

Nobel Ceremony Brings Machado Back Into Public View After Year Underground

Mariangel Garcia Seijas



Credits: Kevin Payravi, Wiki Commons

Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado appears in Oslo during the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony after a year in hiding; her daughter delivered the official acceptance speech on her behalf. Machado has remained out of public view since January 2025, after facing increasing pressure from Venezuelan authorities.

Why she could not speak herself?

María Corina Machado was unable to deliver the Nobel Peace Prize speech in Oslo due to a combination of security and logistical challenges. The increasing political persecution in Venezuela, and traveling publicly posed serious personal risks. Her clandestine exit from the country and the difficulties of reaching Norway safely in time made it impossible for her to attend the December 10 ceremony. The Nobel Institute released an audio message in which Machado explained she was still in route to Oslo and thanked those who “risked their lives” to help her travel. The audio was posted on the Nobel Institute’s official website as part of the coverage of the award and Machado’s journey.

What the prize represents?

The Nobel Peace Prize, awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, honors individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to peace, human rights, and the promotion of democracy. In awarding the 2025 prize to María Corina Machado, the Committee highlighted her persistent efforts to advance democratic rights in Venezuela despite living in hiding for over a year, while also placing international focus on the ongoing challenges faced by Venezuelans under authoritarian rule.

Jørgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, highlighted the democratic significance of María Corina Machado's Nobel Peace Prize. He described it as “more than a recognition for Venezuelans; it is a statement in favour of democracy itself,” and said it underscores the courage of those who refuse to be silenced while recognizing Machado's struggle and affirming global respect for the fight for democracy.

Who attended?

Latin American leaders attending the ceremony, including the presidents of Argentina, Panama, Ecuador, and Paraguay, publicly expressed support, framing the award as a signal of solidarity with Venezuela's democratic opposition. Argentine President Javier Milei said, “Argentina is on the right side of history... in favor of peace and freedom,” while Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino called her “a symbol of the tenacious struggle against dictatorship.” Venezuelan opposition figure Edmundo González Urrutia also attended, showing solidarity. Venezuelan musician Danny Ocean and pianist Gabriela Montero performed, showcasing Venezuelan cultural identity.

What was said in the speech ?

Speaking through her daughter María Corina Machado said the award was a powerful reminder that “democracy is essential for peace,” stressing that the struggle of Venezuelans carries lessons for the world. She dedicated the prize to the Venezuelan people, describing it as recognition of their collective courage and perseverance in the face of authoritarian rule. Machado told the audience that defending freedom requires sacrifice and determination, and emphasized that the Nobel Prize is not an endpoint but a renewed call to continue the fight for democracy, both in Venezuela and globally.

How did the world react?

In an interview, Orlando Verde, representative of the Venezuelan diaspora, highlighted reactions to María Corina Machado receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and her public reappearance in Oslo after a year underground. He said Venezuelans' initial surprise quickly turned to understanding, seeing the prize as a reminder of their struggle and a symbol of hope. "For us, the prize reassures that our fight continues," he said, when many had given up after years of hardship. Verde added that international audiences, less familiar with Venezuela, struggled to understand her selection due to expectations and polarized views. He described the prize as "a metaphor for a larger fight" and a call for both Venezuelans and the global community to defend democratic values. He also encouraged Venezuelans abroad to share their experiences, noting that first-hand testimonials serve as a key communication channel. Additionally, reflecting on Machado's presence in Oslo, Verde said seeing her greet supporters after a year in hiding was a moment of celebration, one that will be repeated when she returns to Venezuela.



Credits: Kevin Payravi, Wiki Commons