

Venezuelan Civil Society and International Human Rights Organizations Present Ten Urgent Demands for a Genuine Democratic Transition

Venezuela faces a new and complex political juncture. In this context, a group of sixteen civil society organizations, both national and international, subscribe to this Ten-Point List of Priority Demands; two of them under reserve due to the risks associated with their public identification in the Venezuelan context. The purpose of the document is to identify a series of urgent measures that, in the short term, can steer the current situation towards a **genuine and credible democratic transition**.

This decalogue should serve as a **starting point**, adapted to the country's current conditions, with the objective of rebuilding trust, restoring legal certainty, and opening effective pathways towards re-establishing the rule of law and democracy. It does not claim to be an exhaustive human rights agenda, nor a comprehensive roadmap for democratization. Rather, it should be understood as part of a broader process that requires political will, coordination among national and international actors, and the support of legitimate multilateral frameworks, accompanied by international human rights mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

The participation of civil society, together with the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms, is essential to achieving an inclusive and sustainable transition, centred on Venezuelan society and on the victims of serious human rights violations.

Against this backdrop, the following **ten urgent actions** are put forward:

1. **Immediate, unconditional and full release** of all persons, both nationals and foreign nationals, who are arbitrarily detained or subjected to criminal proceedings for political reasons, accompanied by transparent verification mechanisms. This includes an end to all forms of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, as well as the lifting of precautionary measures linked to unjustified judicial processes.
2. **Repeal or declaration of unconstitutionality** of the State of External Commotion Decree and of all laws, regulations or resolutions used to criminalize individuals perceived as political opponents or human rights defenders. This includes, among others, the Law Against Hatred; the Simón Bolívar Law; the Law on the Oversight, Regulation, Operation and Financing of Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Social Organizations; Supreme Court Resolution No. 2012-0026 establishing courts with jurisdiction over terrorism offences; and Resolution No. 2015-0007 of 15 March 2025 amending it. Authorities must also commit to a comprehensive, participatory and in-depth review of the legal framework to ensure full alignment with international standards on civic freedoms, particularly provisions related to organized crime, terrorism financing, terrorism offences, defamation and criminal insult.
3. **Adoption of urgent measures** to disarm, dismantle and withdraw all structures, security forces or armed groups that engage in illegitimate acts of intimidation, persecution or repression against the civilian population for exercising their human

rights. This includes practices of surveillance, patrolling, or accusation based on political opinion, thought, or social and political activity, throughout the country.

4. **Issuance of an official public communication** expressly recognizing the continued validity of documentation related to the registration, mandate, and unrestricted operation of all non-profit organizations in the country, including international organizations.
5. **Full, safe and independent access** to Venezuelan territory for international human rights protection mechanisms, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; consent for the in-country visit requested in 2025 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; access for the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission; and for other UN mechanisms seeking to conduct official visits.
6. **Full cooperation with the humanitarian response** in Venezuela, under United Nations coordination, ensuring an enabling operational environment for humanitarian actors, with access, security, and logistical facilities across all states, municipalities, areas, and facilities where people require assistance and protection. This includes guaranteeing the right to receive humanitarian aid without restrictions or conditions incompatible with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
7. **Adoption of appropriate legal and administrative measures** to ensure that public resources constitutionally belonging to the Venezuelan people are used to address the emergency resulting from the multiple and prolonged deprivations suffered by the population. This must prioritize the effective recovery of infrastructure, services, livelihoods and essential goods, through universal, non-discriminatory social protection systems and investment plans, managed by institutions operating with transparency and accountability.
8. **Public commitments and concrete actions** demonstrating recognition, protection and guarantees by all branches of government for the defense of human rights, press freedom and political pluralism. This includes strengthening protections for human rights and humanitarian organizations, journalists and independent media, social leaders, activists and opposition political parties, as well as guaranteeing the rights to dissent, peaceful assembly and democratic participation in public affairs.
9. **Development of a clear and credible roadmap**, with diverse participation from civil society, for the re-institutionalization of all national, regional and municipal public authorities of the Venezuelan State, in compliance with constitutional obligations, rules and timelines, particularly those of the electoral branch, the judiciary and the citizen power, as well as those responsible for defense and security, with the aim of restoring constitutional order and the effective operation of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. This includes the election of the President of the Republic in accordance with constitutional provisions.
10. **Establishment of independent mechanisms**, with meaningful civil society participation and international support, to preserve evidence of human rights violations and to advance a transitional justice process that guarantees truth, memory, justice, full reparations for all victims, and guarantees of cessation and non-repetition.

This decalogue sets out minimum and urgent demands to advance towards an authentic democratic transition in Venezuela, one grounded in human dignity, justice, reconciliation and institutional reconstruction, and centred on the rights of victims and society as a whole

- Acceso a la Justicia
- AlertaVenezuela
- Centro de Justicia y Paz (CEPAZ)
- Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de los Sucesos de Febrero y Marzo de 1989 – El Caracazo (COFAVIC)
- Justicia, Encuentro y Perdón (JEP)
- Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA)
- Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
- Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)
- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen ParticipationGlobal Centre for the Responsibility to Protect