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VENEZUELA WOMEN AND GIRLS' RIGHTS DEFENDER IS FREE

Venezuelan teacher and human rights defender Vannesa Rosales was released on 21 July 2021 after spending nine months detained, six of which under house arrest. She was criminalized for her work as a defender of sexual and reproductive rights in Venezuela. During the preliminary hearing held on 21 July, the court dismissed the prosecution and closed the case against Vannesa.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

In October 2020, Vannesa Rosales responded to a request for support from a woman and her 13-year-old daughter. The girl was her student and had been raped by a man from her neighbourhood, which had resulted in pregnancy. In a previous medical consultation, the girl's mother had been warned that the pregnancy put her daughter's life at risk.

Vannesa was arrested on 12 October 2020, being charged with induction to abortion, conspiracy, and criminal association. Since 11 January 2021, she was held under house arrest, awaiting a preliminary hearing for over six months.

Since her arrest, Venezuelan and international NGOs like 100%Estrógeno and Women's Link have campaigned tirelessly on Vannesa's behalf. One week after Amnesty International issued an urgent action demanding the hearing take place and the case against Vannesa be dropped, the hearing was held and Vannesa was released with the case against her closed and no charges against her pending.

Vannesa's detention occurs in a context of systematic repression and criminalization of human rights defenders in Venezuela. The harassment and stigmatization against those who carry out this work in the country are constant and many are the target of reprisals such as threats, public stigmatization, arbitrary detentions, and attacks on their physical integrity.

Amnesty International will continue campaigning for the protection of human rights defenders in Venezuela, as well as for the advancement of sexual and reproductive rights in the country, which are currently some of the most restricted in all of Latin America.