

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER THREATENED

Venezuelan human rights defender Humberto Prado Sifontes has been threatened for his work examining prisons. Humberto, his family and his colleagues from the NGO Venezuelan Prison Observatory (Observatorio Venezolano de Prisiones) are at risk.

On 23 April, after a magazine published an interview with **Humberto Prado Sifontes** in which he highlighted the responsibility of Aragua state Governor, Tareck El Aisami, in the development of the current penitentiary and security crisis during his time as minister in charge of prisons, the Governor slandered Humberto Prado Sifontes through his Twitter account, naming him a "PRAN". PRAN are negative figures that lead Venezuelan prisons and are responsible for the violence inside them and the coordination of gangs, kidnappings and other felonies. That same afternoon Humberto Prado Sifontes' Facebook account was hacked, and messages with an altered photo were published on it, naming him a PRAN once again. This information was replicated on his Twitter account through different government supporters' accounts, including Governor El Aisami, using the hashtag #HumbertoPradoPranDePolar. The same posts included information related to his work as a human rights defender that was only stored in his private communications. This amounts to a violation of his right to privacy.

On 4 May the former president of Venezuela's National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello, discredited the work of Humberto Prado Sifontes and his colleagues from the Venezuelan Prison Observatory in his television show. During the show, Diosdado Cabello stated that the organization receives money every time they seek out international organizations, or when they use any mechanism, to claim justice. Humberto Prado Sifontes has led the Venezuelan Prison Observatory for many years, recording and denouncing Venezuela's terrible prison conditions. In June 2011, Humberto Prado Sifontes was the target of an intimidation campaign and received death threats after peacefully asking the government to address a riot in El Rodeo prison.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the interception of Humberto Prado Sifontes' communications and those of other members of the Venezuelan Prison Observatory, as it is a violation to his right to privacy, that they publish their results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to implement effective measures to protect Humberto Prado Sifontes and his family, as well as all other members of the Venezuelan Prison Observatory, in accordance with their wishes, and to end the harassment and threats against them;
- Urging them to publicly recognize the legitimacy of the Venezuelan Prison Observatory's human rights work, and reminding them of their duty to guarantee that the organization can work without fear of retaliation, in accordance with the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JUNE 2016 TO:

Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Aristóbulo Istúriz
Esq. De Carmelitas, Av. Urdaneta
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 506 9845
Email:
direcciongeneral@vicepresidencia.gob.ve
Salutation: Dear Vice-President/ Sr. Vicepresidente

Attorney General

Dr. Luisa Ortega Diaz
Sede Ppal del Ministerio Publico
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo
Avenida México
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 578 3239
Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Dra. Fiscal

And copies to:

Ombudsman
Tarek William Saab
Av. Urdaneta – in front of El Universal
Centro Financiero Latino, Piso 27
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 507 7025
Email: contacto@defensoria.gob.ve

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Threats against Humberto Prado began on 18 June 2011, after the then Minister of Interior and Justice, Tarek El Aissami, granted a telephone interview in a state television program, in which he reportedly said Humberto Prado had flagrantly lied about the situation in El Rodeo II prison. A day earlier, around 3,500 members of the National Guard had begun operations, which lasted several days, to control the violent situation in El Rodeo prison. Following these statements, a blog published Humberto Prado's personal data, such as his address and home telephone numbers. The last post of the blog stated "Up next family data [...] so the people can judge him. Capital punishment".

On 30 May 2012, the husband of Marianela Sánchez Ortiz, a collaborator with the Venezuelan Prison Observatory, was abducted by four armed men who told him to advise his wife to stop complaining about prison conditions and criticizing the government, or she and her family would regret it because they knew all about them: where they work, where they live and where their children study.

On several occasions, high-level Venezuelan authorities have made statements on public television against human rights organizations such as the Venezuelan Prison Observatory. These attacks have led human rights defenders, including Humberto Prado Sifontes, to denounce the statements and turn to international protection mechanisms. These events have been condemned by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on the work of Human Rights Defenders, the UN Human Rights Committee and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Humans.

Name: Humberto Prado Sifontes

Gender m/f: m

UA: 104/16 Index: AMR 53/3952/2016 Issue Date: 6 May 2016