Bertucci. An April poll found that 65.4 percent of respondents believed that Falcón was working in collaboration with Maduro to create the fraudulent appearance of a legitimate democratic election.

Because of irregularities of the electoral schedule and other components of the process, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the European Union, the Organization of American States, the Lima Group, and countries including the United States and Colombia have rejected this year's election.

And on May 7, in an address to the Organization of American States (OAS), Vice President Mike Pence (shown on right) asked the organization's members to suspend Venezuela from the 35-nation organization.

Pence also asked Maduro to suspend the May 20 presidential election, which he called "no more than fraud and sham." Pence also urged Maduro to "open Venezuela to international aid, and do it now."

Venezuela's foreign minister, Samuel Moncada responded by saying there is "no possibility" that the May 20 elections do not take place, stating: "They are an expression of our sovereignty."

On May 8, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said during a speech on Latin America that it was time for Maduro to step down. "For the safety and security of all the peoples of Latin America, it is time for Maduro to go," she stated.

Haley said that the people of Venezuela are "unwilling victims of a criminal narco-state" and maintained that the upcoming May 20 elections will be fraudulent if independent observers are not present to monitor them.

During her speech, Haley also called on Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega (who leads the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista party) to honor his offer to engage in dialogue with the business community, students, and the Roman Catholic Church.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 9, 2018

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