



VENEZUELA: VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING PROTESTS DEMAND JUSTICE

DANIEL CEBALLOS MUST BE RELEASED

Daniel Ceballos, Mayor of San Cristóbal (Táchira State) and member of the opposition Popular Will (Voluntad Popular) party, was detained on 19 March 2014 by members of the National Intelligence Service (Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional, SEBIN). At the time of writing, he remained in detention in CENAPROMIL (Centro Nacional de Procesados Militares), a military prison in the city of Los Teques, more than 800km from San Cristóbal.

Daniel Ceballos has been the subject of two legal proceedings. On 25 March 2014, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice sentenced him to 12 months' imprisonment and removal from the post of Mayor for contempt of court for failing to comply with a ruling by the Chamber. On 12 March 2014, the Constitutional Chamber had issued a ruling ordering a number of mayors belonging to the opposition to guarantee security and other rights, such as the right to freedom of movement, in their municipalities during the protests that began in February 2014. It was only on 17 March 2014 that this ruling was extended to include Daniel Ceballos.

In addition, Daniel Ceballos is currently on trial charged with civil rebellion and conspiracy to commit a crime. The charges relate to his alleged involvement in the anti-government protests that shook the country between February and July 2014. At the time of writing the trial was continuing; if convicted he could face up to 24 years in prison.

On 28 August 2014, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that it considered Daniel Ceballos to have been arbitrarily detained and called on the government to release him immediately.

The opinion of the UN Working Group, adopted at its 70th session, concludes that: "the detention of Mayor Daniel Omar Ceballos was arbitrary and motivated by a desire to prevent him exercising his right to freedom of opinion and expression and his right to political participation in his capacity as an opposition Mayor". It added that: "Mr Ceballos was arbitrarily detained because the Venezuelan Bolivarian Republic had failed to abide by international standards of judicial impartiality."¹

At least 43 people died and 878 were injured in the pro and anti-government protests that took place between February and July 2014. In addition, 3,300 people were detained. The vast majority have been released, although according to official statistics, 507 are facing prosecution for their alleged involvement in violence during the protests.² At the time of writing, 41 people remained in detention, 27 of them ordinary civilians. Amnesty International is concerned that others held on charges linked to the protests may also have been arbitrarily detained.

¹ Opinion adopted by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 70th session. Number 26/2014 (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). A/HRC/WGAD/2014/30, paras 50-51.

² 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:

- Comply with the recommendations of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and release Daniel Ceballos immediately.

Envía tus llamamientos a:

Vice-President 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

The 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

The Minister of Justice

Gral. Gustavo González López
Ministerio del Poder Popular para las
Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz.
Edificio Sede del Ministerio, Avenida México
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Salutation: Dear Minister

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Index: AMR 53/1036/2015
March 2015