



“POLITICAL PERSECUTION IN VENEZUELA”

*Systematization of patterns of persecution to Venezuelan
political dissidents*

Executive Summary

Report to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations during the consideration of the 4th periodic report of the Venezuelan State in the 114th session of June 2015, on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This report was prepared by the organization CEPAZ, Justice and Peace Center, for the Human Rights Committee on the occasion of the Venezuelan Fourth Report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The content of this report is focused on patterns of persecution of individuals and groups for political reasons, corresponding to Articles 2, 9, 14, 19 and 25 of the Covenant.

Following the constitutional reform of 2000 and the second inauguration of President Hugo Chávez Frías, the scheme of government is framed within an ideological development under left-wing parameters; a new phase in the history called by the government “The Bolivarian Revolution”.

Strengthening of the government ideology and dissatisfaction on the part of the population against the execution of government policies has contributed, in contrast, to the growth of an opposition that has emphatically demonstrated against the political, economic and social situation the country, leading to the emergence of political figures and leaders who have led the opposition movement. ***The immediate reaction from the government before the clear manifestation of discontent and criticism of the movement led by opposition leaders has been through a consistent and ongoing persecution against the Venezuelan political dissent, even against that coming from people in favor of Chavez.***

In 2013, after the death of President Hugo Chavez, the presidency of Nicolas Maduro is initiated, under the same schemes of Chavez, a left-wing and revolutionary ideology. Until the date of publication of this report, the government of Nicolas Maduro, has been known by a deep political crisis, characterized by the absence of impartial and independent branches of public powers, government corruption and a sharp political polarization. The treatment given to the continued political instability, growth and strengthening of opposition leaders has been the ***increase in acts of assault and percussion against dissent, and along with it, the systematic violation of Human Rights and Civil and Political Rights of Venezuelan.***

During the period of the present government the political crisis in Venezuela has dramatically increased. Various sectors of Venezuelan society have expressed their disagreement with the government of Nicolas Maduro, kicking off a strong opposition demonstration, in response; the government exercised a higher level of repression to keep control of the instability in the country. ***The answer to all these social and peaceful protests has been the arrest and persecution of students, citizens and political leaders, part of the Venezuelan opposition.***

The arbitrary detention of citizens without warrants; the many complaints about the violation of due process of people arrested in demonstrations; the opening of criminal proceedings to protesters with unnecessary delays in their process; public harassment by representatives of the organs of the National Government to leaders of the Venezuelan opposition; the criminalization of protest; complaints of citizens due to physical and psychological abuse of officials from the Intelligence Agency- SEBIN and the National Guard during their detention, ***are systematic and repeated practices applied by the Venezuelan state officials at different levels against Venezuelan citizens who oppose or disagree with the government of President Nicolas Maduro.***

After the demonstrations occurred throughout the first half of 2014, the government action to maintain control of the situation, have undoubtedly been the repression against protesters; however, ***there are people whose influence on the population and their leadership has made them a target for the government.*** In that regard, in the present study, although the number of complaints known in 2014, we have selected a sample of 35 cases (members of the Venezuelan opposition at the National Assembly, governors, mayors,

politicians, officials of the Public Administration states and municipalities, councilors, students and demonstrators) that allow us to approach to solve the concerns in relation to the different patterns that the government has used consistently and concurrently to persecute for political reasons to those who dissent from the government.

From these individual cases, we will identify the means of repression and persuasion that have been used by the government in each one, which reflect a specific pattern. From the 35 cases we can observe, in the chart below, the percentage and frequency in each case of the pattern.

The present study shows that the pattern of persecution that has been used the most by the government is the opening of judicial or administrative proceeding against those who disagree with their management, such procedures have been characterized by not respecting the parameters established by due process, distorting the judicial branch, which has gone from ensuring and dispensing justice, to becoming a mechanism of repression and persecution managed by the government, with the sole purpose of intimidating or impeding the action of the Venezuelan opposition.

Additionally, we point out that political persecution is a form of repression and attack against the practice of an ideology that discerns of those in power. In order to show how this does not correspond only to isolated cases against certain opposition leaders, but that they are evidently linked and aimed at criminalizing, discrediting and nullifying the action of the highly critical dissent of the government, and focused at important leadership in the Venezuelan opposition; we also perform a statistical counting of political parties, which have been most affected by the acts of persecution carried out by the government.¹

Through this report we present an independent, objective, nonpartisan vision that can give insight into the situation in Venezuela and alert society and the international community about the existence of repeated and systematic practice by the Venezuelan government that is aimed at the persecution of political dissent and, thus, violate civil and political rights by the Venezuelan State established in the CRBV, in the ICCPR, the ACHR and the principles and international standards related to the right to a due process, fundamental freedoms of expression and opinion, non-discrimination and the right to equality, political participation and respect for the physical integrity of the individual, among others.

¹ **Cases of persecution to politicians of the following political parties:** **Primero Justicia:** Richard Mardo, Julio Borges, Juan Carlos Caldera, Henrique Capriles, Gustavo Marcano, Ramón Muchacho, Oscar López, Hernando Garzón, Carlos García, **Voluntad Popular:** Leopoldo López, Carlos Vecchio, Daniel Ceballos, David Smolansky, Darío Ramírez, Alexander Tirado, Rosmit Mantilla, Gaby Arellano, Giuseppe Di Fabio, Antonio Rivero, Enrique Sierra. **Un Nuevo Tiempo:** Gerardo Blyde, **Bandera Roja:** Sairam Rivas. **Proyecto Venezuela:** Julio Cesar Rivas. **Vente Venezuela:** Maria Corina Machado. **Independent:** Raúl Baduel, Rodolfo González, Gerardo Resplandor, Vilca Fernández, Ricardo Hasumann, Aliza Macia, Enzo Scarano.