

URGENT ACTION

ATTACKS AGAINST OPPOSITION MEMBERS GROW

FAES police officers detained on 2 April and still hold in custody Maury Carrero, local council staff, and Demóstenes Quijada, advisor to Venezuelan National Assembly President Juan Guaidó. On 30 March, unidentified officers detained Andrea Bianchi, partner to another advisor to Juan Guaidó. Later released, she claims that she was beaten and threatened with sexual violence. At least 10 other individuals connected to National Assembly opposition representatives and staff have been detained in different circumstances in recent months. We demand an immediate halt on the repression policy against opposition members in Venezuela.

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

President Nicolás Maduro

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Dear Nicolás Maduro,

I and millions of others are observing how authorities in Venezuela repeatedly use your policy of repression, consisting of excessive force, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and other human rights violations to try to silence those voices critical of your government.

Repression and censorship in times of a global health crisis, including the continued targeting of political dissidents like National Assembly representatives, are of no help to the people in Venezuela. Now more than ever, their human rights should be protected.

I demand that you put an immediate stop to the policy of repression used by your government and to guarantee the right to due process, life, integrity, and freedom of speech for all Venezuelans – even if they do not agree with you.

Cordially,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Upon National Assembly President Juan Guaidó's return to Venezuela on 11 February 2020, his uncle Juan José Márquez was arbitrarily detained and accused of smuggling explosives on his commercial flight from Lisbon, Portugal to the Simón Bolívar International Airport in Maiquetía, Venezuela. Mr. Marquez's arrest represents the continuation of a worrying pattern targeting those close to opposition lawmakers and other members of their staff.

Other opposition lawmakers have themselves been arbitrarily detained:

- Ismael León, lawmaker, was detained from 21 – 23 January 2020 then conditionally released.
- Juan Requesens, lawmaker reportedly incommunicado since 5 February. His representatives manifest that he has been tortured and suffered severe irregularities in his judicial case.
- Gilber Caro was enforcedly disappeared for a month after being detained since 20 December 2019. He continues to be in custody.
- Roberto Marrero, National Assembly President's chief of staff, arrested on 21 March 2019 and being held by the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) in El Helicoide, Caracas.

President Nicolas Maduro and his government continue to intimidate, harass, physically abuse, arbitrarily detain and forcibly disappear National Assembly representatives and staff in an attempt to silence political dissent. In recent years, dozens of opposition members have been forced to flee the country and request asylum in the face of threats they have received from the Maduro government. At least two opposition lawmakers (Freddy Guevara and Roberto Enriquez) have sought the protection of foreign embassies in Venezuela, where they have remained for nearly three years.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Venezuela, authorities have also targeted other critical voices like Darvinson Rojas, a Venezuelan journalist and prisoner of conscience who reported on COVID-19. Detained on 21 March and conditionally released on 2 April 2020, Darvinson was accused of 'advocacy of hatred' and 'instigation to commit crimes' and released on bail pending a criminal investigation. Amnesty International considers these charges to be politically motivated to silence his reporting on the pandemic in Venezuela and we demand the case against him is closed.

These actions are part of a policy of repression that seem to originate from the top of the Maduro government as a way to hinder civil and political rights.

In last year's report, [Hunger for Justice: Crimes against Humanity in Venezuela](#), Amnesty International concluded that the selective extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, and deaths and injuries caused by the excessive use of force by Nicolás Maduro's government as part of a systematic and widespread policy of repression since at least 2017 may constitute crimes against humanity.

Since 2014 Venezuelans have fled in unprecedented numbers in search of safety and a dignified future abroad. By March 2020, an estimated 4.9 million had fled the country and it is believed that this figure will reach 5.5 million by the end of 2020.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 May 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Plural (they/them/their)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/1879/2020/en/>