

URGENT ACTION

RELEASE PERSONS ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Around 900 people remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons in Venezuela, according to the Venezuelan NGO Foro Penal. Many of these people are subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and arbitrary deprivation of liberty, with systematic lack of fair trial guarantees, prolonged incommunicado detention and denial of medical care. We call on Nicolás Maduro to release all those arbitrarily detained and to protect their lives and physical integrity while in detention, in particular by ensuring access to family visits and a defence counsel of their choice, in addition to dignified conditions of detention.

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

President of the Republic Nicolás Maduro
Palacio de Miraflores,
Av. Nte. 10, Caracas 1012,
Caracas, Venezuela

President Maduro,

We are writing to demand the release and protection of the lives and physical integrity of all those deprived of their liberty for political reasons in Venezuela, including members of the opposition who are being punished for their political opinions.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the Venezuelan authorities are using enforced disappearance to remove detained persons from the protection of the law and to facilitate acts of torture and other ill-treatment against them, including their families. In many cases, even when families are able to learn of the whereabouts of detainees, they are subjected to full, prolonged and arbitrary incommunicado detention.

In the cases of Pedro Guanipa, Perkins Rocha, Rafael Ramírez, Américo de Grazia, Biagio Pilieri, Freddy Superlano, Luis Somaza, Alfredo Díaz, Luis Palocz, Ricardo Estevez, Jesús Armas, María Oropeza, Nélide Sánchez, Roland Carreño, Williams Dávila and Edwin Moya, many of their relatives were unaware of their whereabouts for days or weeks. In some cases, to this day they are still unsure of whether their family member is actually in the prison centre that the authorities claim they are, and are often only able to locate their family member through unofficial sources.

Enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment are absolutely prohibited under international human rights law. The victims of these crimes have the right under international law to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. In this regard, investigations conducted by independent courts abroad are of enormous importance.

We demand that you immediately release the persons mentioned above and all other persons arbitrarily detained for political reasons, and that while they remain in detention you ensure their access to family visits, the appointment of a trusted defence counsel, medical care and all guarantees of a fair trial.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Venezuela has been suffering a profound human rights crisis for more than ten years. During this time, Amnesty International has reported serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and a complex humanitarian emergency that has caused more than 25% of the population to flee the country. The ongoing political repression by the government of Nicolás Maduro, aimed at silencing any form of real or perceived dissent, reached historic levels following the presidential elections of 28 July 2024. The patterns of persecution registered as from that date were consistent with those reported in the previous decade and still continue in April 2025.

Since 28 July 2024, more than [2,000 arbitrary detentions](#) of protestors, political opponents, activists, human rights defenders and even bystanders have been recorded. These more than 2,000 persons were in addition to the at least 300 people detained before the elections. Almost all of these individuals have been subjected to arbitrary criminal proceedings, on charges of “terrorism” and inciting hatred, many of them simply for dissenting with the current government. [Children and adolescents](#), as well as people living with some form of [disability](#), have also been victims of these human rights violations, and many of them have additionally been subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. According to the Venezuelan NGO Foro Penal, as of 10 April 2025, 896 people were in arbitrary detention for political reasons, and the whereabouts of 62 persons were unknown.

As part of its policy of repression, the Venezuelan government has intimidated, criminalized and censored civil society organizations and activists, who are working in a highly repressive environment with no access to basic rights such as health, education or access to food. This deadly combination has forced an unprecedented number of Venezuelans to flee the country in search of safety and protection. As of December 2024, [7.9 million](#) Venezuelan nationals had left the country.

From 2020, reports from the UN [Independent International Fact-Finding Mission](#) (FFM) on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have comprehensively documented hundreds of cases of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions and torture and other ill-treatment committed in the country since 2014. The FFM has also documented the ways in which the justice system is used as an instrument for the government’s policy of repression and has concluded that some of the international crimes and human rights violations constitute crimes against humanity. In particular, in its 2024 report, the FFM concluded that it had “reasonable grounds to believe that the crime of persecution on political grounds has been committed during the timeframe covered by its mandate”.

Since November 2021, the [Office of the Prosecutor](#) of the [International Criminal Court](#) is conducting a criminal investigation on the situation in Venezuela, in particular on crimes against humanity including “...imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty; torture; rape and other forms of sexual violence; persecution on political grounds...” committed by state security forces, civil authorities and pro-government collectives at least since April 2017.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 11 October 2025. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after this date.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUNS: Persons detained for political reasons (they, them, their)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/8396/2024/en/>