URGENT ACTION

DETAINED FOR DEFENDING WOMEN AND GIRLS’ RIGHTS

Vannesa Rosales is a teacher and women and girls’ rights defender in the state of Mérida (West). On 12 October 2020, officers from the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Unit (CICPC) broke into her home without a search warrant and detained her, violating due process guarantees. She is now accused of assisting a 13-year-old girl, whose life was in danger, for the interruption of her pregnancy resulting from rape. Vannesa has been under house arrest since 11 January 2021 and her pre-trial hearing is scheduled for 21 July 2021. The Attorney General should drop the charges against Vannesa and release her.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Attorney General
Tarek William Saab
Av. México cruce con Maduca A Pelelojo,
Edificio Fiscalía General de la República,
Caracas, Venezuela
Twitter: @TarekWilliamSaab

Dear Tarek William Saab,

I am alarmed by the arbitrary detention and criminalization of Vannesa Rosales, a teacher, social worker and women and girls’ rights defender in Venezuela. On 12 October 2020, she was arbitrarily detained after an illegal inspection of her home by CICPC officials.

Vannesa is being accused of inducing abortion to third parties, criminal association and conspiracy for providing information and supporting the interruption of the pregnancy of a 13-year-old at her mother’s request. The girl’s life was in danger by the pregnancy, and she had been a victim of sexual abuse in Pueblo Nuevo, Mérida.

Since a precautionary measure was issued on 11 January 2021, Vannesa has been deprived of her liberty under house arrest and the preliminary hearing has not yet been held.

Vannesa must not face a criminal trial, and she must be released as soon as possible. Therefore, I demand that all charges against Vannesa are dropped, and if the case remains -unfairly- open, at least, she should face her trial free, as established by international law and standards on pre-trial detention. I also demand that in the meantime, her physical and psychological integrity is guaranteed. Those who peacefully defend human rights in Venezuela should not be criminalized.

Yours sincerely,
In October 2020, Vannesa Rosales responded to a request for support from a woman and her 13-year-old daughter. The girl was her student and had been raped by a man from her neighbourhood, which had resulted in pregnancy. In a previous medical consultation, the girl's mother had been warned that the pregnancy put her daughter's life at risk.

As part of the irregularities committed since the beginning of the process, the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Unit (CICPC) went to the health center where the girl went with her mother to receive post-abortion care. According to the information available, although the CICPC had received the report of the rape and had not carried out any investigation at the moment, it proceeded to take the statement from the girl without legal representation and to establish who had helped her terminate the pregnancy. This illegally taken statement was used to justify the subsequent arrest of Vannesa Rosales.

The girl who Vannesa accompanied in the termination of her pregnancy belongs to a community with limited resources. The pregnancy was diagnosed as risky by a medical provider due to the girl's age. Her socio-economic status made her situation even more precarious. The sexual offender is a fugitive from justice while Vannesa continues to be deprived of her liberty.

Vannesa's case highlights the lack of due diligence on behalf of the state to address acts of violence against women, particularly sexual violence, and ensure women who are victims of sexual violence can access timely and adequate sexual and reproductive health care. On the contrary, women who dedicate their lives to supporting victims and fighting for their rights are being criminalized by the system.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish.
You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 7 September 2021
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Vannesa Rosales (she, her)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** n/a