

Caracas, July 3, 2024

Mr. Volker Türk
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
His Office

We, the undersigned Venezuelan social and human rights organizations, wish you success in your work to promote and protect human dignity in the world and in Venezuela.

The purpose of this communication is to express our concern about the potential increase in human rights violations as of July 4, 2024, the day on which the electoral campaign officially begins in Venezuela, during the elections scheduled for July 28, 2024 and the days after that date. Since the beginning of the year 2024, different leaders and candidates have been carrying out activities to promote their options to occupy the presidency of the country for the period 2025-2031. In this context, and during the first six months of the year, we have been able to document different violations to the fundamental freedoms and rights of freedom of association and assembly, peaceful demonstration as well as expression and information.

According to data collected by the NGO Laboratorio de Paz y Acceso a la Justicia (Peace and Access to Justice Laboratory), as of Friday, June 28, 2024, the following occurred:

- **Arbitrary detentions:** 46 arbitrary detentions against political and social leaders in the country, 7 women and 39 men.
- **Enforced disappearances** Very alarming is the fact that out of 46 arbitrary detentions, 82% of people suffered short-term enforced disappearances.
- **Violations of due process:** In the 46 arbitrary detentions, the guarantees of due process and the right to defense, have been violated.
- **Harassment and persecution for political reasons:** Likewise, there have been at least 32 acts of harassment and 12 cases of persecution against political activists. This includes 6 persons who have taken refuge in the Argentine embassy in Caracas without having been granted safe conduct to leave the country, in violation of the Convention on Diplomatic Asylum.
- **Reprisals and tax penalties:** Within the framework of the campaign in favor of the candidacy of the Unitary Platform for candidate Edmundo Gonzalez, in the tour made by political leader Maria Corina Machado to 17 states in 16 of them, acts of reprisals have occurred. At least 22 actions were documented for having supplied goods and services to the campaign. Among them, the cessation and closures for more than 30 days against 17 establishments by the National Integrated Customs and Tax Administration Service (SENIAT). Affecting small merchants, family businesses of lodging and sale of food, confiscating vehicles, dugout canoes and sound systems. It is very worrying that in the majority of cases they take away the main source of work and sustenance of families in a complex humanitarian emergency.
- **Political disqualifications:** In total, during 2024, 19 political leaders and officials linked to the opposition have been administratively disqualified. Among them, 12 mayors elected by popular vote have been disqualified.
- **Violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression:** 14 radio stations have been closed, 6 cases of censorship against journalists and 47 digital media continue to be blocked by service providers.
- **Obstruction to free circulation:** In the states of Apure, Amazonas, Cojedes, Falcón, Mérida, Miranda, and Táchira, road closures were carried out, obstructing for up to more than 10 hours the passage and accesses, affecting merchants, sick people, farmers, students, workers and the population in general.

Roadblocks, tolls and road closures implemented by security agencies and the Guardia Nacional Bolivariana (National Guard). In the state of Táchira, the tree felling and the breaking of perfectly good roads to limit traffic in remote areas, were documented.

- **Intimidation: 1)** Congressman Diosdado Cabello on June 26, in his program "Con el mazo dando" (with the sledgehammer) declared that he had in his possession the data of the persons who have voluntarily registered for the promotion of the vote in favor of the unitary platform. It is worth recalling the serious human rights violations resulting from persecutory lists generated by the Venezuelan state, such as the Tascón List and the Maisanta List, in a clear threat and intimidating act against citizens in their right to political participation. 2) The activation in January 2024, of the "Bolivarian Fury", a form of targeted repression, but with a high degree of intimidation and intimidation against the critical population. With actions of temporary forced disappearance, arbitrary detentions, persecution, kidnapping attempts, threats, marking of facades.

In the right to elect, we wish to highlight that actions have been implemented that violate, alter and hinder the right to political participation and vote, highlighting: a) The revocation of the invitation of the European electoral observation mission, limiting and leaving without the possibility of a complete accompaniment of the election day, with independence for the publication, declarations and recommendations. Only the invitation to experts with severe limitations in their actions and reports remained; b) outside the period of time the CNE approved Resolution N° 240620-054 which modifies the regulations for accreditation of witnesses, changing the possibility of being a witness in any center and table limiting it to those who vote in the tables; c) limiting requirements were placed for the majority of Venezuelan migrants to register or update data in the Electoral Registry, failing in turn with the starting date and with the placement and activation of the equipment for the update; of the 7.5 million Venezuelans around 4 million are of voting age, however only 69,000 will be able to vote; d) In 54.71% of the voting centers there will only be 1 table available per center, totaling 8,644 tables for 3,928.288 voters, centers where large amounts of denunciations have been repeatedly documented; e) repeated denunciations that the data in the verification in the text message line and the page of the National Electoral Council do not coincide, generating confusion among the electorate; f) Arbitrary changes of voting sites.

All of the situations described above constitute a clear violation of the obligations voluntarily acquired by the Venezuelan State in the Barbados Agreement for transparent, free, competitive and fair elections.

We warn about the systematic, generalized and executed pattern by state institutions to violate rights enshrined in our National Constitution and in international human rights treaties and covenants. These systematic actions harm the right of the population to elect and be elected, generating greater restrictions in the civic space. It is for this reason that we would like to express our concern that, as of July 4th, the pattern of violations documented so far will increase exponentially.

We ask you, as the highest representative of the United Nations human rights protection system, to monitor, speak out loud and clear, as well as to exhaust all actions within your mandate to accompany the Venezuelan population in their right to peacefully and participatively resolve their conflicts, to choose their destiny in a non-violent manner, to exercise with guarantees and standards their right to vote in credible, inclusive, transparent, competitive and legitimate elections.

We thank you for your attention to this letter and bid you farewell:

- 1) A.C. Mujeres de Frente (Women in Front)
- 2) A.C. Médicos Unidos de Venezuela (Doctors United of Venezuela)
- 3) A.C. Jóvenes y Desarrollo (Youth and Development)
- 4) Acceso a la Justicia (Access to Justice)
- 5) AlertaVenezuela
- 6) AN2015
- 7) Aquí Cabemos Todos
- 8) Chunikai Civil Association
- 9) Los Naguaritos Civil Association
- 10) Human Kaleidoscope
- 11) CAMPO

- 12) Free Chair of Human Rights of the Universidad Centroccidental Lisandro Alvarado
- 13) Center for Integral Individual Psychopedagogical Attention
- 14) Center for Social Research, Training and Women's Studies.
- 15) Center for Justice and Peace - Cepaz
- 16) Civilis
- 17) Clima21
- 18) Human Rights Commission of the Federation of Venezuelan Bar Associations of the State of Apure.
- 19) National Human Rights Commission of the Federation of Venezuelan Bar Associations of the state of Táchira.
- 20) National Human Rights Commission of the Federation of Venezuelan Bar Associations - Mérida.
- 21) Human Rights Committee for the Defense of Pensioners, Retirees, Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities.
- 22) Human Rights Committee of La Guajira
- 23) Community Council Colinas de Santa Rosa
- 24) Creemos Alianza Ciudadana (We Believe Citizen Alliance)
- 25) Encuentro Universitario (Movimiento Estudiantil Universitario)
- 26) EXCUBITUS Human Rights in Education
- 27) Fedecámaras Monagas
- 28) FormanFuturo
- 29) Penal Forum
- 30) Aguaclara Foundation
- 31) Iribarren Lucha Foundation
- 32) Foundation for Due Process (Fundepro)
- 33) Foundation for the Prevention of Violence against Women (Fundación para la Prevención de la Violencia contra las Mujeres)
- 34) Foundation for the Rights of Latin American Women
- 35) Refugio Pana Foundation
- 36) Fundacoda
- 37) FundaRedes
- 38) Hearts On Venezuela
- 39) Ideas for Democracy
- 40) INVESP (Venezuelan Institute of Social and Political Studies)
- 41) Doctors United of Venezuela
- 42) Vinotinto Movement
- 43) Mujeres de Frente AC
- 44) No Permisas Mal Tratos
- 45) Venezuelan Electoral Observatory (OEV)
- 46) Global Observatory of Communication and Democracy
- 47) Venezuelan Observatory of LGBTIQ+ Violence (Observatorio Venezolano de Violencias LGBTIQ+)
- 48) Venezuelan Observatory for Women's Human Rights)
- 49) Organized Parents of Venezuela (Padres Organizados de Venezuela)
- 50) Panamerican and caribbean union for human rights PACUHR
- 51) Venezuelan Program of Education Action in Human Rights (Provea)
- 52) PROMEDEHUM
- 53) Network of Citizen Activists for Human Rights
- 54) Civil Society Juan Rodríguez Suárez Parish (Sociedad Civil Parroquia Juan Rodríguez Suárez)
- 55) Sindicato Unico Nacional de Empleados Públicos del Sector Salud (SUNEPSAS)
- 56) Transparencia Ciudadana
- 57) Transparencia Electoral
- 58) Una Ventana a la Libertad
- 59) Vente Venezuela
- 60) Voces Q' Suman
- 61) Voto Joven
- 62) Peace Laboratory