

# *Venezuela Election: Socialists Win Zulia Governorship, Nearly Sweep State Capitals*

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Caracas, December 11 (RHC)—In a landslide victory, candidates for Venezuela's Socialist Party won 23 of the 24 mayoral seats in state capitals as well as the governorship for the state of Zulia, election authorities announced as they released partial results in Sunday's municipal elections. All told, the Socialist Party won at least 90% of the 335 mayoral seats.

"These elections were accompanied by 9,139,564 voters," announced Sandra Oblitas, vice president of the National Electoral Council, or CNE, amounting to 47.32 percent voter turnout.

CNE officials presented partial results for the capitals of the 23 states as well as Caracas, with candidates for the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) taking all but the top mayor position in Tachira state.

Omar Prieto of the PSUV also won the governorship for the state of Zulia, leaving the PSUV in all but four of the country's 23 states. The post in the key state was vacated after the opposition politician who won the October 15th regional elections refused to be sworn in by the Constituent Assembly.

Earlier in the day, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro praised the high voter turnout. "There is an extraordinary electoral participation," Maduro said Sunday. "I want to thank the people of Venezuela who have come to the polling stations to exercise their right to vote. "

With 19.7 million eligible voters, Maduro had called on people to vote in what is the South American nation's third election in less than six months and the 24th in the last 18 years.

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