

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to request a clear explanation of the Trump administration's Venezuela policy and specifically, its strategy for ensuring that the post-Maduro political arrangement results in a genuine democratic transition, rather than a repackaged continuation of authoritarian rule under a new banner.

President Trump has asserted that the United States has taken from Venezuela "billions and billions of dollars," and that "Venezuela is doing better right now than they've ever done in the history of their country."¹ While we certainly hope Venezuela can chart a more prosperous and democratic path forward, the facts on the ground suggest a far more troubling reality and raise serious questions about the President's claims.

Four months into the administration's engagement with Maduro's hand-picked Vice President, the Delcy regime is still stacked with the same Maduro regime officials, the regime has yet to outline an electoral timeline, and 473 political prisoners continue to languish in prison. The administration also has yet to comment on Delcy Rodríguez's April 24th announcement that the Amnesty Law for Democratic Coexistence was "coming to an end." We are also concerned by reported appointments of Larry Devoe as Attorney General, Eglée González Lobato as Ombudsman, and Gen. Gustavo González López as Minister of Defense, appointments that, if supported or accepted without objection, would represent missed opportunities to address endemic corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and transition away from the old repressive Maduro regime. Nor has Rodríguez's government abandoned the regime's destabilizing posture toward Guyana, one of the United States' democratic partners in the Caribbean.

¹ C-SPAN, "President Trump Holds Cabinet Meeting," March 26, 2026, 1:19:50, <https://www.c-span.org/program/white-house-event/president-trump-holds-cabinet-meeting/676355>

These realities raise serious questions about whether the administration's current approach is producing democratic results or simply rewarding tactical cooperation by the same political apparatus that helped sustain Maduro's rule.

We understand that elections and a true democratic transition cannot happen overnight. But neither will happen at all if the Trump administration fails to exercise its leverage to insist on the necessary institutional changes that would make a democratic transition possible. Democratic transitions require sustained and coordinated diplomacy across agencies and clear demands of democratization to transition away from autocratic structures and practices. As of today, the department has yet to provide any evidence the Trump Administration is doing any of this hard work.

Accordingly, we request written responses to the following questions no later than 30 days from this writing:

1. What is the Administration's strategy for achieving a democratic transition in Venezuela? Please provide the timeline, benchmarks, and responsible U.S. officials for the "transition" phase of the Administration's stated three-phase Venezuela policy.
2. On what electoral timeline is the United States pressing the current regime? Has the Administration secured any commitment from Delcy Rodríguez or other interim authorities on the timing of presidential, legislative, regional, or local elections?
3. What progress has the Administration made toward securing the institutional conditions necessary for credible elections, including:
 - reform of the National Electoral Council and the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ);
 - guarantees that the armed forces will not interfere in elections;
 - repeal of laws restricting expression, media, political activity, and civil society financing;
 - renewal of voter registration, including for the diaspora;
 - transparent audit of the electoral system; and
 - the involvement of professional international monitors and citizen observers throughout the process.
4. Why has the administration not publicly insisted upon the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners? Has the department assessed why its Venezuelan partners have not released remaining political prisoners and whether interim authorities are using them as leverage?
5. Did the department recommend, acquiesce, or support the appointments of Larry Devoe, Eglée González Lobato, and Gen. Gustavo González López? If not, has the

department raised concerns about these appointments directly with Rodríguez or her representatives?

6. What steps is the administration taking to deter continued Venezuelan threats or provocations against Guyana? Has the department warned Rodríguez that continued provocations toward Guyana will have consequences for U.S. engagement?

We strongly support the Venezuelan people's right to choose their leaders through free, fair, and credible elections. We also recognize that stabilizing Venezuela's economy and restoring basic governance will take time. But stabilization cannot become a pretext for indefinite rule by unreformed regime insiders who rejected the outcome of the 2024 election and helped sustain authoritarian rule against the will of the Venezuelan people.

The removal of a dictator is not, by itself, the restoration of democracy. The administration must use its leverage now—before it is spent—to secure the release of political prisoners, dismantle repressive institutions, restore civic space, and ensure a credible electoral path that allows the Venezuelan people to decide Venezuela's future.

Sincerely,



GREGORY W. MEEKS
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



JEANNE SHAHEEN
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee