## Announcement, Nobel Peace Prize 2025

## 10 October 2025

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2025 goes to a brave and committed champion of peace – to a woman who keeps the flame of democracy burning amid a growing darkness.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2025 to Maria Corina Machado.

She is receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for her tireless work promoting democratic rights for the people of Venezuela and for her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy.

As the leader of the democracy movement in Venezuela, Maria Corina Machado is one of the most extraordinary examples of civilian courage in Latin America in recent times.

Ms Machado has been a key, unifying figure in a political opposition that was once deeply divided – an opposition that found common ground in the demand for free elections and representative government. This is precisely what lies at the heart of democracy: our shared willingness to defend the principles of popular rule, even though we disagree. At a time when democracy is under threat, it is more important than ever to defend this common ground.

Venezuela has evolved from a relatively democratic and prosperous country to a brutal, authoritarian state that is now suffering a humanitarian and economic crisis. Most Venezuelans live in deep poverty, even as the few at the top enrich themselves. The violent machinery of the state is directed against the country's own citizens. Nearly 8 million people have left the country. The opposition has been systematically suppressed by means of election rigging, legal prosecution and imprisonment.

Venezuela's authoritarian regime makes political work extremely difficult. As a founder of Súmate, an organisation devoted to democratic development, Ms Machado stood up for free and fair elections more than 20 years ago. As she said: "It was a choice of ballots over bullets." In political office and in her service to organisations since then, Ms Machado has spoken out for judicial independence, human rights and popular representation. She has spent years working for the freedom of the Venezuelan people.

Ahead of the election of 2024, Ms Machado was the opposition's presidential candidate, but the regime blocked her candidacy. She then backed the representative of a different party, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, in the election. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers mobilised across political divides. They were trained as election observers to ensure a transparent and fair election. Despite the risk of harassment, arrest and torture, citizens across the country held watch over the polling stations. They made sure the final tallies were documented before the regime could destroy ballots and lie about the outcome.

The efforts of the collective opposition, both before and during the election, were innovative and brave, peaceful and democratic. The opposition received international support when its leaders publicised the vote counts that had been collected from the country's election districts, showing that the opposition had won by a clear margin. But the regime refused to accept the election result, and clung to power.

Democracy is a precondition for lasting peace. However, we live in a world where democracy is in retreat, where more and more authoritarian regimes are challenging norms and resorting to violence. The Venezuelan regime's rigid hold on power and its repression of the population are not unique in the world. We see the same trends globally: rule of law abused by those in control, free media silenced, critics imprisoned, and societies pushed towards authoritarian rule and militarisation. In 2024, more elections were held than ever before, but fewer and fewer are free and fair.

In its long history, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has honoured brave women and men who have stood up to repression, who have carried the hope of freedom in prison cells, on the streets and in public squares, and who have shown by their actions that peaceful resistance can change the world. In the past year, Ms Machado has been forced to live in hiding. Despite serious threats against her life she has remained in the country, a choice that has inspired millions of people.

When authoritarians seize power, it is crucial to recognise courageous defenders of freedom who rise and resist. Democracy depends on people who refuse to stay silent, who dare to step forward despite grave risk, and who remind us that freedom must never be taken for granted, but must always be defended – with words, with courage and with determination.

Maria Corina Machado meets all three criteria stated in Alfred Nobel's will for the selection of a Peace Prize laureate. She has brought her country's opposition together. She has never wavered in resisting the militarisation of Venezuelan society. She has been steadfast in her support for a peaceful transition to democracy.

Maria Corina Machado has shown that the tools of democracy are also the tools of peace. She embodies the hope of a different future, one where the fundamental rights of citizens are protected, and their voices are heard. In this future, people will finally be free to live in peace.