

The Venezuelan

RECLAIMING
COMMUNES PT. 4/6

Communes

Image: Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro marches with youth from the country's communes in Caracas. Prensa Presidencial.



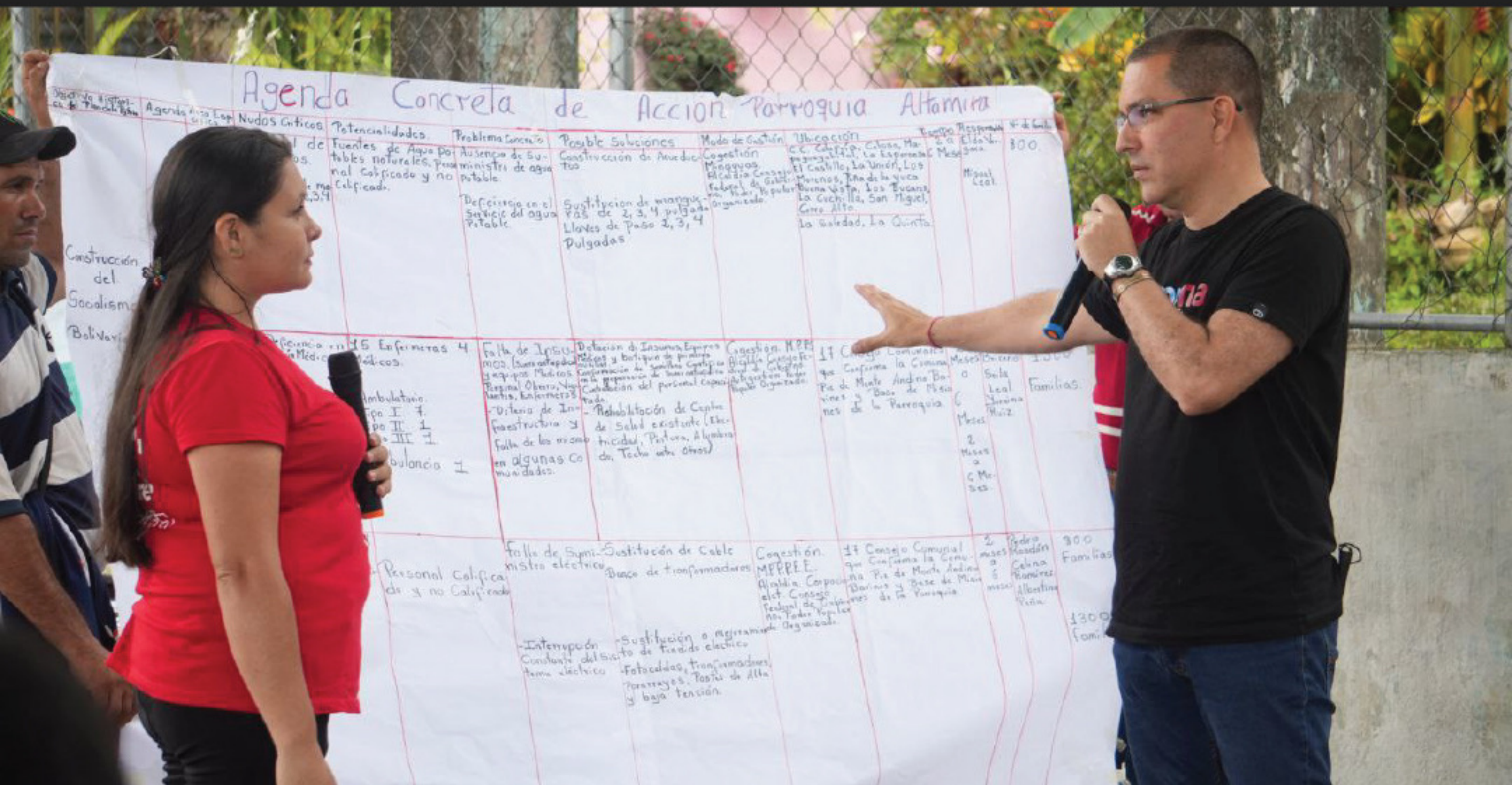
In 1998, **Hugo Chávez** won the presidential election in Venezuela, advancing a popular process known as the Bolivarian Revolution. Under Chávez's leadership, **the Venezuelan state was re-purposed to support people's efforts for building a new society →**



Communal Councils

In 2006, **Chávez adopted the Law of Communal Councils**, leading to the expansion of councils across Venezuela.

Each communal council is **responsible for meeting the needs of its people through democratic resource allocation and production**. This is done through popular assemblies, in which the community (50 to 100 families in rural areas or 200 to 400 families in urban areas) participate in the planning process.



Popular Protagonism

Once democratic plans have been established, they're operationalised through an **Agenda for Concrete Action**, which contains an overview of each family's needs, the corresponding solutions, the people responsible for implementing them, and a progress update.

From decision-making to action, **communal councils are designed to build people's popular protagonism** – the capacity to exercise agency over one's own livelihood.

Cells of Socialism

Over time, communal councils have merged into larger communes, enabling higher levels of coordination.



El Panal Commune

El Panal Commune is situated in the working-class 23 de Enero Barrio, a neighborhood in the capital city Caracas. A stronghold of the Bolivarian Revolution, El Panal has been transformed from a *barrio* of wooden structures, free-flowing sewage, and rampant police violence to a commune with concrete-and-brick homes, modern sanitation, public services, and local industry, such as its own textile factory.

In 2009, the Bolivarian Revolution officially adopted the goal of **building “socialism based on the commune as its basic cell,” paving the way to a “communal state.”**



Communal Anti-Imperialism

In 2015, the Obama administration designated Venezuela as an “unusual and extraordinary threat,” leading to the imposition of over 1,000 sanctions and the international coordination of restrictive measures, such as the Bank of England’s illegal seizure of Venezuela’s gold.

Denied access to international credit markets and vital consumer goods, the communes became an essential means for social provisioning →



Che Guevara Commune

Located in the Venezuelan Andes, the Che Guevara Commune specialises in the production of cocoa and coffee. After US sanctions led to runaway inflation and shortages in medicine and food, communards created the *cafeto* – a currency linked to a kilogram of coffee – as an alternative means of economic credit. This helped stabilise the commune's economy and ensure access to vital commodities.



Venezuela Under Attack

On January 3rd 2026, the US launched a military strike on Venezuela, abducting President Nicolás Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores.

Since then, Acting President Delcy Rodríguez and other key figures in the Bolivarian leadership have made painful concessions to the US, including a recent deal that gives the US control over 17 Venezuelan oil fields worth a combined 65 billion barrels of oil.



With the Bolivarian government in a strategically compromised position, **the communes will be forced to increase their defense of Venezuelan sovereignty, internationalism, and socialism.**

For example, popular movements, including the Alexis Vive Patriotic Force of the El Panal Commune, pressured the government to retract its March statement on the war on Iran, which failed to identify the US and Israel as the perpetrators of the military aggression.



“...the commune is and always will be anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist, and in support of the self-determination of peoples, with a vision of how resources and community life should be organized, [and] the full exercise of our sovereignty...”

– Andy Hernández, *member of the 5 de Marzo Comandante Eterno Commune*