



VENEZUELA: VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING PROTESTS, DEMAND JUSTICE

YANEULIZ VACA – SHOT AND WOUNDED DURING A PROTEST

Yaneuliz Vaca, a 20-year-old student nurse, told Amnesty International how she was shot and wounded by members of the security forces near her family home in La Fría municipality (Táchira State) on 26 February 2014.

Yaneuliz described how that day, the state security forces started to throw tear-gas grenades and opened fire on the demonstrators to disperse them. Although she was suffering from the effects of tear gas, she tried to take cover behind a parked car to protect herself from the bullets. While she was crouched there, she was shot in the shoulder. The wound resulted in a haemothorax (the rupture caused blood to flow into the space between the thorax and the lung) and two broken ribs.

She was hospitalized for two weeks and almost a year later she is still in pain from the wound. The bullet remains lodged near her spine and she suffers from intense back pain as a result.

Yaneuliz gave her statement to representatives from the Public Prosecution Service a few days after the incident. The Public Prosecutors office has recently informed Amnesty International that it has requested that the case be closed. This will mean the end of the investigation and that those responsible will not be brought to justice.

Amnesty International has documented many cases in which law enforcement officials used excessive force in the context of the demonstrations that took place in various parts of Venezuela between February and July of 2014. The victims included demonstrators, passers by and people living in the neighbourhoods where protests were taking place. Among the cases documented by Amnesty International are incidents in which live ammunition was used against demonstrators and homes in residential areas where “cacerolazos” (protests in which people use cooking utensils or other objects to make a noise) were taking place or where residents had set up roadblocks.¹

The information obtained indicates that law enforcement officials frequently saw dispersing protests, including peaceful protests, as a priority and used force to do so, often without attempting to negotiate with the demonstrators or giving a clear prior warning.

¹ For more information on the February to July 2014 events, see the following Amnesty International reports: Venezuela: Human rights at risk amid protests (Index: AMR 53/009/2014), available at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR53/009/2014/en>; and Venezuela: Briefing to the UN Committee Against Torture, 53rd session, November 2014 (Index: AMR 53/020/2014), available at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR53/020/2014/en>.

ACT NOW!

Write to the Venezuelan authorities urging them to:

- Carry out a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the shooting of Yaneuliz Vaca, ensure that those responsible are brought to justice and ensure that she receives comprehensive and appropriate reparations.
- Ensure that protests are allowed to take place and that law enforcement officials use force only when strictly necessary and never against peaceful protesters, in line with the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

Send your appeals to:

Vicepresident of the Republic

Sr. Jorge Arreaza
Vicepresidencia de la República
Esq. Carmelitas, Avenida Urdaneta,
Caracas, Venezuela.
Email: vicepresidencia@venezuela.gov.ve
ciudadano@vicepresidencia.gov.ve
Salutation: Dear Vice-president

Attorney General of the Republic

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio Público,
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo
Caracas, Venezuela
Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve
Fax: +58 212 578 3239
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Minister of the Interior, Justice and Peace

Almirante en Jefa Carmen Teresa Meléndez Rivas
Ministerio del Poder Popular para las
Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz.
Edificio Sede del Ministerio, Avenida México
Caracas, Venezuela
Email: mijcudecon@gmail.com
Fax: +58 212 506-1558
Salutation: Dear Minister

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