



1.3. Political landscape

1.3.1. Branches of Power

The Venezuelan Constitution outlines the five branches of power as follows:

Executive Power, led by the President, who is the Head of State, the Executive Vice-President, and the Ministers;

Legislative Power, in the National Assembly (Asamblea Nacional, AN);

Judicial Power, consisting of the Supreme Justice Tribunal (TSJ, Tribunal Supremo de Justicia), the national court system, the Office of Public Prosecutions (Ministerio Público), the Public Defender's Office (Defensoría Pública), criminal-investigation organs, and the penitentiary system;

Citizen Power, consisting of the Office of the Ombudsperson (Defensoría del Pueblo), the Public Ministry (Ministerio Público), and the Office of the General Comptroller (CGR, Contraloría General de la República); and

Electoral Power, led by the National Electoral Council (CNE, Consejo Nacional Electoral).[67](#)

The President of Venezuela is elected for a six-year term and may be re-elected indefinitely.[68](#) Until 3 January 2026, when the US launched a military operation in Venezuela, the presidency was held by Nicolás Maduro, first elected in 2013,[69](#) with Delcy Rodríguez serving as Vice-President following her appointment by Maduro in June 2018.[70](#) Maduro's presidency was considered illegitimate by the opposition and the international community after allegations of widespread fraud during the presidential elections of 28 July 2024.[71](#) The National Assembly consists of 277 members,[72](#) elected for five-year terms, with the possibility of indefinite re-election.[73](#) TSJ judges are nominated by federal employees and later ratified by the National Assembly,[74](#) serving 12-year terms.[75](#) The Public Ministry, headed by the Attorney General, is responsible for the administration of justice, including the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases.[76](#)

Sources indicated that, although the separation of powers is formally enshrined in the Constitution, it is effectively absent in practice; the system of checks and balances is described as non-functional, with the branches of public power operating as extensions of the executive branch.[77](#) The National Assembly, dominated by the ruling party, is widely characterised as a

'rubber-stamp' body that rapidly approves legislation aimed at consolidating state control.[78](#)

- [67](#)

Venezuela, Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (Amended), 2009, [url](#), Arts. 136, 186, 225, 273, 292

- [68](#)

Venezuela, Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (Amended), 2009, [url](#), Art. 230

- [69](#)

NPR, The rise and fall of Nicolás Maduro, 5 January 2026, [url](#); WOLA, Two months without Maduro in Venezuela: Democratic transition or authoritarian adaptation?, 11 March 2026, [url](#)

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Reuters, Who is Delcy Rodriguez, the vice president that Trump says replaced Maduro?, 3 January 2026, [url](#)

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WOLA, One year since the presidential election of July 28, 2024: the Venezuelan crisis, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

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CNN, Cómo se compone la Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela y cuántos diputados tiene, 25 May 2025, [url](#); AFP, Elecciones parlamentarias en Venezuela entre desinformación y fuerte despliegue militar, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

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Venezuela, Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (Amended), 2009, [url](#), Art. 192

- [74](#)

Euronews, Al menos 24 muertos y más de 2.200 detenidos en las protestas contra los resultados en Venezuela, 7 August 2024, [url](#)

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SELA, Venezuela, n.d., [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report — Venezuela, 2026, [url](#), p. 11

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ICJ, Sin voluntad de Justicia en Venezuela: Un Ministerio Público que fomenta la impunidad, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12

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Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report — Venezuela, 2026, [url](#), p. 11; Efecto Cocuyo, Poderes Públicos alineados con permanencia de Maduro en el poder: implicaciones, 21 August 2024, [url](#). See also: OAS, IACHR, Venezuela: Graves violaciones a los Derechos humanos en el Contexto electoral, 2025, [url](#), p. 82

- [78](#)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report — Venezuela, 2026, [url](#), p. 11; Bloomberg, Venezuela Lawmakers Give First Nod to Landmark Amnesty Bill, 5 February 2026, [url](#)