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## **Venezuela: Conditional freedom for Judge Afiuni not enough**

The decision to grant Judge María Lourdes Afiuni Mora conditional release is a positive step, but clearly insufficient, Amnesty International said today.

"More than three years after being detained, no reliable evidence has been presented against Judge Afiuni. Once more, we demand that the charges against her be dropped" said Guadalupe Marengo, Amnesty International's Americas Programme Director.

"The preventive measures attached to her release are worrying, since they constitute a serious limitation on her freedom of expression and movement."

Yesterday, the 17th Caracas tribunal judge, Marilda Ríos, granted Afiuni conditional freedom. She will have to appear in court every 15 days and she is not allowed to travel abroad, to give statements to national and international media, or write on social networks. The trial against her continues.

Amnesty International has repeatedly stated that the detention of judge María Lourdes Afiuni Mora is a case of unwarranted political interference by the executive branch.

In December 2009 judge Afiuni was arbitrarily arrested and detained for more than a year, accused of "corruption, abuse of authority, aiding escape, and association to a commit crime", after granting conditional freedom to banker Eligio Cedeño. Judge Afiuni's decision was in accordance with Venezuelan legislation according to which no person should remain in custody for more than two years awaiting trial.

One day after her arrest in 2009, then President Hugo Chávez welcomed her detention and requested that she be awarded the maximum sentence of 30 years.

Judge Afiuni remained in prison for one year and two months. On 4 February 2011, she was granted house arrest, after she had to undergo a surgical treatment.

The conditions of judge Afiuni's prison detention were worrying, as the adequate security classification measures were not in place and she received threats.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as well as the Special Rapporteurs on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers have called for the judge to be released immediately.