

URGENT ACTION

STOP WITHHOLDING DETAINEES' MEDICAL CARE

On 19 February 2024, Juan Carlos Marrufo was unexpectedly transferred to Venezuelan prison Rodeo I, almost three years into his politically motivated arbitrary detention. While his health deteriorates, the authorities deny him testing and treatment. María Auxiliadora Delgado, married to Juan Carlos and also arbitrarily detained since 19 March 2019, requires immediate medical tests. Emirlendris Benitez, arbitrarily arrested in August 2018, suffers ailments resulting from the torture she was subjected to. She requires immediate surgery to treat her conditions. We call on president Nicolás Maduro to ensure their release and, while in custody, ensure they receive medical attention immediately.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President Nicolas Maduro

Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela,
Edificio Palacio de Miraflores,
Avenida Urdaneta,
Caracas, Venezuela
Twitter: @NicolasMaduro

Dear Mr. Nicolas Maduro,

The authorities responsible for the life and safety of all detainees in Venezuela must immediately stop withholding medical care. The neglect of the health of Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado is unacceptable and violates their human rights. All three need urgent medical attention, which authorities under your command must provide immediately.

Emirlendris Benítez's is a mother, sister and businessowner who should have never been detained, let alone endure an unfair 30-year prison sentence. She is victim of arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, discrimination, unfair trial, and inhumane prison conditions. As a result of all these injustices, she requires urgent surgery to treat potentially life-threatening health conditions. It is within your power to put a stop to her suffering and avoid irreversible damage.

María Auxiliadora Delgado and Juan Carlos Marrufo have been unfairly detained for approximately three years. Both require urgent medical tests to diagnose and treat health conditions that put their safety, and potentially their lives, at risk. They were first arrested on 19 March 2019 by the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM). They are victims of arbitrary detentions, inhumane detention conditions, and have been deprived of their plans of growing their family.

Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado should be immediately and unconditionally released. While they remain in custody of the state, you must guarantee their life and safety. We urge you to urgently grant them access to trusted and adequate medical care, including urgent testing and treatment.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Emirlendris Benitez is a Venezuelan mother, sister, and tradeswoman. On 5 August 2018, Emirlendris was arbitrarily detained on fabricated grounds. Authorities falsely linked her to acts of violence committed against high-profile political leaders in Venezuela; an accusation for which there is no evidence and which she has consistently stated that she had no part in. In custody, she was subjected to torture while pregnant. A few weeks after her arrest, she was forcibly transferred to a medical facility and her pregnancy was terminated without her knowledge or consent. The torture she was subjected to left her needing the long-term use of a wheelchair for mobility. In 2022, she was sentenced to a 30-year prison sentence by a partial and politically motivated court. Emirlendris should have never been detained, as it is believed the charges are politically motivated. Furthermore, the draconian sentence against her should be revoked and she must be immediately released.

Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado were first arrested on 19 March 2019 by the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM). They are a married couple, holding dual Spanish and Italian nationalities, respectively. They had decided to undergo an in vitro fertilization treatment when they were arrested. Their only connection to criminal offenses seems to be limited to María Auxiliadora being the sister of a retired military officer with alleged ties to an attack on Nicolás Maduro. Not only are they victims of arbitrary detentions, but they have also been deprived of their plans of growing their family. While María Auxiliadora remains in custody of the DGCIM at their detention center in Boleíta, Caracas, Juan Carlos was unexpectedly transferred to the prison referred to as Rodeo I. They require immediate medical tests and diagnosis.

Their detentions are not an isolated issue. They fall within a widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detentions -amongst other international crimes and human rights violations- used to target those considered critical of Nicolás Maduro's government and could therefore constitute crimes against humanity. Other victims of arbitrary detention include human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Javier Tarazona, detained since July 2021, and human rights defender Rocio San Miguel, who was forcibly disappeared for five days and continues to be detained since 9 February 2024.

Civil society organisations face systemic threats from the government in Venezuela. Nicolás Maduro's government has continually harassed, prosecuted, and censored activists and civil society organizations working to protect the rights of Venezuelans amidst a complex humanitarian emergency and a deep human rights crisis that is making Venezuelans flee in unprecedented numbers in search of safety and protection. By November 2023, over 7.72 million had fled the country, representing over 25% of the country's total population.

Since 2020, four reports from the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have thoroughly documented hundreds of cases of extrajudicial executions; enforced disappearances; arbitrary detentions; and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment committed in the country since 2014; as well as the ways in which the justice system serves as a tool for the government's policy of repression, and concluded that these grave human rights violations may amount to crimes against humanity.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 April 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Emirlendris Benítez (she/her), Juan Carlos Marrufo (he/him), María Auxiliadora Delgado (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [Venezuela: Venezuelan detainees need immediate care - Amnesty International](#)