

VENEZUELA
SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela establishes that communication in the country must be free and with a plurality of voices. Although compliance with this has been violated by the government itself, it is an important reference for any process in defense of this right. Social media activity, although threatened and sometimes penalized, still allows citizens to share criticism on the government. Journalists and companies penalized by the regime continue reporting in the digital sphere, facing, however, blockings and challenges to sustainability.
WEAKNESSES	Violence against journalists has included homicides, imprisonment, and arbitrary judicial processes. Censorship and self-censorship in the country, in the form of direct and indirect instruments of control over the media, keep the media docile and weak. Journalists do not enjoy minimum guarantees for coverage and critical media professionals are not granted access to official sources. Citizen's demonstrations barely revolve around issues regarding freedom of expression as Venezuelans suffer from a serious economic and social crisis that keeps their attention busy to a great extent.
OPPORTUNITIES	Investigative journalism has overcome obstacles and unveiled corruption schemes that reach beyond public opinion in digital media. Independent journalism initiatives have overcome blockades thanks to technology alternatives that have been disseminated among the public, but also due to the efforts in favor of face-to-face communication and the use of direct messaging between said initiatives and users. Information about what is happening in Venezuela crosses borders and allows gathering international support in favor of freedom of expression. Journalists' fact-checking initiatives have raised awareness of the anti-democratic effects of disinformation in the country through information posted on websites and digital literacy campaigns.
THREATS	Communication is still in the crosshairs of the Executive. The opposition and even moderately pro-government media are still monitored by national, provincial, and local authorities. Unceasing statements by spokespersons of the branches of the government against social media activity suggest that actions will continue to silence citizens and journalists who disseminate information and opinions on issues deemed sensitive for the regime of Nicolás Maduro. The regulations that have turned the National Telecommunications Commission (Conatel) into a ideology-based political operator remain unquestionable. The possibility of further seizure measures and arbitrary media shutdowns remains open, also, by means of a recent regulation governing the registration of NGOs.

