

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST TORTURED IN POLICE CELL

Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas, a Venezuelan human rights activist has been in detention since March for participating in a protest. He has been tortured and threatened. He is ill and is not receiving the urgent medical care he needs.

On 19 March **Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas** was arrested by police officers in Barcelona, Anzoátegui state as he participated in a protest with a group of residents demanding adequate housing. He was arrested and taken to the local police headquarters. During his first night in detention he was taken from his cell by officers and hung by the wrists and beaten. The following day, he was presented to a judge in Barcelona, who charged with resistance to authority (*resistencia a la autoridad*) and illegal occupation (*perturbación pacífica a la posesión*). He was remanded to remain in custody until his trial. He has filed a complaint detailing his torture.

Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas is detained, whilst awaiting trial, in a cell at the police headquarters in Peñalver, Anzoátegui state. He has acute dermatitis and an infection that prevents him from urinating properly. Those who have visited him said that police cells are overcrowded and Rafael Ugas said that in July he was attacked with a knife by an inmate leaving a stab wound on his arm. He remains at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas is a human rights activist. He has denounced acts of torture and extortion by local police and campaigned for social and housing rights. He has been subjected to human rights abuses on several occasions in relation to his work. In 1996 he was kidnapped for several days and tortured by members of security forces and when released he fled Venezuela for his safety. In 2007, after he returned, he was again kidnapped and tortured by several armed men, apparently in reprisal for his work. This happened again in November 2010: he was kidnapped for several hours and the men, whom he identified as members of the police, burnt him with cigarette butts. A week later he was detained as he participated in a demonstration in front of Barcelona's Court House to protest the conditions of prisons and the delays in the criminal justice system, he was later released without charge.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to give Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas immediate medical attention and ensure he is safe and protected from torture and ill-treatment and that he is held in humane conditions, in line with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that his right to due process is guaranteed, and ensure that the trial takes place within a reasonable time or that he be released awaiting trial, in line with international human rights standards such as article 9.3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Calling on the authorities to investigate the alleged acts of torture and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 OCTOBER 2013 TO:

Human Rights Ombudsman
Gabriela del Mar Ramírez
Defensora del Pueblo
Edificio Defensoría del Pueblo
Plaza Morelos, Av. México,
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 507 7025
Salutation: Señora Defensora/Dear Ombudswoman

Minister of Justice and Interior
Gral. Miguel Rodríguez Torres
Ministerio del Poder Popular para
Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz
Av. Urdaneta, Edificio Interior y Justicia
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax+ 58 212 506 1685
**Salutation: Señor Ministro/
Dear Minister**

And copies to:
Human Rights Organization
PROVEA
Bulevar Panteón, Puente Trinidad a
Tienda Honda, Edif. Centro Plaza Las
Mercedes, PB. Local 6
Parroquia Altigracia, Apdo. Post. 5156
Carmelitas 1010-A,
Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 862 1011

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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Name: Luis Rafael Escobar Ugas

Gender m/f: m

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