

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

GLOBOVISION

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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VENEZUELA'S STRATEGIC PIVOT:
AMNESTY LEGISLATION, ENERGY
NORMALIZATION, AND THE
PRAGMATIC REALIGNMENT WITH
WASHINGTON

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 20, 2026, marks a watershed moment in Venezuelan governance, characterized by a multifaceted strategic retreat from previous isolationist postures toward a pragmatically managed "democratic coexistence." The centerpiece of this shift is the **National Assembly's unanimous approval** of the [Amnesty Law for Democratic Coexistence](#), a 16-article instrument designed to "repair wounds" from political violence dating back to 1999. While the state portrays this as a humanitarian act of reconciliation, the legislative framework maintains critical exclusions for human rights violations and crimes against humanity, suggesting a carefully calibrated process of elite protection and selective liberalization. This domestic legal maneuver coincides with a radical **re-engagement with the United States**, underscored by reports of U.S. Southern Command officials meeting with Venezuelan

leadership and the restoration of classic republican iconography—symbolized by the return of the original [Simón Bolívar portrait](#) to the Miraflores Palace.

The economic landscape is defined by a desperate rush to monetize the nation's energy reserves amid a burgeoning "new oil boom." The U.S. Treasury's [General License 50A](#) has effectively dismantled significant portions of the sanctions regime, permitting companies like **Chevron, Repsol, and Phillips 66** to expand operations. Financial data suggests a global environment where **Gold has surged to \$5,083 per ounce** and **Bitcoin holds at \$67,612**, reflecting broader international instability that Venezuela is seeking to navigate by positioning itself as a reliable energy partner. However, this normalization is transactional; public sentiment remains fraught with skepticism regarding wage stagnation and the persistence of the "law against hate," which remains a tool for potential state overreach despite the amnesty overtures.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Legislative Normalization:** The [unanimous passage](#) of the Amnesty Law aims to reintegrate political actors into the public sphere, though its implementation is delegated to a specialized commission with a strict 15-day window for judicial review.
- **Energy Diplomacy:** A significant volume of [50 million barrels of Venezuelan crude](#) is currently in transit to Houston, Texas, marking the most substantial direct energy exchange with the U.S. in years.

- **US-Venezuela Strategic Thaw:** High-level meetings between the U.S. Southern Command and Venezuelan officials—including [Delsi Rodríguez and Padrino López](#)—signal a "pragmatic turn" by the Trump administration, prioritizing regional stability and oil flow over regime change.
- **Public Health Crisis:** Despite the political "spring," the nation faces a severe [HIV/AIDS epidemic](#), with approximately 102,000 people infected and a notable prevalence of 9.6% in indigenous Guaraó populations, exacerbated by a lack of official data since 2016.
- **Regional Unrest:** Argentina is experiencing its [fourth general strike](#) against the Milei administration, contrasting with Venezuela's current state-managed "stability."

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- The emergence of **Delcy Rodríguez** as "Presidenta Encargada" (Acting President) suggests a transitional phase in the executive branch, while **Diosdado Cabello** continues to lead the "Judicial Revolution" commission, indicating a power-sharing arrangement among the ruling elite [to manage the transition](#).
- The restoration of the **classic portrait of Bolívar**, replacing the "Chavista-era" version, is a potent symbolic gesture intended to signal a return to traditional republicanism and national unity [at the highest levels](#).

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- Venezuela is leveraging the **Geneva Agreement's 60th anniversary** to harden its stance on the Essequibo, criticizing Guyana for "mocking international law" and using [new diplomatic aggressiveness](#) to secure maritime exits.
- Engagement with **Jordan** via a new tourism memorandum suggests a strategy of diversifying international partners while the U.S. relationship [undergoes fundamental restructuring](#).

Energy & Macroeconomics

- Refinery operations in Amuay and Cardón have [increased by 20-25%](#) year-over-year, yet the country still requires nafta imports from the U.S. to dilute its extra-heavy crude.
- The central bank (BCV) is maintaining an exchange rate of [402.33 bolívares per dollar](#), a figure that highlights persistent inflationary pressures despite the increase in FX sales to the public.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Managed Transition Narrative

- State media is carefully constructing a narrative of "necessary forgiveness" to de-escalate social tension. The [amnesty law](#) is framed not as a concession of weakness, but as a "step of maturity" following the "unprecedented aggression" of early 2026. This suggests the government is using the law to buy social peace and institutional legitimacy without fully dismantling the repressive legal apparatus.

Technological Sovereignty vs. Human Control

- A burgeoning debate over **Artificial Intelligence** governance is evident, with Venezuelan state media echoing UN calls for "human control" over AI. This is likely a defensive posture against information warfare, as evidenced by concerns over [WhatsApp security and Telegram's refusal](#) to share user data, framing tech giants as potential threats to national sovereignty.

The Commodity Super-Cycle Hedge

- With **Gold at historic highs** and the U.S. dollar facing internal scrutiny from the Trump administration's "Peace Board" spending, Venezuela is positioning its **oil and rare earth minerals** (coltán, diamonds) as the ultimate collateral for a "special loan" from the U.S. [being considered by Trump](#).

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The Venezuelan state is in a state of fragile equilibrium. The **unanimous approval** of the Amnesty Law by both the "Patria" bloc and the "Libertad" opposition bloc [signals a temporary cessation](#) of open hostilities within the National Assembly. However, this consensus is built on thin ice; the exclusion of human rights abuses from the amnesty means many high-profile detainees remain in legal limbo. Public sentiment, as reflected in viewer messages, is shifting from political fatigue to economic desperation, with [demands for a minimum wage increase](#) to at least \$200 per month. The government's ability to maintain order is increasingly tied to its success in rapidly converting oil production into liquid cash for public sector salaries, a process

hampered by [lack of long-term financing](#) and a decaying electricity grid that requires an estimated \$30 billion in immediate investment.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Globally, Venezuela is navigating a world it perceives as transitioning into a "new order" dominated by **Donald Trump's isolationist pragmatism**. The broadcast frames the U.S. not as a crusader for democracy, but as a [transactional superpower](#) that has abandoned ideological opposition in favor of energy security and regional stability. This shift has allowed Venezuela to re-assert its claim over the Essequibo, framing its dispute with Guyana as a battle against "unilateral pretensions" and [British colonial vestiges](#). The state is projecting itself as a "reliable partner" that has survived a military aggression and is now ready for a "coexistence" where **U.S. companies operate alongside state firms** under a modernized Hydrocarbons Law [intended to attract \\$100 billion](#) in total investment.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic environment is characterized by a "survival-to-growth" pivot, though structural risks remain severe. Inflation is being managed via aggressive FX interventions by the Banco de Venezuela, but the **lack of credit** and **legal uncertainty** in the real estate sector has led to an "inventory limited" market where prices rise on

perception rather than actual closures [at the registers](#).

- **Energy Prices:** WTI at \$66.44, Brent at \$71.71. Venezuelan heavy crude is being heavily discounted despite increased U.S. demand [in the markets](#).
- **Commodities:** Gold at \$5,083/oz; Silver at \$82.75/oz; Gas Natural at \$3.13 [per unit](#).
- **Crypto-Assets:** Bitcoin \$67,612; Ethereum \$1,967; Binance Coin \$624.30 [market value](#).
- **Tourism Economy:** Carnival 2026 saw a 7% increase in supermarket visits and a 41% surge in electronic transactions compared to 2025, with [7.4 million total travelers](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Personnel shifts and symbolic restorations indicate a significant reorganization of the Venezuelan power structure toward a "Post-Chavista" pragmatism.

- **Delcy Rodríguez:** Elevated to "Presidenta Encargada," she is the primary face of the [Amnesty Law](#) and U.S. negotiations, suggesting she is the designated successor or lead negotiator for the regime's survival strategy.
- **Jorge Arriaza:** Appointed to lead the [Amnesty Commission](#), signaling his return to a central administrative and conciliatory role.
- **The Old Guard (Padrino López/Cabello):** Remain in control of defense and the "Judicial Revolution," ensuring the military and security apparatus remains loyal during the [liberalization phase](#).

- **Xavier Milei (Argentina):** Facing critical stability risks as labor unions challenge his [labor deregulation reforms](#), providing a regional counter-example to Venezuela's managed peace.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

Globovisión's hierarchy is dominated by state-sponsored "reconciliation" messaging. The Amnesty Law and Delcy Rodríguez's speeches received nearly continuous coverage, framed in **reassuring and nationalistic tones**. The network conspicuously minimizes the ongoing humanitarian crisis, burying the **HIV/AIDS epidemic** and **indigenous mortality** beneath sports results and technical segments on AI. The editorial line is clear: focus on the "new oil boom" and the "American pivot" to generate a sense of economic hope, while dismissing domestic opposition as "radicals" who "cannot look in a mirror" [during political debates](#). There is a conspicuous omission of the actual conditions in prisons and the fate of those excluded from the amnesty.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The day's coverage reflects a world defined by the collapse of traditional ideological blocs and the rise of raw resource-based diplomacy.

COUNTRIES

- **United States:** Portrayed as a "pragmatic foe turned reluctant partner." The Trump administration is seen as competent but transactional, willing to sacrifice "regime change" for [50 million barrels of oil](#).
- **Guyana:** Framed as a "proxy" and "bully" that uses colonial-era agreements to rob Venezuela of its [maritime sovereignty](#).

- **Argentina:** Depicted as chaotic and unstable, an "oscurantista" (obscurantist) government leading its people to "labor slavery" [through reforms](#).

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as strong and decisive, a leader who "rules by his own hand" and has successfully bypassed the "Washington establishment" to [deal directly with Caracas](#).
- **Delcy Rodríguez:** Framed as a principled professional, a "professional of the law" who is showing "grandeur" by [requesting and granting forgiveness](#).
- **Prince Andrew:** Depicted as a corrupt and "detained" figure, used as a cautionary tale of elite decay in the [European system](#).

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Repsol & Chevron:** Framed as opportunistic and eager partners whose re-entry into Venezuela is the [catalyst for the new economy](#).
- **The UN (Antonio Guterres):** Portrayed as reactive and weak, seeking "commissions" for AI while the real power [rests with sovereign states](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The government is aggressively seeding the "Democratic Coexistence" narrative to preempt any potential social explosion linked to inflation. By using the word "forgiveness" [repeatedly](#), they shift the burden of conflict onto the opposition, framing any dissent as "hate."

- **Selective Leaks:** The "primicia" (scoop) regarding a potential U.S. loan of [\\$750 million](#) appears to be a state-authorized leak to stabilize the currency and manage expectations regarding future wage hikes.
- **Censorship by Inclusion:** By including the "Patria" and "Libertad" blocs in the [amnesty discussion](#), the network creates an illusion of total consensus, ignoring the non-parliamentary opposition and those who view the law as a "whitewashing" of past crimes.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **The "Amnesty Trap":** The law will lead to the release of mid-level activists, but the specialized commission will use the "crimes against humanity" exclusion to keep key opposition leaders in prison or in exile, ensuring the ruling party maintains control of the 2026 electoral landscape [via judicial veto](#).
- **The Oil-for-Leniency Deal:** A formal agreement with the U.S. is imminent, likely involving a "debt-for-equity" swap where U.S. firms take direct control of Venezuelan oil fields in exchange for [debt cancellation](#) and a massive cash injection.
- **Social Fracture over Wages:** If the oil revenue does not translate into a wage increase [by Q3 2026](#), the "peace" will collapse, leading to an Argentina-style general strike that the current amnesty overtures will be unable to contain.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a wave of high-profile prisoner releases and the formalization of the Amnesty Commission's

first findings. Domestic markets may see a temporary bolívar stabilization as the U.S. loan rumors [gain traction](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months): Re-opening of the U.S. Embassy in Caracas and a flurry of new drilling licenses. The "Law Against Hate" may be selectively [reformed but not repealed](#), maintaining a chilling effect on digital discourse.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A structural realignment where Venezuela exits the Russian/Chinese orbit in favor of a "Special Energy Relationship" with the U.S., potentially leading to a constitutional reform that enshrines this new "coexistence" **at the cost of genuine pluralism**.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current path toward stabilization is fraught with systemic risks that could derail the fragile consensus between Caracas and Washington.

- **Hyper-Inflationary Surge:** A sudden collapse in oil prices or failure to secure the U.S. loan could trigger a currency devaluation beyond 1,000 bolívars/USD. **Triggers:** Global recession, OPEC quotas. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Critical destabilization. **Mitigations:** Immediate \$200 minimum wage [pegged to the dollar](#).
- **Essequibo Military Escalation:** Defensive postures by Guyana and British allies could lead to a skirmish. **Triggers:** Guyana granting new licenses in disputed waters. **Likelihood:** Low. **Impact:** Severe regional conflict. **Mitigations:** UN-mediated [maritime delimitation](#).

- **Judicial Backlash:** The "Judicial Revolution" commission could block amnesty cases, triggering a return to civil unrest. **Triggers:** Refusal to release key figures like those from the [2016-2021 Assembly](#). **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Collapse of the coexistence deal.
- **Public Health Catastrophe:** The HIV/AIDS epidemic could become uncontrollable, leading to a humanitarian intervention. **Triggers:** Total stock-out of antirretrovirals [in public hospitals](#). **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Regional biosecurity threat.
- **AI Cybersecurity Breach:** State systems could be paralyzed by non-state actors targeting the "Judicial Revolution" database. **Triggers:** Ransomware attack [on government servers](#). **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Operational paralysis.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The broadcast fails to detail the **precise criteria for the "crimes against humanity" exclusion** in the Amnesty Law, which is the ultimate tool for political filtering.
- There is no discussion of the **health status of Nicolás Maduro**, whose absence from the most critical symbolic events—replaced by Delcy Rodríguez—is highly irregular [in a regime so centered on personality](#).
- The origins and terms of the [proposed \\$750 million U.S. loan](#) are unverified and lack any mention of congressional approval in Washington.
- The **environmental impact of the "new oil boom"** is completely ignored, despite the use of U.S. nafta and heavy crude processing [near populated areas](#).

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Potemkin Peace": The entire amnesty and U.S. realignment is a temporary "mask" designed to unlock immediate cash to fund a massive state-led crackdown in late 2026. The government is not reconciling; it is **refinancing its repressive capacity** while using the U.S. as a shield [against domestic rivals](#).

The "Trump Exit Plan": The \$750 million loan and the "Peace Board" are actually bribes intended to secure a **safe exit for the Venezuelan ruling elite** to a third country, with the Amnesty Law serving as the domestic legal "pardon" for their remaining supporters [to avoid a bloodbath](#).

Black Swan Event: A total collapse of the Venezuelan power grid during the amnesty implementation leads to a **spontaneous mass migration** into the Essequibo, forcing a military confrontation that neither Caracas nor Georgetown intended [to manage](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Prepare for a potential internal rift within the military if the "pragmatic turn" with the U.S. is seen as a betrayal of sovereignty [by middle-ranking officers](#).
- **Economic:** Formalize the \$200 minimum wage hike immediately to stabilize the labor force [before inflation erodes](#) the amnesty's psychological gains.
- **Diplomatic:** Use the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Agreement to propose a shared resource management zone in the Essequibo [to de-escalate tensions](#).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Closely monitor the specialized Amnesty Commission; its rulings will be the primary indicator of the [actual legal risk](#) for foreign nationals and former political actors.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Diversify energy inputs; the reliance on U.S. nafta for heavy crude dilution [is a single point of failure](#) if U.S. domestic politics shift again.
- **Capital Allocation:** Real estate in the Miranda region (Cristóbal Rojas) shows signs of speculative activity; wait for [legal reforms on mortgages](#) before large-scale entry.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The National Assembly passed the **Amnesty Law for Democratic Coexistence**, while the executive branch signed several international memorandums and managed the deployment of **General License 50A**. Public debate focused on the **Law Against Hate** and the **Hydrocarbons Law**, both of which are slated for further reform.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Amnesty Law for Democratic Coexistence:** A 16-article law approved unanimously [by 277 deputies](#) to grant pardon for political crimes since 1999, excluding grave human rights violations.
- **Hydrocarbons Law Reform:** Legislative changes aimed at lowering oil taxes from 50% to 34% to attract [private investment](#).
- **Law Against Hate:** Discussed for potential reform to align with the [new "coexistence" framework](#).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Delcy Rodríguez Amnesty Signing:** A Miraflores event where the acting president called for [national "desprendimiento"](#) (detachment) from intolerance.
- **U.S. Southern Command Briefing:** Informal reports of high-level security talks [in Caracas](#).
- **Amnesty Commission Installation:** Led by Jorge Arriaza at the [Palacio Federal Legislativo](#).

KEY STORIES

- **Amnesty Law Passage:** The National Assembly unanimously passed the "Amnesty Law for Democratic Coexistence" with 16 articles [aimed at reconciliation](#).
- **The 50-Million-Barrel Shipment:** Donald Trump confirmed the transit of 50 million barrels of Venezuelan crude to [Houston, Texas](#).
- **US Southern Command in Caracas:** U.S. military officials met with Delsi Rodríguez and [Vladimir Padrino López](#).
- **The Bolívar Portrait Restoration:** The classic portrait of Simón Bolívar was returned to its place in Miraflores, replacing the [Chavista digital recreation](#).
- **HIV/AIDS Epidemic Data:** NGO reports indicate 102,000 Venezuelans live with HIV, with 7,334 [new cases in 2024](#).
- **Argentina General Strike:** A 90% compliance strike against the Milei government [turned violent in Buenos Aires](#).
- **Essequibo Geneva Anniversary:** Venezuela marks 60 years of the Geneva Agreement by [hardening its stance against Guyana](#).
- **U.S. \$750 Million Loan Scoop:** Reports filter out that Trump is considering a [special loan for Venezuela](#).
- **UN AI Commission:** Antonio Guterres announced a new body to analyze AI control [following a summit in India](#).
- **Oil Production Increases:** Venezuelan refineries see a 20-25% jump in operations [to 450,000 barrels daily](#).
- **Prince Andrew Investigation:** French and British authorities are investigating [the former prince](#) for inappropriate conduct linked to the Epstein case.
- **South Korean Ex-President Condemnation:** Former leader John sentenced to life for [declaring martial law](#).
- **Peru Presidential Transition:** 83-year-old José María Balcázar takes office [amid corruption allegations](#).
- **Sudan Genocide Warning:** UN investigators alert of possible genocide [in Alfasher](#).
- **Venezuelan Basketball Agreement:** The basketball federation signs an agreement with the [Ministry of Education](#).
- **NBA Action:** Spurs win 7th straight; Celtics beat Warriors; [Clippers top Nuggets](#).
- **Premio Lo Nuestro 2026:** Paloma San Basilio and Juanes honored in [Miami](#).
- **Toy Story 5 Trailer:** Pixar releases the first trailer for the movie [due in June](#).
- **Margarita Island Tourism:** Plans announced for the "Saca al Pecho Fest" in [April 2026](#).
- **Franciscan Jubilee:** 800 years of St. Francis of Assisi celebrated [globally](#).
- **Family Mediation Trends:** Lawyers discuss the rise of alternative [conflict resolution in Caracas](#).

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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