

URGENT ACTION

NGOS AND SURVIVORS UNDER THREAT

As of 1 May 2021, all Venezuelan civil society organisations must comply with abusive registration measures or face criminal prosecution, according to new regulations under counterterrorism and organised crime legislation, announced by the government on 30 March. These measures include disclosing details on their beneficiaries, such as victims of human rights violations and humanitarian relief recipients, as well as information on their funding, staff, and governance. Such measures violate the rights to association, privacy, presumption of innocence, and puts civil society organisations and their beneficiaries at grave risk of criminalisation and reprisals. We demand immediate repeal of this regulation.

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 am alarmed by the new regulations issued by your government aimed at controlling and limiting civil society work in Venezuela, particularly through the recent regulation no. 001-2021, published in the Official Gazette No. 42.098 of 30 March 2021.

This regulation places unacceptable restrictions on NGOs, humanitarian organizations and other members of Venezuelan civil society, all in order to further control and limit their work on behalf of victims of human rights violations, recipients of humanitarian relief, and people in need in Venezuela.

Civil society organizations carry out a vital mission in any country, but even more so in Venezuela, where millions are forced to cope with a dire humanitarian emergency, widespread and systematic human rights violations, and the effects of a global pandemic.

I call upon you to ensure this regulation is repealed immediately, and to stop all the harassment, penal prosecution and or censorship of all civil society organizations working to protect the rights of all Venezuelans, particularly those in most need.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The new Administrative Regulation No. 001-2021 for the “Unified Registry of Obligated Subjects before the National Office Against Organized Crime and Terrorism Financing, of the Ministry of Interior, Justice, and Peace”, was published in Official Gazette No. 42.098 of 30 March 2021. It requires the registration of all natural or legal persons of a nonfinancial nature before 1 May 2021, emphasizing the participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the surveillance and supervision of their work. The regulation would impose strict controls that include handing over constitutive documentation, assembly notes, lists of members and personnel, lists of donors, registration of financial movements, and lists of all their beneficiaries and other organizations with which they work. The regulation operates under the presumption of committing crimes such as terrorism or that NGOs are vulnerable to these crimes because they are not subject to the supervision of a specific public body or regulated by a special law.

This measure is part of the systematic criminalization patterns against civil society organizations, which has intensified during the last year. Without a doubt, this ruling represents the most serious event that we have registered so far, including the explicit purpose of closing civic space through a siege of severe restrictions on civil society's ability to continue defending rights and providing due assistance and protection to the Venezuelan population.

Amnesty International and other 662 organizations [have called for the regulation to be repealed](#), bearing in mind that in the last few years any constitutional avenue to pursue its annulment within local courts is futile, due to the lack of judicial independence and the tight control the executive branch has over the judiciary.

Nicolás Maduro government has continually harassed, prosecuted and censored activists and civil society organizations working to protect the rights of Venezuelans amidst a humanitarian complex crisis and a deep human rights crisis that is making Venezuelans fled in unprecedented numbers in search of safety and a dignified future abroad. By December 2020, over 6 million had fled the country.

Last year, a report from the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 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, and concluded that these grave human rights violations may amount to crimes against humanity.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 16 June 2021

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Venezuelan NGOs (They, them, theirs)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a