

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED OPPOSITION MEMBERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López, opposition politicians both arbitrarily detained in Venezuela for over a year are on hunger strike, causing concern for their health. They should both be released in line with recommendations of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López, both members of the opposition party Popular Will (Voluntad Popular) who have been arbitrarily detained since March and February 2014, respectively, began a wet hunger strike (taking water but not food) two weeks ago. Daniel Ceballos began his hunger strike on 22 May and Leopoldo López on 24 May. The two men are demanding not only their release, but that of others who they believe have also been arbitrarily detained following the pro and anti-government protests that took place throughout Venezuela between February and July 2014. They are also demanding that a date be set for the next parliamentary elections that are due to take place during the second half of this year.

There is no credible evidence that Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López have committed the crimes they are being charged with, which include incitement to commit a crime, rebellion and arson during the 2014 protests. In August 2014 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that the detention of Leopoldo López and Daniel Ceballos was arbitrary. Based on the opinion of the Working Group, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has also urged the Venezuelan authorities to release them immediately.

There are concerns that their health could deteriorate quickly.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to comply with the recommendations of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and immediately release Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López;
- Calling on them to ensure that Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López have adequate access to qualified health professionals who provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent;
- Urging them to ensure that those detained since the 2014 protests are not held unnecessarily in pre-trial detention and have their right to trial within a reasonable time or else released.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JULY 2015 TO:

President

Sr. Nicolás Maduro Moros
 Presidente de la Republica
 Final Avenida Urdaneta, Esquina de
 Bolero, Palacio de Miraflores
 Caracas, Venezuela
 Twitter: @NicolasMaduro

Salutation: Señor Presidente/

Dear President

Attorney General of the Republic

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
 Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio
 Público, Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele
 El Ojo Avenida México
 Caracas, Venezuela
 Fax: +58 212 578 3239

Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve

**Salutation: Dra. Fiscal / Dear Attorney
 General**

And copies to:

Ombudsman

Tarek William Saab
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Av. Urdaneta - Frente a El Universal
 Centro Financiero Latino, Piso 27
 Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: +58 212 5077025

Email: contacto@defensoria.gob.ve

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. This is the fourth update of UA 33/14. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR53/1715/2015/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Daniel Ceballos, who was detained on 19 March 2014, was transferred from CENAPROMIL (Centro Nacional de Procesados Militares), a military prison in Los Teques, on the outskirts of the capital, Caracas, to a civilian prison in San Juan de los Morros, Guarico State, central Venezuela, in the early hours of the morning on 23 May. The transfer reportedly took place hours after he announced the start of his hunger strike and a month after the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued precautionary measures on his behalf and ordered the state to protect his life and physical integrity and ensure that his conditions of detention meet international standards.

Leopoldo López, who was detained on 18 February 2014, has been held in the CENAPROMIL (Centro Nacional de Procesados Militares) military prison since his arrest.

According to press releases by Voluntad Popular, more than 20 of their supporters are also on hunger strike demanding the release of all political prisoners as well as demanding that a date be set for the next parliamentary elections that are due on the second half of this year.

On 13 February 2015, prison personnel raided Leopoldo López and Daniel Ceballos's cells in CENAPROMIL and tore up some of their personal belongings, such as photos and documents. It is not clear why the raid was organized. According to their relatives, the prison personnel first tried to enter their cells but the men locked themselves inside with iron bars. They reported that twenty armed men then returned and used a blowtorch to enter.

During the pro and anti-government protests that took place in Venezuela between February and July 2014, at least 43 people died, including six members of the security forces, and 878 were injured, of which approximately 300 were members of the security forces, as a result of excessive use of force and violence perpetrated by law enforcement officials, anti-government protestors and armed pro-government groups. Some victims were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

In addition, 3,351 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. At least 20 civilians remain in detention. After reviewing information presented by the Public Prosecution Services on a number of those who remain in detention, Amnesty International was able to confirm that some detainees had been arbitrarily detained. In five cases examined by Amnesty International, detainees are facing trial despite the absence of credible evidence to support the charges against them. One of these persons, Christian Holdack, was released on bail on 17 March 2015. Daniel Ceballos, Leopoldo López and Rosmit Mantilla (another member of Voluntad Popular) remain in detention. Marcelo Crovato, an associate attorney with the Venezuelan Penal Forum (Foro Penal Venezolano) has been under house arrest since 25 February due to medical concerns. Amnesty International is concerned that others held on charges linked to the protests may also have been arbitrarily detained.

Name: Daniel Ceballos and Leopoldo López
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 33/14 Index: AMR 53/1833/2015 Issue Date: 9 June 2015