

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

GLOBOVISION

FEBRUARY 16, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

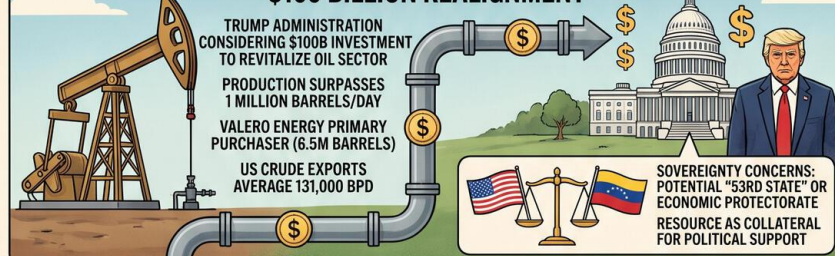
VENEZUELA'S POST-JANUARY 3 TRANSITION: STABILIZATION, ENERGY REALIGNMENT, & THE NEW POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



DUAL STABILIZATION STRATEGY: CARNIVAL & AMNESTY



DEEPENING US-VENEZUELA ENERGY COOPERATION: \$100 BILLION REALIGNMENT



GOVERNANCE RESET & INSTITUTIONAL DISMANTLING



FUTURE OUTLOOK & RISKS



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ACTING PRESIDENT DELCY RODRÍGUEZ LEVERAGES CARNIVAL CELEBRATIONS AND A PROPOSED AMNESTY LAW TO STABILIZE THE POST-JANUARY 3 POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AMID DEEPENING US-VENEZUELA ENERGY COOPERATION.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The February 16, 2026, news cycle is dominated by the aftermath of the January 3 "event"—an apparent U.S.-led operation that resulted in the removal or "kidnapping" of Nicolás Maduro. Acting President Delcy Rodríguez is currently presiding over a fragile transition, utilizing the national Carnival holidays as a primary vehicle for projecting **domestic stability and social order**. Extensive coverage of "Carnavales de Paz" across the states of Anzoátegui, Falcón, and Bolívar serves as a distraction from the fundamental restructuring of the Venezuelan state. This restructuring includes the [liquidation of several Chavista "Mission" foundations](#) and a pivot toward a more orthodox, market-friendly economic model designed to attract Western investment.

Simultaneously, the administration is aggressively pursuing a "National Reconciliation" narrative centered on a new **Amnesty Law**. This legislative push, supported by both government figures and moderate opposition factions, aims to release "unjustly detained" political prisoners and consolidate the current leadership's legitimacy. The underlying strategic driver is a profound realignment with the United States under the Trump administration. High-level discussions regarding a **\$100 billion investment** in the oil sector and the potential for Venezuela to become a [virtual "53rd state"](#) or economic protectorate indicate a desperate search for fiscal solvency at the cost of traditional sovereignty.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Post-Maduro Transition and Governance Reset

- Acting President Delcy Rodríguez has officialized the **liquidation of seven state entities**, including the Robert Serra Mission and the Misión Socialista Nueva Frontera de Paz, signaling a purge of the old ideological guard [under Decree 5248](#).
- The National Assembly is prioritizing the **Amnesty Law** (Ley de Amnistía), which contains between 19 and 28 articles aimed at "reconciliation" and the release of [unjustly detained individuals](#).
- New leadership appointments are being fast-tracked, such as Amibon Pérez González as **Superintendent of Sudeban** (banking regulator), replacing Delis Adriana Álvarez Márquez [effective February 10](#).

The US-Venezuela Energy Realignment

- The Trump administration is reportedly considering a **\$100 billion capital injection** into the Venezuelan oil sector to revitalize production, which has recently [surpassed 1 million barrels per day](#).
- Valero Energy is identified as a primary purchaser, with reports indicating it will buy **6.5 million barrels** of Venezuelan crude [to stabilize supply](#).
- Significant internal debate has emerged regarding the **loss of sovereignty**, as Trump rhetoric suggests Venezuela could be treated as a **"53rd state"** following the events of January 3 [in the US Senate](#).

Carnival as a Tool for Social Control

- The state has deployed over **7,600 security officials** in Caracas and thousands more in states like Anzoátegui and Portuguesa to ensure the "Carnavales de Paz" [remain incident-free](#).
- Public focus is being redirected toward **tourism and festivals**, such as the 55th International Sun Fair (Feria del Sol) in Mérida and the El Callao Carnival, which expects [over 40,000 visitors](#).
- The "normalization" narrative emphasizes high hotel occupancy rates (85% in La Guaira, 100% in Adícora) as evidence of [economic recovery](#).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The restoration of diplomatic ties with the U.S. is progressing via **"heterodox" channels**, with an unnamed Charge d'Affaires receiving official recognition at Miraflores, bypassing traditional [diplomatic protocols](#).
- Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum has announced an **air bridge for humanitarian aid** to Cuba, reacting to the U.S. "energy siege" [on the island](#).
- Chile has launched **"Tam GPT,"** a regional AI model intended to reduce **geopolitical bias** in technology dominated by U.S. firms [and improve collaboration](#).

Macroeconomics & Trade

- Venezuela is experiencing an **export shift**, with non-oil exports to the U.S. (specifically crab meat and methanol) representing **20% and 15%** of the total, [respectively](#).
- The administration is debating **VAT (IVA) refunds** for exporters to increase the competitiveness of Venezuelan products in the [European market](#).
- The **Anti-Blockage Law** and the reform of the **Hydrocarbons Law** are being utilized to create "flexible productive alliances" where the investor carries the risk in exchange for [favorable fiscal terms](#).

Critical Infrastructure & Logistics

- Major aviation updates: Air Europa, Plus Ultra, and Iberia are scheduled to **resume direct flights** between Madrid and Caracas in March 2026 [following FAA regulatory shifts](#).

- Modernization efforts are underway at the **Guanta Port terminal** in Anzoátegui, focusing on docking precision and [administrative efficiency](#).
- Banking services (Sudeban) will be **suspended on February 16-17** for Carnival, forcing a reliance on digital platforms for [financial transactions](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Erasure of Chavismo's Radical Ideology

The current administration is systematically dismantling the institutional architecture of the Maduro era. The closure of missions and the marginalization of "radical" elements (both in government and opposition) suggest a transition toward a **technocratic-authoritarian model**. The broadcast emphasizes "reconciliation" not as a return to democracy, but as a path to "stability" that allows for the resumption of international capital flows. The frequent dismissals of "fake news" and "rumors" regarding Maduro's status indicate a concerted effort to manage the narrative of his absence as a **fait accompli** rather than a [crisis of legitimacy](#).

Energy Sovereignty vs. Fiscal Survival

There is a blatant contradiction in the state narrative regarding "national sovereignty." While officials praise the "recovery of the oil industry," the transcripts reveal a **massive concessions program** to the U.S. and European firms. The mention of a "Qatar-based account" for oil revenues, overseen by **U.S. Treasury auditors**, suggests that Venezuela is operating under a form of [international receivership](#). The "State 53" rhetoric, even if dismissed by some as a joke,

reflects the reality of a nation whose primary resource is now functionally **collateral for foreign political support**.

The Weaponization of AI and Information

The news cycle highlights a growing anxiety over "Information Warfare." From the discussion of **Deepfakes** as an "industrial scale" threat to the use of AI in classrooms, technology is framed as a dual-use tool for both modernization and [malicious destabilization](#). The Intesia Foundation's focus on teaching teachers how to detect AI-generated homework indicates that the "battle for truth" is moving into the **educational and professional spheres**, while the government uses the same tools to monitor and control [public sentiment](#).

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The Venezuelan domestic environment is characterized by **exhaustion-led compliance**. The public's skepticism toward all political actors—captured in a segment describing a citizen at a pharmacy saying they "believe in nothing and no one"—is being exploited by the Rodríguez administration to implement radical changes with minimal resistance [from a fatigued population](#). The "Amnesty Law" is a critical release valve for this pressure, offering a symbolic win to the opposition while maintaining the government's grip on the [security apparatus](#).

However, **institutional decay** remains a significant threat. The liquidation of mission entities and the focus on "reforming the system" suggest that the previous governance model has utterly collapsed. The military's role is largely confined to "Carnival Security" in the broadcasts, but the subtext of the

"January 3" event suggests a military that has been neutralized or is undergoing a **forced realignment** with external powers. The "moderate opposition" is described as fragmented and struggling to find a leader who can challenge the new status quo [effectively](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Venezuela is attempting a **strategic pivot** away from the "Anti-Imperialist" bloc and toward a pragmatic accommodation with the Global North. The "outside world" is no longer framed primarily as a threat, but as a source of "investment and stabilization." The Trump administration is portrayed as a **rational actor** seeking energy security, a stark contrast to previous rhetoric. This shift has isolated traditional allies like Cuba, which is now looking to Mexico for [humanitarian support](#).

Regionally, Venezuela is navigating a **crisis-ridden South America**. Peru is in a state of "institutional inflection" with motions to impeach President José Jerí, and Colombia is preparing for elections where the "Petrista" project faces **deep fragmentation**. Venezuela's administration is positioning itself as the "stable" partner in the region, using its oil wealth to buy its way back into the [Inter-American system](#).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Venezuela is transitioning toward a **concession-based energy economy**. Market sentiment is cautiously optimistic due to the removal of FAA restrictions and the prospect of U.S. investment. However, the reliance on a single resource remains total, and the "Anti-Blockage" model effectively shifts the burden

of national development [onto private investors](#).

Key Economic Vectors:

- **Oil Production:** Surpassed **1 million barrels per day** following the implementation of "Productive Participation Contracts" [in 2024](#).
- **US Crude Exports:** Averaged **131,000 barrels per day** in early February 2026, making Venezuela a **top 5 supplier** to U.S. refineries [for the first time in years](#).
- **Foreign Investment:** Potential **\$100 billion** in capital from U.S. and European firms (Chevron, Shell, BP, Repsol) [under License No. 50](#).
- **External Debt:** Use of oil revenues to "**amortize debt**" via a Qatar-based account [overseen by Scott Bessent](#).
- **Inflation:** While not explicitly cited with a percentage, the focus on "salary recovery" and "productive stability" indicates that controlling prices remains a [primary concern](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The following leadership shifts signal a move away from ideological purity toward technocratic and pragmatic governance:

- **Delcy Rodríguez (Acting President):** Consolidating power through decrees that liquidate radical Chavista missions and negotiating directly with **the Trump administration and regional leaders**.
- **Amibon Pérez González (Superintendent of Sudeban):** Appointed to oversee a banking sector that is increasingly **integrated with international finance laws**.

- **Félix Plasencia (US Envoy/Negotiator):** Described as an "ambassador of career" who is managing the "heterodox" and "privileged" [relationship with Washington](#).
- **Nicolás Maduro / Cilia Flores (Status: Removed):** Explicitly described as "kidnapped" by Washington on January 3, their faction is clearly the **major loser** in this new political [alignment](#).

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

Globovision's editorial posture is **aggressively reassuring and nationalistic**, with a distinct focus on "soft power" during the Carnival season. The "Lead Stories" are consistently the "Carnaval Seguro" operations and cultural festivals, which are used to frame the country as "at peace." Significant political and economic shifts—like the liquidation of missions and the \$100B U.S. investment—are presented as **matter-of-fact bureaucratic updates**, downplaying their radical nature. The "January 3" event is a **Conspicuous Omission** in terms of tactical detail; the network discusses its *aftermath* (Amnesty, US relations) but never explicitly details the actual mechanics of how Maduro was removed, reflecting a tightly controlled information environment.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The current geopolitical framing suggests a world of **transactional pragmatism**, where ideological conflicts are being traded for economic security.

COUNTRIES

- **United States:** Portrayed as a **dominant but pragmatic hegemon**. No longer the "empire" to be defeated, but the "partner" whose investment is essential. Quotable framing: "The Trump administration... is a correction to American intervention policies... it produces stability" [in the region](#).
- **Russia & China:** Framed as **opportunistic competitors** losing ground in Venezuela. China is described as "searching for routes" in the Arctic, while its influence in Venezuela's energy sector is being eclipsed by the U.S. [re-entry](#).
- **Sudan:** Portrayed as a **chaotic cautionary tale** of internal division and resource curses. Described as "assuming a devastating war" that has caused a "systemic collapse" [of its economy](#).

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as **strong and decisive**, using "unconventional" methods to secure U.S. interests. He is framed as the architect of the "new Venezuelan stability" [who "leaves Delcy to stabilize"](#).
- **Marco Rubio:** Characterized as **competent and strategically focused** on the energy sector. His Senate testimony is described as "genial" in how it exposed the [necessity of intervention](#).
- **Gustavo Petro:** Framed as a **principled but modern** leader with "enormous personality." However, he is implicitly seen as a figure of the past whose influence is [waning](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The administration is engaged in a high-stakes **narrative seeding** operation. The primary goal is to establish the current Rodríguez-Trump co-governance as the only path to prosperity. This is achieved by:

- **Discrediting the "Interinato":** Foreign labs and media outlets (New York Times, Reuters) are accused of "planting lies" about the internal state of [the government](#).
- **Controlled Leaks:** Information about the Amnesty Law is "accidentally" seen on WhatsApp by news anchors, humanizing the legislative process [for the public](#).
- **Psychological Operations:** The saturation of Carnival coverage creates a "reality delta"—the contrast between the extreme political shifts and the images of children playing on inflatables in Macuto works to **depoliticize the citizenry** and [reduce the likelihood of protest](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Formalization of the "Protectorate":** Venezuela will likely move toward a formal economic treaty with the U.S. that grants U.S. firms unprecedented control over the Orinoco Belt in exchange for long-term **regime security** for the Rodríguez faction.
- **Internal Factional Blowback:** The liquidation of Chavista missions will likely trigger a **clandestine insurgency** from former Maduro loyalists and collectives who view Rodríguez as a traitor. This could lead to a wave of **political assassinations** in Q3 2026.

- **Regional Rebound:** If the "Venezuela experiment" succeeds in stabilizing the economy, it will serve as a **blueprint for right-wing pivots** in neighboring countries, specifically targeting the upcoming elections in Colombia and Brazil [to marginalize the left](#).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect the **passage of the Amnesty Law** immediately following Carnival, accompanied by high-profile releases of prisoners to satiate international critics. Domestic security will remain at **maximum alert** to prevent "post-holiday" protests.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The **resumption of direct U.S. flights** and the arrival of the first wave of U.S. oil technocrats. We expect a formal summit between **Delcy Rodríguez and Donald Trump** to announce the "New Era" of cooperation.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A total **restructuring of the Venezuelan debt** and a move toward the **dollarization** of the public sector. Venezuela will likely withdraw from ALBA and rejoin the **OAS (OEA)** as a client state of the U.S. energy axis.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following risks could derail the current stabilization efforts:

- **Sovereignty Backlash:** The "State 53" narrative could trigger a nationalist uprising. **Triggers:** Formal U.S. military bases or permanent Treasury presence. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** High (civil war). **Mitigations:** Aggressive use of the "Amnesty" narrative to co-opt **patriotic sentiment**.
- **Economic "Dutch Disease" 2.0:** Total dependence on the U.S. \$100B oil injection. **Triggers:** Collapse in global oil prices. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Moderate. **Mitigations:** Diversifying into non-oil exports like **cacao and methanol** [to maintain a trade balance](#).
- **Cyber-Destabilization:** Use of "industrial scale" deepfakes to simulate a government collapse. **Triggers:** Viral video of a "second coup." **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Extreme. **Mitigations:** Investing in state-run **AI verification tools** [and centralized media messaging](#).
- **Guerrilla Ideological Resistance:** Radical Chavista factions (ELN/Collectivos) reacting to mission liquidations. **Triggers:** Arrest of a high-profile "Maduro loyalist." **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Moderate (urban terrorism). **Mitigations:** Immediate integration of moderate opposition **into security roles**.
- **Regional Contagion:** Political collapse in Peru or Colombia spillover. **Triggers:** Mass migration from neighboring states into "stabilized" Venezuela. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** High. **Mitigations:** Reinforcing **border "zones of influence"** [with binational agreements](#).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Maduro's Exact Location/Condition:** The network refers to him as "kidnapped" but provides no health update or proof of life, leaving a massive potential for **succession crises**.
- **Military Allegiances:** No mention is made of the **FANB high command's** reaction to the U.S. intervention or the presence of foreign troops, which is historically unprecedented.
- **Debt Repayment Terms:** While the "Qatar account" is mentioned, the **interest rates and collateral** details are missing, potentially masking a massive loss of national wealth.
- **Domestic Resistance Scale:** The broadcast portrays 100% occupancy and "joy," but fails to report on **empty shelves or hyperinflationary pressure** in non-tourist zones.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Delcy Trojanship":** Acting President Rodríguez is not normalizing with the U.S. but is **buying time** to allow Russian and Chinese interests to reorganize under the cover of Carnival and the Amnesty Law. The "stability" is a facade for a **re-Chavista counter-operation**.
- **The "Involuntary Protectorate":** Venezuela has already **effectively ceased to exist** as a sovereign state. The "Acting President" is a figurehead for a joint U.S.-Treasury/Defense council, and the broadcasts are **pure psychological sedation** while national assets are inventoried for sale.

- **Black Swan - The "Petro-Yuan" Coup:** A sudden collapse of the U.S. Dollar or a massive Chinese debt-call in April 2026 could force Venezuela to **repudiate the Trump agreement**, leading to a second U.S. military intervention within six months.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Intelligence agencies must monitor the "Robert Serra" and other liquidated mission cells; their dissolution is a **high-risk indicator for domestic terrorism**.
- **Economic:** Formalize the "Qatar account" transparency measures immediately to avoid accusations of **neocolonial asset stripping**.
- **Diplomatic:** Leverage the Amnesty Law to **rejoin the Inter-American Court of Human Rights** as a sign of irreversible reform.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Opportunity:** The **aviation sector** represents a primary entry point; the resumption of European flights suggests a rapid "re-opening" of the logistics hub [model](#).
- **Risk:** Supply chain resilience in the mining sector is low due to **gold informalization**; investors should wait for the new "Mining Reorganization" decree [before committing capital](#).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Closely monitor Sudeban's **Pérez González**; new banking regulations will likely be heavily influenced by U.S. AML/KYC [standards](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The current legislative agenda is focused on removing the ideological and fiscal barriers of the previous era while establishing a new "Social Contract" through amnesty and economic liberalization.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Ley de Amnistía (Amnesty Law):** A cornerstone for national reconciliation, aiming to release political prisoners and integrate moderate opposition into the [legislative process](#).
- **Ley de Hidrocarburos (Reform):** Overhauling the sector to allow "Productive Participation Contracts," effectively privatizing the risk for foreign [oil companies](#).
- **Ley de Promoción de Exportaciones (Export Promotion):** A new framework to incentivize non-oil exports via **VAT (IVA) refunds** and tax breaks [for manufacturers](#).
- **Decree 5248 (Liquidation of Missions):** Administrative action to dissolve ideological foundations and **purge the bureaucracy** [of the old guard](#).

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **William Castillo (Anti-Blockage Briefing):** Defended the "Hydrocarbons Reform" as a tool for **national survival** rather than a giveaway [to the US](#).
- **Jorge Rodríguez (Dialogue Commission):** Announced that "lies fall of their own weight" and confirmed **meetings with 19 members** of the peace commission [to discuss the transition](#).
- **Amibon Pérez González (Sudeban Presser):** Outlined the need for banking systems to support **international capital inflows** [post-sanctions](#).

KEY STORIES

- **Carnaval Seguro 2026 Operations:** Over 7,000 troops deployed in Caracas and thousands in Anzoátegui and Falcón to ensure a "peaceful" holiday [environment](#).
- **Amnesty Law Negotiations:** Detailed discussions on 28 articles to release prisoners and "turn the page" on the January 3 [conflict](#).
- **US Oil Purchase by Valero:** 6.5 million barrels of crude bought to bridge the supply gap [following Maduro's removal](#).
- **Liquidation of Chavista Missions:** Seven major foundations shuttered by decree to "reorganize" [government spending](#).
- **Mérida Sun Fair (Feria del Sol):** 55th edition reporting 100% occupancy and "unprecedented" tourism [recovery](#).
- **Sudan Gold and Conflict:** Analysis of the 80 tons of gold produced annually amidst a "devastating" [civil war](#).
- **Táchira Drug Seizure:** 567 kg of narcotics recovered after a high-speed chase involving [freight vehicles](#).
- **Peru Political Crisis:** Congress debating the removal of interim President José Jerí due to "semiclandestine" [business meetings](#).
- **Deepfake Fraud Industrialization:** UK reporting £9.4 billion in losses due to AI-generated [scams](#).
- **Storm Oriana in Spain:** Two deaths and 172 km/h winds reported [in Girona and Córdoba](#).
- **Super Bowl Bad Bunny Analysis:** Record 135 million viewers for a "Hispanoparlante" halftime show [at Super Bowl LX](#).
- **Chile Tam GPT Launch:** Development of a regional AI to fight "**Western bias**" [in technology](#).
- **Margarita Rodríguez Animal Abuse Case:** Prosecution of a woman for the "disappearance" of several [adopted cats](#).
- **Sleep Hygiene and Brain Health:** Neurological warning that lack of sleep causes the brain to ["self-devour" connections](#).
- **Guanta Port Modernization:** Administrative and structural upgrades to handle [increased maritime traffic](#).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts

that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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