

Leocenis García, the leader of the ProCiudadanos party, was prevented by the Maduro regime from registering as a candidate for president in the upcoming July 28 election in Venezuela. In response, Mr. Garcia has filed a lawsuit contesting his exclusion.

ProCiudadanos, which has met all the legal requirements to function as a political party, is dedicated to amplifying the voices of those traditionally marginalized by the political establishment, including the Afro-Venezuelan community.

Earlier this year, Mr. García was invited by the president of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, to participate in the drafting of an agreement to set guidelines for the conduct of the presidential election. Mr. Garcia was acknowledged as the legitimate leader of ProCiudadanos, which was registered with the National Electoral Council (CNE), and he was recognized as a presidential “pre-candidate”. Yet, on the day he filed to be a candidate, Mr. Garcia was banned by the Maduro Government from participating in the election.

The Maduro government has also banned others including Maria Corina Machado, Corina Yoris, Henrique Capriles, Pablo Zambrano, among others despite its rhetoric that it would hold "free and fair" elections. In banning Leocenis, the Maduro government has demonstrated that it has no interest in holding "free and fair" elections and will ban anyone from participating who has the political support of Venezuelans.

In February 2024, a very reputable polling firm, Datanálisis, surveyed Venezuelans about their preferences among the opposition candidates declared eligible to run for president. Vente Venezuela leader María Corina Machado and former governor of Miranda, Henrique Capriles, were not included in the survey due to the Maduro regime’s decision to disqualify them from running.

In the poll, Leocenis was favored by over 22% of those who were asked their preference among opposition candidates. The results were as follows: Leocenis Garcia 22.2%, Pablo Pérez 9.4%, Richard Mardo 5.2%, Rosa de Scarano 4.8%, and Daniel Ceballos 4.7%. When asked the question “If the election were held today, who would you vote for?”- the response was spread out, with votes for Benjamín Rausseo 17%; Leocenis García 15.1%; Nicolás Maduro 14.5%; Manuel Rosales 8.7%; Javier Bertucci 4.1%, and others 5%.

Additionally, a regional polling firm, Datincorp, conducted a poll between March 13 and 14, 2024. The poll provided insights into Venezuelans interest in participating in elections. According to the obtained data, 66.7% are “definitely willing” to vote. Moreover, in a hypothetical scenario where Mr. García competes against Maduro, the ProCiudadanos leader would receive 34.4% support compared to the 18.3% of the current head of state.

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