

Public conference

Latin America and Europe facing growing authoritarianism

March 15, 2024, Montevideo, Uruguay

INTRODUCTION

Jakub Klepal, Executive Director, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

SPEAKERS

María Corina Machado, opposition leader, Venezuela

Toribia Lero Quispe, Congresswomen, Plurinational Legislative Assembly, Bolivia

Carlos Malamud, Real Instituto Elcano, Spain

MODERADOR

Andrés Bancalari, Director, International studies department, Universidad ORT Uruguay

During the conference organized at Universidad ORT Uruguay the panelists referred to the expansion of authoritarianism, considering specific cases on both continents. Students and the general public were able to ask questions and delve deeper into the future perspectives of this scourge that affects the entire world.

After the welcoming words by the Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation **Jakub Klepal**, the Director of the International Studies Department at Universidad ORT Uruguay, **Andrés Bancalari**, gave way to a brief presentation by **María Corina Machado**, leader of the Venezuelan opposition. Via streaming, Machado spoke about the difficulties faced by the opposition movement in Venezuela in the face of the next presidential elections and highlighted the signs and expressions of hope transmitted by the population “in every corner of the country.” Machado pointed out that the Nicolás Maduro regime “is terrified by the elections” and stressed that “they [the regime] have already suffered moral defeat. Now political defeat is remaining, and their best option is a negotiated transition.”

It was the turn of the Bolivian representative, **Toribia Lero Quispe**, to analyze the struggle of indigenous peoples to defend the human rights of all citizens. “Bolivia is under a permanent electoral situation. The government does not stop carrying out a political campaign and uses the state apparatus to carry it out. In these circumstances it is difficult to compete since there is political persecution” analyzed Lero Quispe. And she denounced that in her country there are autocratic leaders who “use their power to idiotize and control people”. “That is not progress and that is not democracy”, she concluded.

Carlos Malamud, from Real Instituto Elcano, made a counterpoint between what is happening in Latin America and Europe. On both sides of the Atlantic there are important electoral processes, “half the planet” is going to vote and in principle this is good, explained Malamud although he clarified that unfortunately “many of these elections are not going to be transparent” as is the case of Russia. Finally, the researcher from the Real Instituto Elcano highlighted the importance of key elections such as those in Poland and Guatemala that generated a “process of recovery of democracy.”

The conference took place during the morning of March 15, 2024. It was organized by Democratic Solidarity, an initiative coordinated by Forum 2000, and had the support of CESCOS and Universidad ORT Uruguay.