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Second UA: 72/24 Index: AMR 53/8396/2024 Venezuela of August 8, 2024

VENEZUELA STOP THE MASS DETENTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Between July 29 and August 7, 2024, over 2,000 people were arrested for protesting or being perceived as critical of the government. Many detainees are young, with at least 105 between the ages of 13 and 17. At least 16 people with disabilities, including visual or hearing impairments, are still in detention. There are credible reports of incommunicado detention and denial of legal counsel, increasing the risk of ill-treatment and torture. We urge the authorities to release all those detained for exercising their rights and call on the Attorney General to protect vulnerable individuals, including minors and those with disabilities or serious health conditions.

Write to the Attorney General of Venezuela urging him to:

- Protect those exercising their right to peaceful assembly.
- Immediately release all those detained for protesting.
- Protect individuals who are vulnerable due to their age, disability, or serious or chronic health condition.

Write to:

Attorney General of the Republic,
Tarek William Saab
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio Público,
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo Avenida México,
Caracas, Venezuela
Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve
Salutation: *Dear Attorney General of the Republic,*

And copy:

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
32 Range Road
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J4
Tel: (613) 235-5151/ (613) 447-4576 (24h) Fax: (613) 235-3205
Email: consular@misionvenezuela.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Venezuela has been in a severe human rights crisis for over ten years. During this time, Amnesty International has reported serious violations, including crimes against humanity and a complex humanitarian emergency. These issues have forced more than 25% of the population to flee the country.

On July 28, Venezuela held presidential elections with a massive turnout, despite a pre-election environment marked by persecution, censorship, and threats. After voting ended, the electoral

authorities declared Nicolás Maduro the winner. However, the opposition disputed the result, claiming it did not match the official polling documents they had collected. The electoral authority has not yet published the official results, as required by Venezuelan law. Since then, mass demonstrations have erupted across the country in support of the opposition.

The state authorities have responded with widespread repression, including:

- Lethal Force: At least 17 people, mostly young, have been killed by lethal and less lethal force, including two teenagers.
- Mass Detentions: There have been mass politically motivated arrests.
- Possible Torture: Key opposition figures may have been tortured.
- Illegal Home Raids: Dozens of illegal home raids have been conducted with excessive force.
- Armed Groups: Pro-government armed groups (colectivos) and non-uniformed security forces have been mobilized.
- Stigmatization: Senior government officials have used stigmatizing language against political activists, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Between July 29 and August 7, there has been a sharp increase in the government's repressive actions, including:

- Killings: At least 17 people have been killed by security forces.
- Opposition Leaders Targeted: Arrest warrants have been issued against opposition leaders, including the presidential candidate.
- Torture Allegations: Reports suggest at least one senior opposition figure has been tortured to force a confession.
- Illegal Raids: Activists and protesters have been harassed and detained in illegal home raids.
- Use of Armed Groups: Non-uniformed security forces and armed groups have used lethal and excessive force.
- Continued Stigmatization: Government officials continue to stigmatize opposition leaders, activists, human rights defenders, and CSOs. Several human rights defenders have been arrested, including Edni López, Kennedy Tejada, and Edward Ocariz.

The current events align with existing patterns of crimes against humanity in Venezuela. This situation requires an international response. The ongoing investigation by the International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor could investigate these possible crimes, including detention, torture, gender-based violence, and persecution related to the elections. Those responsible, including those in command, must be brought to justice in impartial and independent courts with full guarantees of a fair trial.

Please take action as soon as possible until September 27, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.