

**ALVARO  
YBARRA ZAVALA**

**1984 - Venezuela**  
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# ALVARO YBARRA ZAVALA

## 1984 - Venezuela

*1984 - Venezuela* est un document sur l'héritage du président Hugo Chávez Frías et de sa révolution bolivarienne, à ses débuts une source d'inspiration pour les citoyens les plus défavorisés d'Amérique latine, mais désormais l'un des régimes les plus oppressifs de l'histoire de la région.

Lorsque Hugo Chávez a lancé sa révolution, ses partisans rêvaient d'une Amérique latine plus juste, plus libre, offrant davantage d'opportunités à chacun. Cette révolution s'adressait à des sociétés où les changements radicaux n'avaient jamais été obtenus autrement que par la lutte armée.

Mais avec le temps, le rêve s'est brisé. La révolution est devenue son propre ennemi juré, se transformant en ce qu'elle avait autrefois critiqué: une dictature. Ce récit photographique témoigne de la défaite de cette révolution et montre également les aspirations à la réconciliation qui émergent au sein de la société vénézuélienne.

Je travaille dans ce pays depuis dix ans, et lors de mes derniers séjours j'ai constaté qu'il était au bord de l'effondrement. Vingt ans après que Chávez a engagé sa révolution bolivarienne, le Venezuela est un État en déliquescence. Le mouvement chaviste et les promesses

d'une société plus égalitaire et plus juste sont un lointain souvenir. Aujourd'hui, la séparation des pouvoirs n'existe plus, et les droits fondamentaux des membres de la société civile sont constamment bafoués.

Le pays s'écroule sous la pression de la crise économique. En 2016, l'inflation s'élevait à 500 %, et selon le FMI devrait atteindre 1 000 000 % en 2019. Le pays souffre de graves pénuries de produits de première nécessité et de médicaments. Le système de santé s'est effondré et l'insécurité et la violence ont atteint des niveaux sans précédent. L'ONG Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia fait état de 28 479 meurtres en 2016, soit 91,8 homicides pour 100 000 habitants.

L'opposition a été tenue en échec par le régime, et à l'ère de Nicolás Maduro la persécution politique est une réalité. Depuis que l'héritier de Chávez est arrivé au pouvoir en 2013, la violence à l'encontre des opposants a explosé. Selon l'organisation vénézuélienne de défense des droits de l'homme Foro Penal, il y a actuellement 795 prisonniers politiques, dont 103 sans procédure formelle.

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LIEU D'EXPOSITION  
**COUVENT DES MINIMES**

↑ Des membres d'un gang surveillent leur quartier d'un poste stratégique, hors de portée de la police. Le gang m'a autorisé à prendre des photos à certains checkpoints à condition de ne divulguer ni leurs identités ni la situation géographique des lieux.  
Caracas, Venezuela, septembre 2015.

© Alvaro Ybarra Zavala

Members of a criminal gang keeping watch over their neighborhood from a strategic position out of reach of the police. The gang allowed me to take photographs at certain checkpoints provided that I did not reveal their identities and the geographical locations.  
Caracas, Venezuela, September 2015.

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## 1984 - Venezuela

The project "1984" documents the legacy of President Hugo Chávez Frías and his Bolivarian Revolution, once a source of inspiration for the most disadvantaged citizens in Latin America, but which, today, has become one of the most oppressive dictatorships in the history of the region. When Hugo Chávez launched his revolution, his supporters saw the dream of a fairer, freer Latin America, offering greater opportunities for people from all backgrounds. This was to be a revolution for societies that had only ever known armed struggle as a means of effecting dramatic change. With time, the people woke from that dream. The revolution had become its own worst enemy, changing into what it had once criticized: a totalitarian revolution. Here is a visual record of the revolution in Venezuela, seeing how it came undone, and also showing aspirations for reconciliation within Venezuelan society.

I have been working in Venezuela for a decade, and on recent visits have seen the country on the verge of collapse. Twenty years after Chávez launched the Bolivarian Revolution, Venezuela is a failed state. The Chavista movement and the promises of a more egalitarian and just society are long

gone. In Venezuela today, the separation of powers has collapsed, and the fundamental rights of members of civil society are constantly being violated.

The country is falling apart under the pressure of the economic crisis. In 2016 inflation was at 500%, and in 2019, according to the IMF, will reach 1,000,000%. There are acute shortages of basic commodities and medical supplies. The health system has collapsed, and insecurity and violence are at unprecedented levels. The NGO Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia (OVV) registered 28,479 murders in 2016, i.e. 91.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

The political opposition has been kept in check by the regime, and under the government of Nicolás Maduro, political persecution is a reality. Since Maduro, the political heir of Hugo Chávez, took power in 2013, political violence targeting the opposition has soared. According to the Venezuelan human rights organization Foro Penal, there are currently 795 political prisoners, and 103 of them without any formal proceedings.

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EXHIBITION VENUE  
**COUVENT DES MINIMES**

↑ Juan Carlos et un de ses fils fouillent les ordures à la recherche de quelques légumes. Juan Carlos est maçon, mais sans emploi et sans ressources, il peine à nourrir sa famille.

Caracas, Venezuela, juin 2016.

© Alvaro Ybarra Zavala

Juan Carlos and one of his children searching through trash for vegetables. Juan Carlos is a bricklayer, but is now unemployed and has no money to feed his family.

Caracas, Venezuela, June 2016.

© Alvaro Ybarra Zavala



Alvaro Ybarra Zavala (Born in 1979) is a Spanish photographer who has reported on conflicts across the world: Iraq, Darfur, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Myanmar, Sudan, Georgia, the Central African Republic and more. With political unrest in Latin America, he spent 16 years covering the war in Colombia as featured in his "*Macondo*" project. Other issues include genetically modified food, rising powers in India and China, the tragic legacy of the AIDS epidemic in South East Asia and the tumultuous presidential elections in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Serbia. In addition to devastation wreaked by humans, Alvaro Ybarra Zavala has catalogued natural disasters, e.g. earthquake in Haiti, and tsunami in Banda Aceh and Sri Lanka. As a boy he was inspired by his grandfather who was an amateur photographer, and thus grew up with a camera in his hands. He was only 19 when he embarked on his career as a photographer, and the only formal

training he has had over the two decades he has been working has been from the World Press Photo Foundation when selected for the Joop Swart Masterclass in 2009.

Alvaro Ybarra Zavala endeavors to understand human beings and the world, with photography as an obsessive quest to learn from different values and cultures. He wants his photographs to trigger inner dialogue, offering prospects for mutual understanding and hope for the future. He has worked extensively with a variety of human rights organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN Refugee Agency. Exhibitions include the Royal Albert Hall, London, Visa pour l'Image-Perpignan, and the United Nations in both New York and Geneva. He collaborated with the film director Hany Abu-Assad for "*The Mountain Between Us*," and has published five books.

Depuis la mort du président Hugo Chávez, le culte de la déesse Maria Lionza revêt souvent une dimension politique.  
Caracas, Venezuela, mars 2013.  
© Alvaro Ybarra Zavala  
Since the death of President Hugo Chávez, the ritual of worshipping the goddess Maria Lionza is often political.  
Caracas, Venezuela, March 2013.  
© Alvaro Ybarra Zavala

PRESS PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE  
*Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *L'Espresso*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Le Monde*.

AWARDS INCLUDE  
Photographers Giving Back, Visa Pour l'Image-Perpignan, POYi and the 2010 Olivier Rebbot Award (Overseas Press Club of America).

Alvaro Ybarra Zavala teaches photography at university level, and is director of an audiovisual production company. He currently has three main bases: Madrid, Bogota, and London.  
Alvaro Ybarra Zavala, freelance photographer, represented by Getty Images (previously by Agence Vu).