

URGENT ACTION

REPRESENTATIVE'S RIGHT TO FAIR TRIAL IGNORED

Juan Requesens, Venezuelan Representative in the National Assembly has been in pre-trial detention since his arbitrary detention on 7 August 2018. After 14 months, his trial hearing was scheduled for Monday 25 November 2019, then postponed to 2 December, and again to 4 December. More delays are expected. The justice system in Venezuela constantly fails to comply with procedural time limits and the right to a fair trial without undue delays. Judges regularly postpone hearings without any valid excuse like when officers refuse to transfer defendants to their hearings, or because prosecutors do not show up before the court. We call for Juan Requesens to have a fair trial without undue delays.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr. Maikel Moreno
President of the Justice Supreme Court
Edificio Tribunal Supremo de Justicia
Final Avenida Baralt, Esquina "Dos Pilitas",
Foro Libertador, Caracas.
Venezuela
Twitter: @TSJ_Venezuela

Dear Mr. Moreno,

I am appalled by the case of Juan Requesens, a representative to the National Assembly of Venezuela, who has been under pre-trial detention since August 2018 and should have had his trial hearing on 25 November but keeps getting unduly delayed.

Requesens' family reports that he was subjected to torture during his first days in custody by the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN), after which he was coerced to record an incriminating video.

Mr. Moreno, the guarantee of a prompt trial serves the interests of justice for the defendants, potential victims of the crime and the public at large. In order to respect and guarantee Requesens' right to a fair trial and considering the grave reports that this confession was obtained through coercion, I call on to you to ensure that his trial hearing takes place in the date stipulated by the court and complies with international standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Juan Requesens was arbitrary detained on 7 August 2018, after he gave a strong statement as representative of the National Assembly against Nicolás Maduro's government. He was arrested in his house without a court order, late at night, with his sister Rafaela Requesens who was released hours later. The process to lift his parliamentary immunity was untimely, arbitrary and irregular.

Authorities of Maduro's government released a video in which Requesens would have admitted his participation in some facts that are allegedly linked to a drone attack against Nicolás Maduro on 5 August 2018. This video was recorded when Requesens was being held incommunicado and isolated. According to his lawyer, he does not remember having recorded such video, and by his appearance in the video, his family suspects that he was under the effect of some sort of drug that prompted his statements and alleged confession.

This video is not incorporated in the judicial file. However, he has been processed as it was a real confession and assumes that his speech early on the day of his detention could have instigated others to commit a crime. His preliminary hearing was postponed four times and the prosecution accusation lasted for eight months, while his defence had only few minutes to present arguments.

Politically motivated arbitrary detentions have been part of Maduro's policy of repression since the beginning of his presidency. Local NGOs have reported more than 15,000 arbitrary detentions in the past few years. Conditions of detentions are often inhumane and claims of torture to obtain confessions are often found in these cases.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish and English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 January 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Juan Requesens (He, him, his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/1439/2019/en/>