



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 28, 2017

## U.S. Pulls Families from Caracas; Airlines End Flights Before Sunday's Crucial Vote

In its foreign travel advisory issued Thursday, the U.S. State Department [warned](#) American visitors against traveling to Venezuela and ordered family members of U.S. government employees at its embassy in Caracas to leave the country. It also offered assistance for those employees wanting to leave before the country's crucial and controversial election on Sunday. The order and warnings were due to "social unrest, violent crime and pervasive food and medicine shortages" in the country.



Sunday's vote could be crucial for the direction of the country run by Marxist Nicolas Maduro. Already rumors of vote fraud are suggesting that Maduro's attempt to create a new 545-seat "Constituent Assembly" will succeed, with new powers not only to override the country's existing legislature but also to write a new constitution that would be able to grant dictatorial powers to Maduro.

When Maduro's opposition won a majority in the national assembly in 2015, it appeared that he would be impeached. But before the new legislators could be sworn in, Maduro stacked the Supreme Court with his cronies that blocked any such attempts. If Sunday's vote goes his way, the new assembly would have power over all other branches of the government, allowing Maduro unlimited power over the failing country.

Maduro's policies, which continued those of his Marxist predecessor, Hugo Chávez, have decimated the once-wealthy country. Half the population now lives in poverty, the country's currency is all but worthless, and warnings of famine are increasing. The country's oil company, PDVSA (Petroleos de Venezuela), cannot obtain diluents necessary to reduce oil viscosity for refining, and it hasn't the funds to maintain safety and health standards for its employees, many of whom are not receiving their salaries. The default on Venezuela's debts through bankruptcy would spell the end for Maduro's government as well, since it depends on PDVSA revenues for nearly all its sustenance.

The country's troubles multiplied on Wednesday when the U.S. Treasury Department imposed financial sanctions on 13 of Maduro's top people, including his interior minister and heads of his army, police, and national guard, along with several involved in the upcoming election. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin stated:

As President Trump has made clear, the United States will not ignore the Maduro regime's ongoing efforts to undermine democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

As our sanctions demonstrate, the United States is standing by the Venezuelan people in their quest to restore their country to a full and prosperous democracy.

This dreadful misuse of the word "democracy" hides the historical fact that Venezuela is proving: Democracies are short-lived and die in violence. James Madison observed in *Federalist*, No. 10:



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Hence it is, that such Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security, or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives, as they have been violent in their deaths.

Democracies, where people can vote away the rights, work, and property of others (as opposed to a republic, where laws are made to protect citizens from the whims of other citizens), always lead to greed and foolish behavior by the masses. In Venezuela's case, democracy led to the installation of an unaffordable welfare state and the empowerment of the country's leader to dictatorial realms, allowing the leader to devastate the economy.

The life of the government and social system in Venezuela could be very short not only because of sanctions being imposed by the State Department (which freezes the assets of those being sanctioned) but also because of the threat of additional sanctions on any of those taking office in Maduro's new government.

As the country implodes, the two airlines serving Venezuela, Delta and Avianca, are ending service to the country. And ramped-up sanctions against PDVSA could hasten the bankruptcy of not only the company but Maduro's government as well.

The widespread violence in the country, which began in April, is well-documented: 111 protesters have lost their lives, 15,000 of them have been injured (mostly wounded by Maduro's police), and more than 3,000 of them have been arrested with most of them remaining in jail. Those are being subject to the most inhumane treatment, according to the State Department, which added in its travel advisory on Thursday: "Individuals, including U.S. citizens, [are being] detained for long periods with little or no evidence of a crime [or] access to proper medical care, clean water and food."

Sunday's vote, if not disrupted or delayed by Maduro's opposition, which has called for protests despite government bans against them, will direct Venezuela's political future. But that future is likely to be very short as the economic havoc wrought by socialist policies will spell the end for Maduro even if he wins Sunday's election.

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