



PROTESTS IN VENEZUELA: HUMAN RIGHTS AT RISK, PEOPLE IN DANGER.

CASE: JUAN MANUEL CARRASCO

“They put us in a fetal position, on our knees and hit us, they just hit us. A guard went out and said that God would not save us even if we prayed and that this was our last day. They pulled my underpants down and stuck something up my behind. And they continued to hit us, hitting us until they were tired out”.

Juan Manuel Carrasco, aged 21, was detained along with two friends in the night of 13 February 2014 by the National Guard in Valencia, Carabobo State nearby a protest. Juan Manuel Carrasco was sexually assaulted, threatened with death and repeatedly beaten while in detention.



Juan Manuel Carrasco was detained for three days along with ten others at the National Guard's Urban Security Detachment (Destacamento de Seguridad Urbana) in Valencia, where he was beaten and ill-treated. Members of the National Guard raped Juan Manuel with an object, punched, kicked and beat him with guns and helmets, intimidated him with dogs and threatened him with death. Juan Manuel Carrasco described to Amnesty International how some guards even tried to intervene on his behalf when they saw the beating he was taking. **“One of the guards said ‘don’t hit the lad with the yellow shirt (which was me) anymore or you’ll kill him’.** **They kicked me here, and I spat out a mouthful of blood. They kept hitting us”.**

During his detention, he was visited by Attorney General's Office staff. He did not tell them anything for fear of reprisals, as the visit took place in the presence of members of the National Guard. The Attorney General told Amnesty International that her office was investigating the complaint of ill-treatment and torture, including rape.

Since the beginning of February 2014, Venezuela has been shaken by mass protests for and against the government in various parts of the country. At least 41 people have died and more than 650 people have been injured. The victims include demonstrators who have taken to the streets to show their discontent with the government, citizens who support the government and people not involved in the protests, as well as security forces' personnel. Over 2,000 people face charges that could lead to years in prison for their alleged involvement in violent acts during the protest. This is the most recent example of the growing polarization that has gripped the country for more than a decade.

In the context of these protests, Amnesty International has received dozens of complaints about torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees by members of the security forces, at the time of detention, during transfer and at detention centres. The aim of the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees appears to have been to punish them for their participation, or alleged participation in the protests.



Spent cartridges in Táchira State, March 2014 © Manure Quintero Álvarez



For more information on cases of human rights violations and Amnesty International's recommendations in the context of protest in Venezuela—*Human Rights at risk amid protest* (Index: AMR 53/009/2014) This report is available at www.amnesty.org

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Venezuelan authorities calling them to:

- Investigate thoroughly, independently and impartially Juan Manuel Carrasco's complaint of being subject to torture and ill-treatment and ensure all those responsible are brought to justice.
- Ensure all complaints of human rights violations and abuses made in the context of the protests are investigated thoroughly, independently and impartially. Identify all those responsible and bring them to justice.
- Increase efforts to prevent and punish torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and guarantee reparations to victims, especially through the implementation of the Special Law to Prevent and Punish Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment.
- Extend an open invitation to the Missions of the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations and the Inter-American Human Rights System, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.
- Sign and/or ratify the treaties that guarantee the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which establishes a system of periodic visits by independent international and national bodies to places of detention, with the aim of preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment.
- Guarantee that people can exercise their right to the freedom of expression and assembly, without fear of reprisals.

Please send your appeals to:

Attorney General

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio Público,
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo
Avenida México
Caracas, Venezuela.
Correo-e.: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve
Fax: +58 212 578 3239
Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Estimada Sra. Fiscal

Defence Minister

Almirante en Jefa Carmen Teresa Meléndez Rivas
Edificio Sede del Ministerio del Poder Popular para,
la Defensa, Fuerte Tiuna, El Valle
Caracas, Venezuela.
Correo-e.: emily.spiritto@mindefensa.gob.ve
Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimada Ministra

Comandante CEOFANB

Gral. en Jefe Vladimir Padrino López
Alcabala Nro. 5 Vía Tazón,
Fuerte Tiuna, El Valle
Caracas, Venezuela.
Salutation: Dear General in Chief/
Estimado General en Jefe

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Índex: AMR 53/012/2014
May 2014