

# URGENT ACTION

## STOP PERSECUTING VENEZUELAN NGO

Since November 2024, authorities in Venezuela have increased their attacks against PROVEA, a renowned NGO defending human rights in the country. While a high-ranking government official threatened them directly on a TV show a few weeks prior, the Forensic Criminal Investigations Police (CICPC, in Spanish) has now issued a summons to Oscar Murillo, PROVEA's general coordinator, to give testimony in a case of an alleged crime under the highly contested 'anti-hatred law'. We call on authorities to immediately cease all reprisals and threats to PROVEA, its members and other NGOs demanding justice and accountability in Venezuela.

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

*President of the Republic Nicolas Maduro  
Palacio de Miraflores,  
Av. Nte. 10, Caracas 1012,  
Caracas, Venezuela*

*President Nicolas Maduro,*

*I am writing to you with grave concern about the attacks and threats that loom over PROVEA and its general coordinator, Oscar Murillo.*

*We have received information about certain government officials attacking PROVEA in the media, putting them at high risk of persecution and other grave human rights violations and potential crimes under international law. We also learned of the summons issued by the Forensic Criminal Investigations Police (CICPC in Spanish, Scientific, Criminal and Criminal Investigations Corps) to Oscar Murillo, for "the commission of a crime contemplated in the Law against hatred, for peaceful coexistence and tolerance".*

*Human rights organizations and their members must be protected, and their work must be guaranteed by the state. Any fear of reprisals or criminalization against them threatens their right to defend their own and others' human rights.*

***We call on you to cease all reprisals and attacks on PROVEA and ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their work in accordance with international human rights law.***

*Respectfully,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The organization PROVEA has worked tirelessly to expose and condemn the serious human rights violations and possible crimes against humanity committed by the government of Nicolás Maduro over the years.

Recently, PROVEA denounced the death of opposition politician Edwin Santos, who was found dead on 25 October 2024 after being detained by hooded individuals. Although the Forensic Criminal Investigations Police (CICPC) issued a public statement arguing that his death was caused by a traffic accident, numerous civil society organizations pointed out that it could be an extrajudicial execution at the hands of the state, as his whereabouts were unknown, and his family had reported his detention and disappearance.

These recent events, added to the long history of claims against the government of Nicolás Maduro by PROVEA, generate serious concerns of a potential imminent detention of Óscar Murillo, due to the generalized practice of arbitrary detention against human rights defenders and political dissidents, which reached a historic peak after the 28 July election that started a new peak of repression with over [2,000 people arbitrarily detained](#) for political reasons, many of them charged with seemingly unfounded counts of terrorism and incitement of hatred, including vulnerable groups such as [children and people living with disabilities](#).

As Amnesty International has repeatedly denounced, human rights defenders in Venezuela are at a constant risk of harassment, attacks and detention. Human rights defender, prisoner of conscience and director of local NGO Fundaredes, [Javier Tarazona](#), remains in detention and prosecuted for defending human rights since July 2021. We call for his immediate and unconditional release. Others human rights defenders such as [Rocío San Miguel](#), Carlos Julio Rojas, [Edward Ocariz](#), Henry Gómez and [Kennedy Tejeda](#) are also arbitrarily deprived of their freedom and subjected to unfounded criminal proceedings for defending human rights.

Nicolás Maduro's government has continually harassed, prosecuted and censored activists and civil society organizations working to protect the rights of Venezuelans amidst a complex humanitarian emergency and a deep human rights crisis that is making Venezuelans flee in unprecedented numbers in search of safety and protection. By November 2024, over [7.8 million](#) had fled the country.

Nicolás Maduro's government is currently pursuing several initiatives to control and silence human rights and civil society organizations. The [recently adopted](#) bill titled 'Law for the audit, regularization, action and financing of non-governmental and related organizations', or so-called 'anti-NGO law' imposes strict controls that include handing over lists of members and personnel and their assets, lists of donors, and registration of financial movements. Non-compliance with registration requirements could lead to the closure of civil society organizations and possible criminal prosecutions. At the moment, the bill has been approved by Congress but has yet to enter into force.

Since 2020, several reports from the independent international [fact-finding mission](#) on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have thoroughly 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; as well as the ways in which the justice system serves as a tool for the government's policy of repression, and concluded that these grave human rights violations may amount to crimes against humanity.

Since November 2021, the Office of the [Prosecutor](#) of the [International Criminal Court](#) is conducting a criminal investigation into the situation in Venezuela, specifically regarding the "[c]rimes against humanity of deprivation of liberty or other serious deprivation of physical liberty (...); torture (...); rape and/or other forms of sexual violence of comparable severity (...); and politically motivated persecution against persons detained (...), which were committed since at least April 2017, by members of the State security forces, civil authorities and pro-government persons (or groups called "collectives").

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** [Spanish]

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 30 January 2025

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** PROVEA (they/them)