

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Disappointing decision: Venezuela abandons the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court**

Defying its own 1999 Constitution, disowning its commitment towards the universal ratification of the American Convention on Human Rights, and ignoring the calls of numerous national and international human rights organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights, Venezuela has broken away from the American Convention and has left the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. This is a sad and disappointing time for justice, human rights and the rule of law in the country.

The protection provided by the Inter-American Court, which is the last resort and hope for justice for thousands of victims of human rights violations and their families across the continent and has been a necessary addition to national justice systems, will no longer be available to the people of Venezuela, due to this decision made by the Venezuelan government.

For many years the Inter-American Court has responded to the desire for justice, truth and reparations for people who have suffered the effects of dictatorship and conflict in America. The Court has broken new ground in the field of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and has set important precedents on many issues defending the rights of women, indigenous peoples and victims of enforced disappearance, torture and extrajudicial or summary execution when states have denied the protection of these rights.

In the case of Venezuela, we cannot forget important rulings issued in the cases of Caracazo, Amparo, the Catia checkpoint, the Barrios family, the Uzcátegui family, and many others. In the first case, Iris Medina, widow of Wolfgang Quintana, murdered in the Caracazo of 1989, told Amnesty International that the Court finally enabled her to "tell my daughter about what happened, why her father was killed like that. In Court, I was finally listened to and felt respected. That was an important achievement".

As Venezuela continues to be part of the Organization of American States, the country will continue to be subject to scrutiny and recommendations of the Inter-American Commission. It will continue to be under the scrutiny of UN bodies in line with international human rights treaties to which Venezuela is a party. This will be where victims and human rights organizations will continue to report human rights violations and to search for justice.