



fake fabricated result: Questions swirl around Venezuela's election



The two leading candidates in Venezuela's presidential race both declared victory, leading to uncertainty and protest.

Caracas, Venezuela – A mini-truck — with its cargo bed set up like a small stage — paraded through the streets of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, on Tuesday. It was emblazoned with a simple phrase: “He won.”

That truck carried opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, one of two people claiming victory in Sunday's presidential election.

But on the other side of town, that same day, a government rally was telling a different version of events.

There, the incumbent Nicolas Maduro appeared on the balcony of the Miraflores presidential palace to thank his supporters for propelling him to re-election. They joined him in a rendition of the national anthem.

Both sides maintained they had triumphed. But their celebrations were overshadowed as waves of protest and repression gripped the country.

Venezuela's attorney general, a Maduro ally, announced on Tuesday that 749 “criminals” had been arrested during the demonstrations, on charges ranging from terrorism to obstructing public roadways.

The human rights group Foro Penal estimated that 11 people had been killed as of Wednesday.

Experts say the violent reaction from the Maduro government is an attempt to quash the opposition — and impose its desired election results.

“Maduro is trying to solidify the reality of this scam,” said Ryan Berg, director of the Americas Program and head of the Future of Venezuela Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Through repression, Berg explained, Maduro aims to “ensure that this fake, fabricated result becomes the facts on the ground”.