

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS MUST BE RELEASED

In January 2026, human rights defenders Rocío San Miguel and Carlos Julio Rojas were released after being arbitrarily detained since February and April 2024, respectively. The charges against both have reportedly not been dropped and three other human rights defenders remain arbitrarily detained: Javier Tarazona, Kennedy Tejada, and Eduardo Torres. Along with them, over 700 other individuals remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons, as of 19 January. We call on Delcy Rodríguez to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained individuals and protect their rights to life, physical integrity, and fair trial, specifically ensuring trusted medical care and family visits.

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

Delcy Rodríguez
Acting President of the Republic
Palacio de Miraflores,
Av. Nte. 10, Caracas 1012,
Caracas, Venezuela

Ms Delcy Rodríguez,

We took note of the long-awaited-for release of human rights defenders Rocío San Miguel and Carlos Julio Rojas. Since their respective arbitrary detentions in 2024, we have called on the Venezuelan government to unconditionally release them. We continue calling for all charges against them to be dropped, and any arbitrary restrictions on their liberty stopped.

We remain concerned over the safety and personal integrity of other human rights defenders who continue to be arbitrarily detained for their activism, including Javier Tarazona, detained since 2 July 2021, now held in commonly-called 'El Helicoide'; Kennedy Tejada, detained on 2 August 2024, now held in Tocorón prison; and Eduardo Torres, detained on 9 May 2025, held in Yare II prison after being secretly transferred from 'El Helicoide' in late 2025.

As of 19 January 2026, approximately 800 other politically motivated arbitrary detainees, including nationals from Colombia, Spain, and Italy, amongst other nationalities, are currently being unfairly held in Venezuelan detention centres and subjected to unfair trials, all the while suffering an endless list of other human rights violations and international crimes, such as enforced disappearances and torture.

Meanwhile, their relatives and loved ones, supported by civil society organisations, collectives, associations, and communities, bravely and relentlessly call for the immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained for political reasons in Venezuela. Their calls must be heard, and the suffering they have endured should be met with justice and accountability, offered by competent and independent courts outside of the country.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Eduardo Torres, Javier Tarazona, and Kennedy Tejada, and that of all politically-motivated arbitrary detainees in Venezuela. We also demand that the fate and whereabouts of all forcibly disappeared persons are immediately disclosed and that, whilst in your custody, detainees receive adequate medical care, are allowed family visits, and see their fair trial guarantees protected.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Venezuelan government's long-standing policy of repression to silence any form of real or perceived dissent has continuously used politically motivated arbitrary detentions to persecute people in Venezuela. Throughout many years, authorities have implemented a so-called 'revolving door' of detentions, whereby releases are usually followed by new detentions. Similarly, those released are kept subjected to arbitrary criminal proceedings and restrictions to their liberty, perpetuating fear, revictimization, and human rights violations. This practice reached a historic peak after the 28 July 2024 election, which saw over [2,000 people arbitrarily detained](#) for political reasons, many of them charged with seemingly unfounded counts of terrorism and incitement of hatred, including vulnerable groups such as [children and people living with disabilities](#).

Between December 2025 and early January 2026, authorities released a small proportion of the approximately 1,000 politically motivated arbitrary detainees being held at the time. On 3 January, [USA's military action](#) in Venezuela led to the capture of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, and the swearing in of Delcy Rodríguez as acting president of Venezuela. A few days later, National Assembly president, Jorge Rodríguez, announced that a "significant number" of people detained will be released. Local civil society organisations have only been able to verify approximately 150 released since 8 January 2026. According to the local organization Foro Penal, as of 19 January 2026, 777 people remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons.

Amnesty International's July 2025 report [Detentions Without a Trace](#) profiled 15 individuals whose stories demonstrated the widespread use of enforced disappearances, specifically between August 2024 and June 2025. As of 19 January 2026, the fate and whereabouts of Jorgen Guanares remain unknown, while Alfredo Diaz died in custody of the state in December 2025. The remaining individuals have either been released or been located.

Within this policy of repression, the 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 May 2025, [7.9 million](#) had fled Venezuela.

Human rights defenders in Venezuela are at a constant risk of harassment, attacks and detention. Nicolás Maduro's government, now led by former Vice-President and current Acting President Delcy Rodríguez, continues applying laws that aim to control and silence human rights and civil society organizations, such as the law adopted in August 2024 titled 'Law for the audit, regularization, action and financing of non-governmental and related organizations', or so-called 'anti-NGO law'.

Since 2020, reports from the UN independent international [fact-finding mission](#) on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFM) 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, concluding that some of these international crimes and human rights violations amount to crimes against humanity. Specifically in 2024, the FFM concluded that it has "reasonable grounds to believe that the crime of persecution on political grounds has been committed during the timeframe covered by its mandate". Its conclusions were once again reiterated in its 2025 reporting.

Since November 2021, the Office of the [Prosecutor](#) of the [International Criminal Court](#) is conducting a criminal investigation into the situation in Venezuela, specifically regarding the "[c]rimes against humanity of deprivation of liberty or other serious deprivation of physical liberty (...); torture (...); rape and/or other forms of sexual violence of comparable severity (...); and politically motivated persecution against persons detained (...), which were committed since at least April 2017, by members of the State security forces, civil authorities and pro-government persons (or groups called "collectives").

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 June 2026
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Venezuelan human rights defenders (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/0203/2025/en/>