



AI Index: AMR 53/5347/2022
17 March 2022

-Check against delivery-

ORAL STATEMENT

Item 4: Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on her report on the human rights situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (HRC res. 45/20)

PROTECTION AND INCLUSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS REMAINS CRITICAL TO ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-ninth session
28 February – 1 April 2022

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the High Commissioner for Human Rights' report on the human rights situation in Venezuela.

It is of great concern that crimes under international law and human rights violations continue with impunity in Venezuela as the authorities continue to ignore the repeated recommendations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela. Some of these crimes and human rights violations, that have been repeatedly reported to this Council, appear to amount to crimes against humanity.¹

In 2021, Amnesty noted an escalation of the Government's repressive policy, as human rights defenders and humanitarian workers were targeted with politically motivated arbitrary detentions. Among these, we are gravely concerned over the arbitrary and prolonged detention of Javier Tarazona, Director of NGO Fundaredes and prisoner of conscience, who has been under state custody since July 2021, charged with unfounded 'terrorism' charges, while in critical need of medical assistance. We call for his immediate and unconditional release. Unfortunately, Tarazona's detention is not an isolated case. It belongs to a well-documented policy that uses both public discourse and detentions to criminalize human rights defenders in Venezuela.

Recently, Amnesty International, Foro Penal and Centro para los Defensores y la Justicia published a report providing evidence of a correlation between media attacks or stigmatizations against human rights defenders, and politically motivated arbitrary detentions.

Despite various commitments made, including to this Council,² the Government has also

¹ Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela, *Detailed findings of the independent international Fact-Finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 15 September 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paragraphs 2086 -2094.

² UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report: *Human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 5 July 2019,

continued to bar access to relevant Special Procedures³ and the Fact-Finding Mission.

We urge Venezuelan authorities to take concrete measures, which this Council should continue to press for, to end the policy of repression; allow human rights defenders to safely carry out their work; to allow full and unfettered access to the Fact-Finding Mission without further delay and invite the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions and torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to visit.

More than ever, the UN and its member states should focus its efforts on protecting and promoting a safe and enabling environment for Venezuelan civil society, who continue their work at significant personal risk.

Thank you.

A/HRC/41/18, para. 5.

³ UN Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998, spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&lang=en, (accessed on 30 June 2021), "Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).