

As his country grapples with hyperinflation, civil unrest and shortages, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has announced an ambitious 100-day plan to plant 12 million square kilometers (4.6 million square miles) of crops in urban and semi-urban environments.

Maduro is holding on to power after his party lost significantly in December's parliamentary elections, and opposition leader Leopoldo López remains in detention.

On Sunday, the president called on the country to "cultivate everything we consume with our own hands to break the petrol rentierism", referring to Venezuela's lack of income due to falling oil prices which account for 96% of its foreign exchange.

He made the announcement after assigning the task of food production to the armed forces with a program to plan 479,569 hectares across military installations.

In contrast, Venezuelan producers complain they cannot receive the exchange currency necessary to buy the primary inputs necessary to grow in the country, with debts to foreign suppliers reaching US\$12 billion.

Venezuela's shortage currently affects two thirds of basic products, with inflation of 180.9% recorded last year.

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