

URGENT ACTION

DETAINEE MISSING IN VENEZUELA

The fate and whereabouts of Gilber Caro, imprisoned in Venezuela for political reasons, have been unknown since the early hours of 2 March. Gilber Caro has been arbitrarily detained since 11 January 2017. He is being unlawfully tried before a military court despite being a civilian and Member of Parliament.

Gilber Caro, Member of Parliament for the opposition party Popular Will (Voluntad Popular), has been arbitrarily detained at the "El Libertador" Training Centre for the New Man (Centro de Formación para el Hombre Nuevo "El Libertador") in Carabobo state, central Venezuela, since May 2017. His fate and whereabouts are unknown since 2 March 2018, according to information shared with Amnesty International. Since then, his lawyers and family have been demanding communication with him, but authorities have so far ignored their requests. He was last seen on 21 February by his family during visiting hours at the detention centre.

On 2 March, Gilber Caro's lawyers received unconfirmed reports that authorities transferred Gilber Caro to a different facility. Media reports claim the authorities transferred him to the penitentiary referred to as the Fénix-Lara Penitentiary Community (Comunidad Penitenciaria Fénix-Lara) in Lara state, western Venezuela. On 4 March, a journalist posted an unverified video on social media in which Gilber Caro appears and says that day's date.

Venezuelan authorities have not provided Gilber Caro's lawyers nor his relatives with any confirmation of his transfer, whereabouts or his wellbeing.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Demanding the authorities immediately provide information on the fate and whereabouts of Gilber Caro and ensure his physical and mental integrity are protected;
- Demanding they immediately grant him free and private access to his family, and lawyers of his choosing;
- Urging them to ensure full respect of Gilber Caro's rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 APRIL 2018 TO:

Minister of Penitentiary Services

Iris Varela
Avenida Norte 15 entre Avenida Este 0 y
Avenida Urdaneta
Caracas, Venezuela
Twitter: @IrisVarelaANC
Twitter: @mspenitenciario
**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimada
Señora Ministra**

Ombudsman

Alfredo Ruiz
Av. Urdaneta, Frente El Universal
Centro Financiero Latino, Piso 27
Caracas, Venezuela
Twitter: @Defensoria_Vzla
Fax: +58 212 507 7025
**Salutation: Mr Ombudsman/ Estimado
Señor Defensor del Pueblo**

And copies to:

Amnesty International Venezuela
AIVEN, Torre Phelps, Piso 17
Plaza Venezuela
Caracas, Venezuela
Twitter: @amnistia
Email: info@aiven.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 26 April 2017, Amnesty International launched a campaign demanding the release of Gilber Caro and 21 other politically motivated arbitrary detainees in Venezuela. The details of his case were documented in *Silenced by force: Politically motivated arbitrary detentions in Venezuela* (see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/docuemnts/amr53/6014/2017/en/>).

On 11 January 2017, Member of Parliament Gilber Caro was on his way home to Caracas, on the Guacara ring road, Carabobo state, central Venezuela, when officers of the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN) arrested him. Gilber Caro was with Steyci Escalona, an activist for opposition party Popular Will (Voluntad Popular), who was also arrested and then released on 24 November 2017.

That same day, the Vice-President of Venezuela explained in a TV address that a gun and explosives had been seized from Gilber Caro and Steyci Escalona, and stated that the Member of Parliament was involved in terrorist activities, indicating that Gilber Caro has clandestinely crossed the border to Colombia.

Gilber Caro was brought before a military court on 1 June and charged with stealing military equipment and treason ('*sustracción de efectos militares*' and '*traición a la patria*'). Not only was his parliamentary immunity unduly violated, but he has also been deprived of his freedom, imprisoned without a warrant, and brought before a military court despite being a civilian.

During his detention, Gilber Caro has repeatedly denounced violations to his right to food and being subjected to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.

On 23 October, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions determined Gilber Caro's case constituted an arbitrary detention and demanded his immediate release.

Furthermore, on 27 February 2018 Amnesty International raised Gilber Caro's arbitrary detention before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during a public hearing on citizen security and institutionality in Venezuela. During this hearing, Amnesty International denounced other cases of unlawful and irregular transfers of other arbitrary detainees, including Alexander Tirado, which exemplifies the risk of detainees being subjected to the arbitrary and unlawful actions of the Venezuelan authorities.

Name: Gilber Caro
Gender m/f: male

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