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Venezuela: Two years after the protests, the victims are still waiting for justice.

Two years after the mass anti- and pro- government protests in the country, it is unacceptable that the families of the 43 people who lost their lives, including members of the security forces, and the hundreds of people who were injured or were victims of ill-treatment or arbitrary detention are still awaiting justice, truth and reparation.

The failure to make meaningful progress in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for these human rights violations are clear indications of the lack of political will to guarantee the protection and promotion of the human rights of all, without discrimination.

It is regrettable that two years after the killings of Bassil Alejandro Da Costa, Juan Montoya and Roberto Redman, the alleged perpetrators have not been convicted.

While the vast majority of those who commit human rights violations continue to avoid being held accountable and brought to justice, dozens of people are still facing charges for offences allegedly related to the protests, including people who have been held in custody for almost two years without any evidence to prove that they have committed any crime.

This is the case of Leopoldo López, the leader of the Voluntad Popular opposition party, and of Rosmit Mantilla, a member of Voluntad Popular and an activist for the rights of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual or intersexual community (LGBTI). The detention of both these people is politically motivated, without credible evidence to support the charges against them and with clear violations of due process and a fair trial. Both are prisoners of conscience and must be freed immediately and unconditionally.

It is crucial that the authorities take immediate measures to guarantee that no-one will face prosecution on the grounds of politically motivated charges that are not supported by solid and credible evidence.

Both the Executive and the recently elected National Assembly should also adopt urgent and decisive measures to put an end to the persistent impunity, and guarantee that the deplorable incidents of two years ago are not repeated.

As long as the authorities fail to send a clear and unequivocal signal to the security forces, requiring them to act in accordance with international law and international standards on the use of force, there will continue to be complaints of excessive use of force.

It is equally essential to prioritise the strengthening of the justice system, the cornerstone of the rule of law, guaranteeing its independence and impartiality in order to put an end to the high levels of impunity that exist in Venezuela.

The authorities cannot continue to deny truth, justice and reparation to those who lost loved ones, those who continue to be unfairly detained and those who were victims of the excessive use of force or torture and other ill-treatment at the hands of the security forces, during the six months where Venezuela was rocked by mass protests.

Now is the time for the various political forces to look for solutions based on co-operation and dialogue, to provide concrete responses to the difficult situation facing the country, protecting and promoting the work of human rights defenders, and putting the protection of the rights of all, without any form of discrimination, at the very top of the political agenda.