

URGENT ACTION

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE'S RELEASE BLOCKED

Gregory Hinds and Geraldine Chacón have been arbitrarily detained in custody of the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) in Caracas, Venezuela, since 31 January and 1 February, respectively. Both were issued a release warrant on 2 April, but the SEBIN refuses to comply with the warrant. They are prisoners of conscience who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Venezuelan authorities brought **Gregory Hinds**, 32, to the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional, SEBIN) facilities for alleged interviews on 31 January. A few hours later, during the night of 1 February SEBIN officials picked up **Geraldine Chacón**, 24, at her home, and brought her to their facilities under the same argument. Despite there being no arrest warrants against them, both prisoners of conscience have been detained and held incommunicado ever since. Moreover, on 2 April, the competent court issued a release warrant on their names, but the SEBIN has not complied with it, and they both remain arbitrarily deprived of their liberty.

Officers at SEBIN facilities, both at administrative headquarters and at the detention centre, have stated that they do not have orders to comply with Gregory Hinds and Geraldine Chacón's release warrants. SEBIN officers told relatives and lawyers of both prisoners of conscience that they were unaware of the location of their release warrant, or that the system has been down since early April.

While in arbitrary detention, Gregory Hinds' representatives state that SEBIN officials have denied him health care for ailments he suffers from, including hypertension and skin rashes. Neither Gregory Hinds nor Geraldine Chacón have been granted access to drinking water, clean clothes, adequate sanitary conditions, or medication. The food SEBIN provides them is often in small quantities and served raw (including poultry). Both prisoners of conscience are at risk of being subjected to ill treatment while arbitrarily detained by the SEBIN.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the Venezuelan authorities to release Geraldine Chacón and Gregory Hinds immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience who have not used or advocated violence and are being arbitrarily detained in SEBIN custody with release warrants to their names;
- Demanding that Geraldine Chacón and Gregory Hinds be protected from any kind of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment while in detention, and they allow visits from their lawyers and families.
- Calling for Gregory Hinds to be transferred to a health centre of his choice in order to receive the treatment needed for his hypertension and other health concerns.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JUNE 2018 TO:

Director of the National Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN)

Gustavo González López
Torre Corporativa Metro de Caracas
Avenida Casanova, Plaza Venezuela
Caracas 1050, Venezuela
Twitter: @SEBIN_OFICIAL

Salutation: Dear Director/ Estimado Señor Director

Vice President of the Republic

Tareck El Aissami
Esq. Carmelitas, Avenida Urdaneta
Caracas 1010, Venezuela
Twitter: @TareckPSUV
Fax: +58 212 506 9845
Email: direcciongeneral@vicepresidencia.gob.ve

Salutation: Dear Vice President/
Estimado Señor Vicepresidente

Ombudsman

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

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

Geraldine Chacón and Gregory Hinds are both directors at Community Ambassadors Foundation (Fundación Embajadores Comunitarios), a Venezuelan NGO founded in 2008 that works with at-risk youth in marginalized areas of Venezuela. Their mission is to prepare teenagers in these areas to participate on Models of the United Nations. According to their web page, this NGO has reached around 1000 teenagers in the country. They have a presence in 11 communities and 13 educational institutions in three cities in Venezuela. In addition they have received several recognitions such as the 2015 Impact Hub-Inter-American Development Bank Fellowship "Improving lives in the cities of Venezuela". Both Geraldine and Gregory have been activists for social issues for many years.

Geraldine Chacón founded and coordinated Amnesty International Venezuela's local youth network at the Metropolitan University of Venezuela.

It is believed that both Geraldine Chacón and Gregory Hinds were arrested based on their connection to the foundation they work for. The Community Ambassadors Foundation was mentioned by a senior government official, on 17 January 2018, in a nationally televised programme called "Con el Mazo Dando".

This TV show, aired every Wednesday, has been known for regularly harassing and attacking dissidents, human rights defenders, and opposition politicians, among others. On 17 January, Katherina Hruskovec, who is the founding director of the Community Ambassadors Foundation, was named in the TV show. According to the content of the program the Foundation was part of a scam, and was in charge of indoctrinating young people about how good capitalism is.

Amnesty International has documented other similar cases such as the prisoner of conscience Villca Fernandez, who after being named in this TV show, was arrested and prosecuted and has been under SEBIN's custody since January 2016.

Name: Geraldine Chacón (f), Gregory Hinds (m)

Gender m/f: female and male

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