

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDERS UNDER ATTACK

The whereabouts of renowned human rights defender Eduardo Torres have been unknown since 9 May, when he was last seen in Caracas. His detention and enforced disappearance fit squarely into an escalating pattern of attacks on NGOs and civil society, including through repressive laws and smear campaigns. Defenders Javier Tarazona, Rocío San Miguel, Carlos Julio Rojas, and Kennedy Tejeda remain detained. We demand that Nicolás Maduro stop the practice of disappearing people, ensure that all defenders and politically motivated arbitrary detainees are immediately released and, while in custody, uphold their right to life, integrity, access to family members, and fair trial guarantees.

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

Mr Nicolás Maduro,

The enforced disappearance of Eduardo Torres, a member of local NGO PROVEA, whose whereabouts have been unknown since 9 May, adds urgency to the concerns by the escalating attacks on human rights defenders in Venezuela. On 13 May, the Attorney General declared that Torres had been detained “for his involvement in a conspiracy plot”, one of the many fabrications of the Venezuelan government to punish human rights defenders. No information has been given about his whereabouts.

Likewise, the threats from the Attorney General against PROVEA's General Coordinator Óscar Murillo, after denouncing the enforced disappearance of Eduardo Torres, is also a matter of great concern.

Regrettably, other human rights defenders remain arbitrarily detained for their work, including Javier Tarazona, detained in July 2021; Rocío San Miguel, detained in February 2024; Carlos Julio Rojas, detained in April 2024; and Kennedy Tejeda, detained in August 2024.

Almost 900 politically motivated arbitrary detainees -including these human rights defenders- are currently being unfairly held in Venezuelan detention centres, most of whom suffer an endless list of other human rights violations. These include, enforced disappearance, torture, denial of defence, withholding medical care, incommunicado detention, and being accused of unsubstantiated crimes.

The harassment, threats and detention of human rights defenders and the attacks on civil society more broadly must cease immediately, including by repealing the so-called ‘anti-NGO law’ as well as other abusive and arbitrary legislation. Defending human rights in Venezuela -or anywhere- is not a crime.

The enforced disappearance is an extremely serious international crime due to the risk of torture and death, and the victim's removal from the protection of the law. Once again, we must remind you and all Venezuelan authorities that these possible crimes under international law and grave human rights violations are being monitored and scrutinized by international justice and accountability mechanisms, including the UN and the International Criminal Court.

We call for the immediate disclosure of information on Eduardo Torres' whereabouts, and the immediate and unconditional release of every victim of arbitrary detention. While in the custody of the state, we demand their rights to life, integrity, access to family members and to a fair trial are upheld.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nicolás Maduro's government's long-standing policy of repression to silence any form of real or perceived dissent reached a historic peak after the 28 July 2024 election, which saw 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](#). According to the local organization Foro Penal, as of 9 May 2025, at least 894 people remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons, including 89 women, five teenagers, and 66 whose fate and whereabouts are reportedly unknown.

Within this policy of repression, the 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 December 2024, [7.9 million](#) had fled Venezuela.

As Amnesty International has repeatedly denounced, human rights defenders in Venezuela are at a constant risk of harassment, attacks and detention. Nicolás Maduro's government is currently pursuing several initiatives to control and silence human rights and civil society organizations. The [law adopted](#) in August 2024 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. The bill's provisions began entering into force starting in February 2025.

Since 2020, reports from the UN independent international [fact-finding mission](#) on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFM) 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, concluding that some of these international crimes and human rights violations amount to crimes against humanity. Specifically in 2024, the FFM concluded that it has "reasonable grounds to believe that the crime of persecution on political grounds has been committed during the timeframe covered by its mandate".

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: 11 November 2025

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Venezuelan human rights defenders (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/9053/2025/en/>