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## **ARGENTINA**

### **DROP CHARGES AGAINST THREE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS**

Nahuel Morandini, Roque Villegas, and Lucía González face legal action merely for sharing their satirical views on a public figure online. Morandini and Villegas were detained for 54 days due to their posts on X and Facebook and are awaiting trial. González is charged over a remark she made within a private WhatsApp group. We are calling for the immediate dismissal of all charges against them.

**Given the international obligations of the Argentine State to respect, protect and guarantee human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, write to the Public Prosecutor urging him to:**

- Drop the charges against Nahuel Morandini, Roque Villegas and Lucía González as these stems solely from their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

**Write to:**

Public Prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Jujuy  
Mr. Walter Rondón.

Email: [wrondon@mpajujuy.gob.ar](mailto:wrondon@mpajujuy.gob.ar)

Salutation: *Dear Mr. Prosecutor:*

**And copy:**

Her Excellency Maria Josefina Martinez Gramuglia  
Ambassador

Embassy of the Argentine Republic

81 Metcalfe Street, 7th Floor

Ottawa, ON K1P 6K7

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### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

On January 4, 2024, authorities in Jujuy Province arrested Nahuel Morandini, an engineer and teacher. His arrest followed a complaint by Tulia Snopek, the wife of Jujuy's former governor, Gerardo Morales. The issue arose from Morandini's social media post on X (formerly Twitter) about an alleged affair involving a singer. Similarly, Roque Villegas, a 42-year-old silk-screen printer, was arrested for his related Facebook posts.

The charges against them include "*aggravated psychological injuries due to gender violence*" and "*identity suppression*" of Morales' minor daughter, with potential prison sentences up to eight years. Both the Provincial Women's Council and Morales are plaintiffs in this case.

Lucía González also faced legal trouble for a WhatsApp group comment on the matter. Although her arrest warrant was canceled by the court, the investigation continues, with a possible two to six-year imprisonment.

The legal basis for these charges is Article 139, paragraph 2, of the National Penal Code, focusing on altering a minor's identity. However, the defense argues that social media posts cannot alter a minor's identity, especially since the posts did not mention the child's identity. Moreover, the treatment of Morandini and Villegas in detention has led to allegations of inhumane conditions, prompting a complaint by the National Committee against Torture.

This case raises significant concerns about freedom of expression and the potential for a chilling effect on public discourse. Amnesty International has highlighted ongoing human rights issues in Jujuy, including violent police actions during protests in June 2023, arbitrary detentions, and a general reluctance among victims to report abuses due to fear of retaliation. This situation underscores the urgent need for scrutiny and action to protect human rights in the region.

***Please take action as soon as possible until April 12, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***