

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal/health concern

13 February 1992

VENEZUELA Carmen Alicia GOMEZ POTELO, 21 (female)

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the health of Carmen Alicia GOMEZ POTELO, a woman who is four months' pregnant, detained at the Cuartel Policial Navas Espínola, a police detachment in Valencia, Estado Carabobo.

Carmen Alicia GOMEZ POTELO was reportedly detained along with a number of other people in the aftermath of the 4 February 1992 coup attempt. Reports indicate that Carmen Alicia GOMEZ POTELO's health is deteriorating rapidly and that she may suffer a miscarriage due to the poor prison conditions. The same reports also say that the men are forced to sleep outdoors and that the women must take turns to sleep in their very small cells.

The detainees have reportedly had short visits from their relatives, but it is alleged, they have not had access to legal or medical advice. There have been reports that some detainees have been ill-treated, although there are no details available.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

On 4 February 1992, some elements within the army attempted a coup against the government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez, in four main centres: Caracas, Maracay, Maracaibo and Valencia. The movement was put down within two days and some constitutional guarantees, such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and the freedom not to be detained by an administrative decision, were suspended.

Subsequently, there have been reports that some civilians who were involved in the uprisings and many people suspected of supporting the coup attempt, were detained by government forces. In Valencia, Carabobo state, students from the Universidad de Carabobo, Carabobo University, were reportedly seen supporting the leaders of the coup attempt and some were allegedly carrying weapons. Poor neighbourhoods in Caracas and the homes of students and others believed by the government to have supported the coup, were raided. Many people were detained during the raids and later released.

Monitoring human rights abuses has been made difficult by the restrictions imposed on the media, the absence of official information about those kept in detention and the suspension of constitutional guarantees.

On 7 February 1992, in a telex to President Carlos Andrés Pérez, Amnesty International called on the government to ensure that the suspension of individual guarantees would not be used for the detention of prisoners of conscience or in such a way as to facilitate torture or ill-treatment.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters, preferably in Spanish:**

- requesting that Carmen Alicia GOMEZ POTELO be given access to adequate medical attention;
- requesting that her legal situation be clarified;
- requesting that the government make public the names, ages and charges against all people detained for allegedly having supported the leaders of the coup attempt;

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- urging that those detained for the expression of their peacefully-held political beliefs be immediately released;
- urging that allegations of ill-treatment of detainees be impartially and fully investigated and that those found responsible for these abuses be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

President:

Sr. Carlos Andrés Pérez  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela  
**Telegrams: Presidente Pérez, Caracas, Venezuela**  
**Telex: 26429 EXTER VC**  
**Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President**

Minister of the Interior:

Sr. Alejandro Izaguirre Angeli  
Ministro del Interior  
Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela  
**Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Caracas, Venezuela**  
**Telex: 26429 EXTER VC**  
**Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister**

Attorney General:

Sr. Ramón Escobar Salom  
Fiscal General de la República  
La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela  
**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela**  
**Telex: 24787 FISGE VC**  
**Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Organization  
Sres.  
Provea  
Apartado Postal 5156  
Caracas, Venezuela

Daily Newspaper  
Sres.  
El Diario de Caracas  
Final Av. Principal  
Boleíta Norte  
Caracas, Venezuela

Human Rights Organization

Sres.

CODECIUC

Comisión de Defensa  
de los Derechos Ciudadanos  
de la Universidad de Carabobo  
Universidad de Carabobo  
Secretaría, Rectorado  
Avenida Bolívar  
Valencia, Estado Carabobo  
Venezuela

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 March 1992.