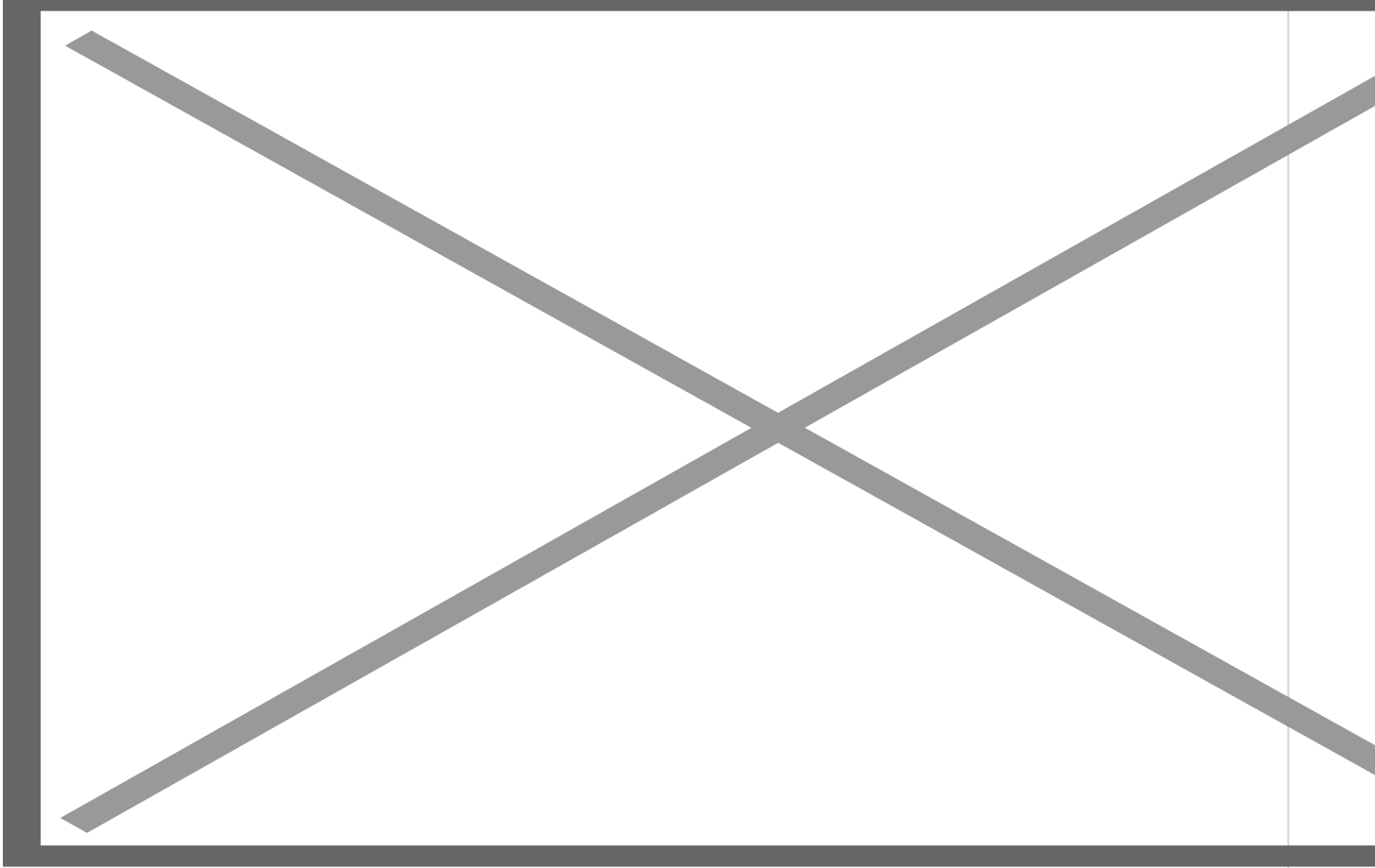


Display of Coat of Arms falls behind U.S.-backed Venezuelan leader

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Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaidó addresses the media after regional and local elections, in Caracas, November 22, 2021. © REUTERS/Leonardo Fernandez Vilorio

Caracas, November 22 (RHC)-- Juan Guaidó, the opposition politician recognized by the U.S. as "interim president" of Venezuela, was in the midst of a passionate speech when the coat of arms mounted on the stage behind him collapsed on the floor.

The round wooden sign displaying Venezuela's insignia seems to have been nudged by someone passing behind the stage and clattered to the ground behind Guaido as he was answering a question. The moment was caught on camera and quickly made rounds on social media on Monday. One Twitter user captioned it, "when the theater drops."

Guaido had broadcast the event live on his Twitter account, and the moment of the seal's collapse can be seen about 58 minutes in. The opposition politician declared himself "interim president" of Venezuela in January 2019, denouncing the incumbent President Nicolas Maduro as an illegitimate "dictator."

Guaido has made multiple attempts to take power in Caracas, with the backing of the Trump administration and later the Biden administration in Washington. The EU withdrew its support in January 2021.

Monday's speech followed the weekend's regional elections in which the ruling Socialist party won 20 governorships while the opposition managed only three. Guaido said now was the time for "reflection, unity and work" among the opposition leaders, who need to set their egos aside and work together to "remove the dictator."

The U.S. has condemned the election results as "skewed" in favor of Maduro's party, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken vowing to continue supporting Guaido, including with sanctions against Caracas. EU election observers are expected to comment on their experience in Venezuela on Tuesday.

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