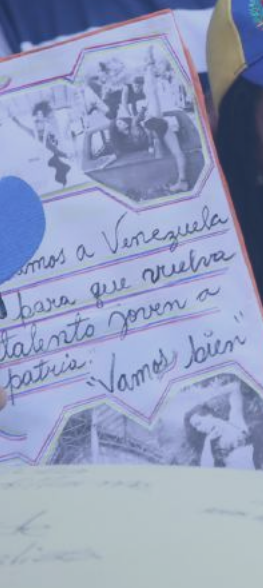




Foro Penal



WOMEN

VICTIMS OF

POLITICAL REPRESSION

IN VENEZUELA

YEAR 2020



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This report was prepared and coordinated by Alfredo Romero and Gonzalo Himiob Santomé, with the collaboration of Mariela Suárez, Patricia Velázquez and based on the information provided by the regional coordinators of Foro Penal and lawyers who are members of the Organization.

Foro Penal is an NGO that has worked in the defense of human rights since 2002, providing free assistance to victims of State repression, including arbitrary detentions, serious human rights violations, torture, and cruel, inhuman treatment or degrading. Currently, Foro Penal has approximately 200 volunteer lawyers and more than two thousand activists throughout Venezuela who are in charge of providing legal assistance and support to victims.

Foro Penal has been awarded various national and international human rights awards for their work in the defense of human rights.

YEAR
2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2020, the organization issued a special report about women who have been victims of political repression in the country¹. This report is an update which includes new cases of women political prisoners and updated data on arrests for political purposes carried out in women, as of December 2020.

As of December, 31 2020, there are a total of 26 political female prisoners² in Venezuela, including 24 civilians and 2 military officials. Of the total number of political prisoners, 12 of them are under house arrest and 14 have been sent to the following detention centers: Headquarters of the General Directorate of Military Intelligence (Boleíta, Caracas), National Institute for Women Orientation (Los Teques, Miranda state), Training Center for Female Prosecutors "*La Crisálida*" (Los Teques, Miranda State), Headquarters of the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (Bolívar state), Special Actions Force Headquarters (Nueva Esparta), Special Actions Force Headquarters (Táchira state), Detachment 51 of the Bolivarian National Guard (Monagas state), The Bolivarian National Police Headquarters (La Yaguara, Caracas).

1 <https://foropenal.com/reporte-mujeres-victimas-de-la-represion-politica-en-venezuela-2014-a-agosto-de-2020/>

2 For practical purposes, Foro Penal's labelling of "political prisoner" is based, on the one hand, on the concept of "prisoner" in its broad sense. On the other, it looks at the political goal of the incarceration thus adding the adjective "political" to the qualified prisoner.

As for the concept of "prisoner", this includes those deprived of liberty but not yet formally sentenced, those under house arrest, and those already sentenced, all in line with the distinctions included in the section "Use of Terms" (literal "b" and "c") of the Set of Principles for the protection of all persons subjected to any form of detention or imprisonment of the UN (Resolution 43/173, of December 9, 1988). A person arrested is not referred to by Foro Penal as a political "prisoner", but as "detained" or "arrested". Foro Penal only uses the term "prisoner" when, in reference to that detainee or arrested person: 1) A formal decision arises from the judicial authority ordering their preventive deprivation of liberty; or 2) When the maximum legal and constitutional term expires (48 hours from his arrest or detention) without being released or without being presented before the competent judicial authority. Regarding the classification as "political" of the deprivation of liberty, whether it is a detainee or a prisoner, Foro Penal analyzes the political objective of the unlawful deprivation of liberty. In this sense, political detainees or prisoners are divided into five (5) categories:

Category 1: Those persecuted or political prisoners, detained or convicted, for individually representing a political threat to the regime, for being political or social leaders and where the objective of the deprivation of liberty is political exclusion.

Category 2: Those detained or imprisoned not for representing a political threat. In this case the objective is intimidation. This group includes among others students, communicators, the military and political activists.

Category 3: Those who, without being considered a political threat by the regime individually or as part of a social group, are arbitrarily detained or imprisoned to be used in support of a campaign or a certain political narrative of power with respect to certain situations of national transcendence of political interest for the regime. In this case the objective is propaganda.

Category 4: Those who are detained or imprisoned in order to extract information that allows the regime to locate other people that they want to neutralize, press or intimidate.

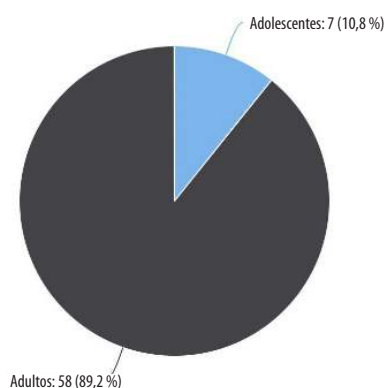
Category 5: Any other not belonging to the previous categories. Includes those persons illegally deprived of liberty for a personal purpose of a regime authority, who abusing his authoritarian political power, deprives a person of liberty as a reprimand.

Between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2020, the cumulative number of political detainees³ in the country was 15,688 people, among these detainees, a total of 1,745 were women. Specifically, with regards to the total number of women political detainees during this year 2020, there were 65 arrests. It was determined that the highest number of detentions for political purposes of women this year, took place as of March, within the context of protests due to failures in basic services, with May being the month that reported the highest number of women detained for political purposes, specifically 18 arrests. It is worth noting that 51% of the detentions for political purposes against women of the year were carried out by officials of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) and that the greatest number of arrests for political purposes against women took place in the Capital District and in the state of Zulia.

DETENTIONS OF WOMEN FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

FORO PENAL verified that between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2020, the accumulated historical number of arrests for political purposes in the country was 15,688.. Of this, a total of 1,745 were women, 14 of them military officials. In terms of age, 1,655 were adults (95%) and 90 were adolescents (5%).

During 2020 specifically, 65 women were reported detained for political purposes. Of this, 7 were adolescents (11%) and 58 were adults (89%).



Total Detentions for political purposes (By age) 01/01/2020-12/31/2020

The month with the highest number of women detained for political purposes was May, with 18 detained women, followed by April, with 13 detained women, July with 9 detained women, March with 7 detained women, and September with 7 women detained. These 5 months were the ones that reported the highest numbers. Below is a table with the 2020 figures, per month, of arrests of women for political purposes.:

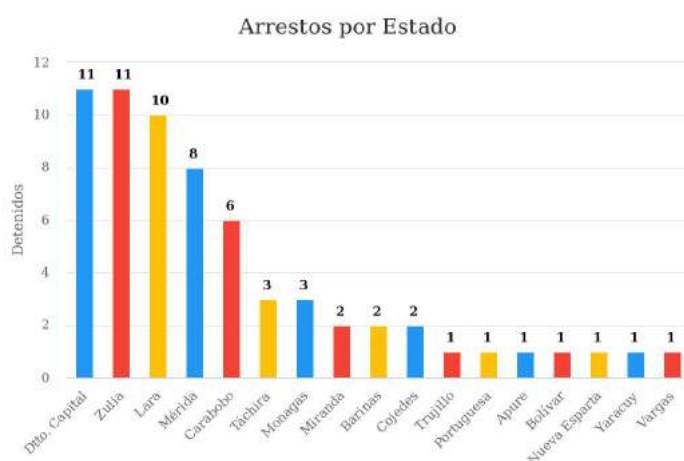
³ As "political detainees" we refer to those persons detained "for political purposes" (within the categories indicated above), but who have not been formally imprisoned by court order or who have not passed the period of 48 hours after their arrest without being presented in court. As for the definition of "political prisoner", which does include persons formally deprived of liberty, see the definition below. It should be noted that the "political detainees" figure includes all those who have been detained, including those who, due to the aforementioned, become "political prisoners"

Month	Women detained por political purpose
January	01
February	01
March	07
April	13
May	18
June	05
July	09
August	01
September	07
October	02
November	0
December	01

Total Detentions for political purposes 01/01/2020-12/31/2021: 65

As can be seen, the increase in arrests began in March (the month in which there was official information on the first cases of COVID-19 in Venezuela⁴) and the month in which the state of alarm was decreed by the government of Nicolás Maduro , due to the COVID-19 pandemic⁵.

The Capital District and Zulia states were the states with the highest numbers of women detained in all of 2020, with 11 arrests in each of these entities, respectively. For its part, Lara state reported 10 arrests, Mérida state 8 arrests and Carabobo state 6 arrests. These 5 states account for 71% of women arrests for political purposes . As can be seen in the below graphic, the remaining 29% of the arrests of women occurred in: Táchira, Monagas, Miranda, Barinas, Cojedes, Trujillo, Portuguesa, Apure, Bolívar, Nueva Esparta, Yaracuy and La Guaira.

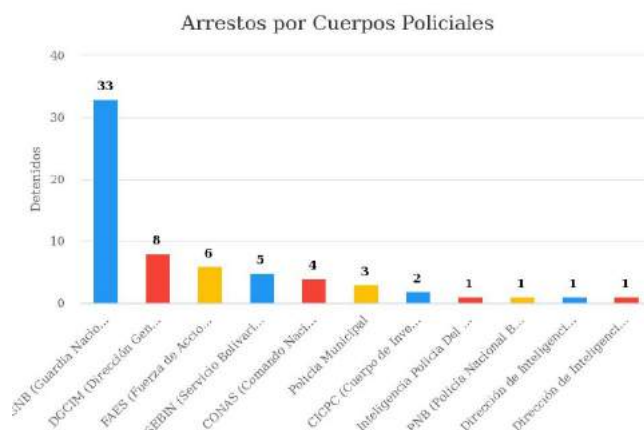


Detentions for political purposes (By State) 01/01/2020-12/31/2021

4 BBC: Coronavirus in Venezuela: How prepared is the country to face the pandemic after confirming its first two cases. March 13, 2020. See: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-lati-na-51876226>

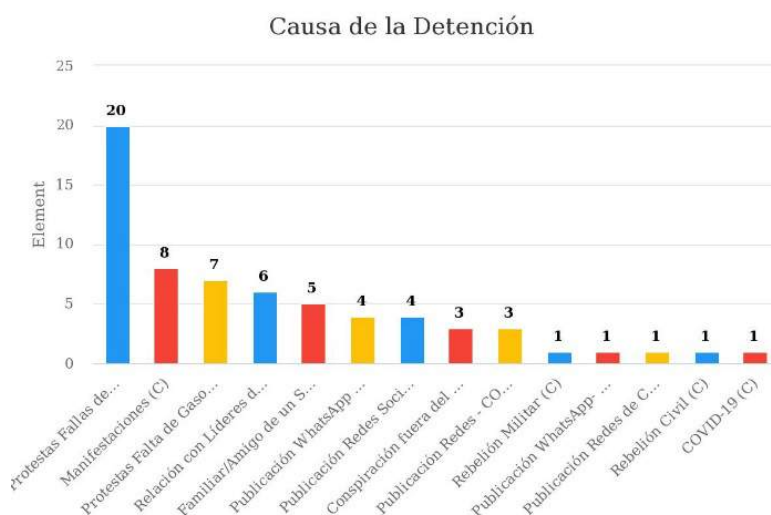
5 Lookup: <https://www.finanzasdigital.com/2020/03/gaceta-oficial-extraordinaria-n6-519-se-decreta-el-estado-de-alar-ma-en-todo-el-territory-nacional-by-epidemic-of-coronavirus-covid-19/>

It is worth noting that the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) carried out 51% of the arrests for political purposes of women in 2020. 33 women were detained by this security body. The rest of the arrests were made by other various security forces, as shown in the following graph:



Detentions for political purposes (By Security Forces) 01/01/2020-12/31/2021

It is noteworthy that 42% of arbitrary arrests for political purposes against women occurred in the framework of peaceful and spontaneous protests by citizens, due to failures in the provision of basic water and electricity services and due to the shortage of domestic gas cylinders (20 arrests), as well as a significant number of arrests against women, in protests over the shortage of fuel for vehicles (7 arrests). Below is a graph with the figures and causes of detention, which occurred between January and December 2020:



Women arrests (By detention cause) 01/01/2020 -12/31/2020

WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

The historical accumulated number of women classified as political prisoners, from the period between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2020, shows a total of 406 women political prisoners. This figure has varied over time (either increasing or decreasing) in accordance

with what Foro Penal has described as the “revolving door”⁶ effect, i.e. while some prisoners are released, others are simultaneously arrested, which is why a significant number of political prisoners are kept behind bars, in this case particularly women.

At December 31, 2020, there were a total of 26 women political prisoners in Venezuela, including 2 military officials and 24 civilian citizens.

Of these, 12 were under house arrest while the rest of them were in different detention centers in the country, as can be seen in the following table:

Center of reclusion	Number of women political prisoners
House arrest	12
General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence Headquarters (Boleita, Caracas)	05
National Institute of Female Orientation (Los Teques, Miranda state)	02
Training Center for Processed Women "La Crisálida" (Los Teques, Miranda State)	02
General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence Headquarters (Bolívar State)	01
Special Actions Forces Headquarters (Nueva Esparta State)	01
Special Actions Force Headquarters (Táchira State)	01
Detachment 51 of the Bolivarian National Guard (Monagas State)	01
Bolivarian National Police Headquarters (La Yaguara, Caracas)	01

Here are some cases of women political prisoners:

Maireni Joselin Montilla Vela 33 years old. Detained on December 17, 2020 together with her husband Fernando Rafael Pino, without a court order, while they were moving from the city of Mérida to the city of Valera, in the Trujillo state, when passing through a check point of the Bolivarian National Guard, in the sector called Mucuruba (Mérida state). She was later transferred to the GNB Command located in the La Mata sector. According to the testimony of his relatives, Fernando Rafael Pino was hired by an unknown person, to transfer publicity material (flyers) related to the popular consultation, called by the Venezuelan opposition for December 12, 2020. cell phones, vehicle and steering wheels. At the presentation hearing, the Public Ministry charged them with the alleged crime of "Conspiracy to destroy the Republic." The court in the case admitted the crime charged, for which **Maireni Joselin Montilla** and her husband were deprived of liberty, under house arrest.

Lisbany Esther Aguilar López, 24 years old. Served as Second Sergeant of the Bolivarian National Navy, and officer working for the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM). She was detained on May 14, 2019, at her home located in the San Joaquín municipality (Carabobo state), by DGCIM officials, who took her from her residence under deceit and requested her to accompany them arguing that a superior had sent for her due to lack of staff to work in the office. , Once she was transferred to the DGCIM headquarters, she was placed in an interrogation room. A senior official told her that she was in trouble and that she should

⁶ The “Revolving Door Effect” has been so defined by the Executive Director of the Venezuelan Foro Penal and University professor Alfredo Romero, in his research work carried out as a fellow of the Carr Center for Human Rights of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University .

confess the truth and began to question her about several of her colleagues. On May 16, two days after her arrest, she was transferred along with other colleagues to the headquarters of the Corps for Scientific, Criminal and Criminal Investigations (CICPC), where they extra-officially told her that they would be blaming her for favoring the former minister's (Miguel Rodríguez Torres) escape plans.. She was presented before military courts on May 22, 2019. She is currently deprived of liberty, confined in the National Institute for Female Orientation (I.N.O.F) located in Los Teques, Miranda state. She has health problems (an infection was detected in her urine).

Rosa Bianey Moreno. 50 years old. Detained on September 30, 2020, along with a group of people, by officials of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) during a protest over failures in basic services in the urbanization "Las Tejitas de San Carlos " (Cojedes state). She was presented before the courts on October 2, 2020. At her presentation hearing, she was granted the measure of presentation of guarantors, in order to allow her house arrest. On November 16, 2020, she was granted home arrest. ,She is currently formally deprived of liberty, at her home.

Jhoana Del Carmen Castillo Molina. Detained on September 30, 2020, along with a group of people, by officials of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) during a protest for failures in basic services in the urbanization "Las Tejitas de San Carlos" (Cojedes state). She was presented to the courts on October 2, 2020. At her presentation hearing, she was granted the alternative measure of presentation of guarantors, in order to allow her house arrest. On November 16, 2020, she was granted house arrest. She is currently formally deprived of liberty, at her home.

Angela Lizbeth Expósito Carrillo. 53 years old. University professor, retired from the Simón Bolívar University. Angela has an NGO called "Fundanimalia" that focuses on defending the rights of animals. She was detained on September 21, 2018, when heavily armed SEBIN officials arrived at her home in the early morning hours, located in the Carrizal urbanization, in the state of Miranda. Her case is linked to the alleged assassination attempt against Nicolás Maduro, which occurred on August 4, 2018, on Avenida Bolívar in Caracas. On September 27, 2018, she was presented before the first terrorism court in Caracas and charged with the alleged crimes of: Terrorism, terrorism financing and criminal association. The headquarters of the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) located in El Helicoide, Caracas, was ordered as a detention center. As an animal protectionist, **Angela Lizbeth Expósito Carrillo** took charge of the dogs of Oscar Pérez, a former CICPC official (killed in January 2018 along with a group of at least 6 people) who made himself known in 2017 for carrying out maneuvers against some headquarters of public organizations and military installations and for calling people's disobedience. The case of **Angela Lizbeth Expósito Carrillo** is currently in the trial phase.

Marifrancys Del Carmen Marciano Vásquez and **Ana María Pernía Méndez**, 37 and 38 years old, respectively. On April 25, 2020 at approximately 5:40 p.m. they were traveling together in the vehicle owned by **Marifrancys Marciano**, to their home located in the Buenaventura de Guarenas building (Miranda state), when, before entering the building's parking lot, they noticed that they were being followed by a rustic green vehicle identified as belonging to the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN). **Marifrancys Marciano** called her mother at once to notify her of what was happening. The mother looked out from the balcony and observed

how her daughter and her companion were being intercepted by police officers, who did not let them get out of the vehicle. They were arbitrarily detained, without an arrest warrant and without their relatives knowing of their whereabouts. They were kept in enforced disappearance along with at least 12 other people, for at least 1 month. Their arrest is related to the assault on detachment 441 of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) located in the sector known as Puerta Morocha, Los Teques, (Miranda state). At a press conference on May 8, 2020, Tarek William Saab, Attorney General of the government of Nicolás Maduro, stated that **Marifrancys Marciano** and **Ana María Pernía** were arrested along with a group of people on May 6 (when they were actually arrested on 25 April 2020). Subsequently, on May 16, 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice published a press release in which it states that **Marifrancys Marciano** and **Ana María Pernía** were presented on May 15, before the special fourth court in charge of terrorism in Caracas, being deprived of liberty for the alleged crimes of: "Terrorism", "Financing of terrorism" and "Treason against the Fatherland". As of the closing date of this report, both are still deprived of liberty at the DGCIM headquarters located in the Boleíta urbanization of Caracas.

Andreina José Alemán Castellano and **Yolimar Alemán De Chaya**, 40 and 41 years old respectively. Arbitrarily detained on April 20, 2020 when a commission from the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM /Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar) illegally broke into their parents' home (where they were) located in the city of Puerto Cabello (Carabobo state). The officials were looking for Richard Alemán Castellano (First Lieutenant of the GNB) but since he was not in the house, they took them and a cousin who was in the house. They were kept in forced disappearance along with at least 12 other people, for at least 1 month. At a press conference on May 8, 2020, Tarek William Saab, Attorney General of the government of Nicolás Maduro, indicated that they were arrested with a group of people on May 6 (when they were actually detained on April 20, 2020). Their arrest is related to the assault on detachment 441 of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) located in the sector known as Puerta Morocha, Los Teques (Miranda state). Subsequently, on May 28, 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice published a press release in which it states that both were presented on May 27, before the fourth special court in terrorism functions, being deprived of liberty for the alleged crimes of : "Terrorism", "Financing terrorism" and "Treason against the fatherland". As of the closing date of this report, both are still deprived of liberty at the DGCIM headquarters located in the Boleíta urbanization of Caracas.

Raibeth Coromoto Azuaje Vielma, 43 years old by profession a public accountant. She was taken at her work place in the headquarters of Petróleos de Venezuela, nucleus of the West (PDVSA OCCIDENTE) located in the Simón Bolívar municipality of Zulia state, arrested on October 24, 2017 by officials of the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) . Her presentation hearing took place on October 27, 2017, before the second court of first instance in control of the judicial circuit of the state of Zulia. In the aforementioned presentation hearing, he was charged with the alleged crimes of: "Association to commit a crime" (Article 37 of the Law against organized crime and terrorist financing), "Embezzlement", "Damage to the industry and trafficking of strategic material ". Due to the fact that she was breastfeeding, shewas transferred from the DGCIM headquarters, located in Lagunillas (Zulia) to her residence.

FINAL REMARKS

The number of women political prisoners and detentions for political purposes against women during 2020, show once again, the control by the Government of the justice system and the injustice executed by security forces against citizens who demonstrate against, or disagree with, the Government policies. According to the information verified and provided in this report, political repression against women in 2020 escalated from the moment that the COVID-19 state of alarm was decreed.

As of the closing date of this report, a significant number of women continue to be detained and formally deprived of liberty for strictly political reasons, making it clear that repression, as a form of control and intimidation carried out by the government of Nicolás Maduro, systematically violates the human rights of citizens, in this case of defenseless women, many of them mothers who provide the economic support of their families.

From Foro Penal we reiterate the importance of Nicolás Maduro's Government putting an end to repression for political reasons in Venezuela and we ask for the release of all political prisoners.



Foro Penal

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