



## PROTESTS IN VENEZUELA: HUMAN RIGHTS AT RISK, PEOPLE IN DANGER.

### CASE: DANIEL QUINTERO

**“First they kicked and punched me in the face, in the ribs and hit me with the butts of their guns on the forehead. I told them to leave me alone but they insulted me saying: ‘shut up you idiot, shut up, shut up you son of a bitch, get on the bike’, and they kept on hitting me”**



Daniel Quintero, a 23-year-old student, participated in a demonstration against the government on 21 February in Maracaibo, Zulia State. Daniel Quintero told Amnesty International he was tortured and ill-treated after being detained on his way home by members of the Bolivarian National Guard. They took him in an armoured vehicle in which they took turns to hit him. Afterwards, Daniel said **“one of them switched on his mobile’s video recording function, handed it to a colleague, then got on top of me and made obscene sexual movements, they brushed my legs with their rifles and said to me ‘hey, he shaves his legs, they are going to rape you in Marite, and if they rape you, they will kill you as well’.”**

In the Bolivarian National Guard’s Regional Base No. 3 (Comando Regional 3) in Maracaibo, the commanding officer **“told me they were going to burn me. And at his side he had a can of petrol, wires and matches [...] and he said they were going to burn me and that nobody would ask about me... The whole army, about 150 soldiers, surrounded me while he hit me nine times with his baton while talking to me and while I was still handcuffed”.**

He was taken to the offices of the National Guard’s Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Squad (Grupo Antiextorsión y Secuestro), also in Maracaibo. Daniel told **“they put [me] in a cell and ordered me to strip down to my underwear. In the cell, they handcuffed my left hand to a bar attached to the wall at about foot height. They said I had to obey two rules: I must not fall asleep, because guards do not sleep and they wanted me to feel like them, and that I had to keep my feet together, with my right hand touching my ankles, and my navel practically touching my thighs. I had to stay in this doubled-up position all night, otherwise they would come and start hitting me.”**

The Attorney General’s Office has initiated an investigation into these events.

Since the beginning of February 2014, Venezuela has been shaken by mass protests for and against the government in different places of the country. In the context of these protests, Amnesty International has received dozens of complaints about torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees by members of the security forces, at the time of detention, during transfer and at detention centres. The aim of the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees appears to have been to punish for their participation, or alleged participation in the protests.



Spent cartridges in Táchira State, March 2014 © Manuere Quintero Álvarez



For more information on cases of human rights violations and Amnesty International's recommendations in the context of protest in Venezuela—Human Rights at risk amid protest (Index: AMR 53/009/2014) This report is available at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

## TAKE ACTION

Please write to the Venezuelan authorities calling them to:

- Investigate thoroughly, independently and impartially Daniel Quintero's complaint of being subject to torture and ill-treatment and ensure all those responsible are brought to justice.
- Ensure all complaints of human rights violations and abuses made in the context of the protests are investigated thoroughly, independently and impartially. Identify all those responsible and bring them to justice.
- Protect the alleged victims, witnesses and their families against all violence/ any violence, threats of violence or any other form of intimidation that may occur as a result of the investigation.
- Increase efforts to prevent and punish torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and guarantee reparations to victims, especially through the implementation of the Special Law to Prevent and Punish Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment.
- Extend an open invitation to the Missions of the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations and the Inter-American Human Rights System, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture
- Sign and/or ratify the treaties that guarantee the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which establishes a system of periodic visits by independent international and national bodies to places of detention, with the aim of preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment.
- Guarantee that people can exercise their right to the freedom of expression and assembly, without fear of reprisals.

Please send your appeals to:

### Attorney General

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz  
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio Público,  
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo  
Avenida México  
Caracas, Venezuela.  
Email: [ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve](mailto:ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve)  
Fax: +58 212 578 3239  
Salutation: Dear Attorney / Dra. Fiscal

### Defence Minister

Almirante en Jefa Carmen Teresa Meléndez Rivas  
Edificio Sede del Ministerio del Poder Popular para  
la Defensa, Fuerte Tiuna, El Valle  
Caracas, Venezuela.  
Email: [emily.spiritto@mindefensa.gob.ve](mailto:emily.spiritto@mindefensa.gob.ve)  
Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimada Ministra

### Comandante CEOFANB

Gral. en Jefe Vladimir Padrino López  
Alcabala Nro. 5 Vía Tazón,  
Fuerte Tiuna, El Valle  
Caracas, Venezuela.  
Salutation: Dear General in Chief/  
Estimado General en Jefe

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