

URGENT ACTION

VENEZUELA: ALARM OVER THE DETENTION OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE

In the four days following the 28 July presidential elections in Venezuela, the authorities have carried out mass arbitrary arrests of demonstrators. According to the Attorney General, as many as 1,062 people have been detained. Local NGOs claim that at least 700 people have been charged with “terrorism”, inciting hatred, and other arbitrary offences. Credible information indicates that detainees are being held *incommunicado*, have no access to legal counsel, and are being transferred to maximum security prisons, where they are at high risk of ill-treatment and torture. We demand that the authorities cease detaining those exercising their rights and call on the Attorney General to ensure that all detainees are provided access to lawyers of their choice and all due process guarantees.

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

Attorney General of the Republic, Tarek William Saab
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio Público,
Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele El Ojo Avenida México,
Caracas, Venezuela
Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve

Dear Attorney General of the Republic,

I am writing to express my deep concern at the wave of repression unleashed by the Venezuelan authorities since 28 July, following the mass demonstrations by people exercising their human rights.

Reports of the arbitrary detention of more than a thousand mostly young persons for protesting in the wake of the elections are extremely alarming. Moreover, credible allegations of a total lack of due process guarantees and the real risk of ill-treatment or even torture must be urgently addressed by the Prosecutor's Office and the relevant authorities. International human rights law and Venezuelan legislation demand it.

The current crisis is the continuation of a pattern of gross human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and the result of rampant impunity for such crimes. The government's policy of repression, which includes detention, torture and killings, must cease immediately.

We call on you to protect the lives and physical integrity of every detainee, and to ensure due process guarantees for all of them, including access to family members and to legal counsel of their choice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Venezuela has been experiencing a deep and multidimensional human rights crisis for at least ten years. During this time, Amnesty International has reported serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and a complex humanitarian emergency, which have caused more than 25% of the population to flee the country.

On 28 July, Venezuela saw a massive turnout for the presidential elections, despite a pre-election environment characterized by persecution, censorship and threatening discourse. When voting ended, the electoral authorities declared Nicolás Maduro the winner. However, the opposition claimed that this result was not supported by the data they had collected during the election. The electoral authority has not published official results, as required by Venezuelan law. Since then, mass demonstrations have broken out across the country in support of the opposition's claims. The state authorities have responded with a policy of large-scale repression, including the use of lethal and less lethal force, which has resulted in at least 11 deaths, mostly of young people, including two teenagers; mass politically motivated arbitrary detentions; possible torture of key opposition figures; illegal home raids with excessive use of force; mobilization of pro-government armed groups (*colectivos*) and non-uniformed security forces; and a highly stigmatizing discourse against political activists, human rights defenders and NGOs. Developments in the country are highly dynamic and volatile, with the number of human rights violations increasing by the hour and public statements being issued constantly by all actors, both national and international.

The months leading up to these elections have seen relentless attacks on civic space, dozens of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, reprisals against businesses and small traders providing services to opposition figures, and arbitrary and abusive administrative measures. These violations are long-standing concerns that Amnesty International has been documenting and campaigning on for years.

The events that are currently unfolding fall within existing patterns of crimes against humanity on a very worrying scale that merits an international response. In this regard, the ongoing investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court would have jurisdiction to investigate the perpetrators of possible acts of detention, torture, gender-based violence and persecution committed in the context of the elections. All authorities responsible for these crimes, including the chain of command, can and must be brought to justice in impartial and independent courts, with full guarantees of a fair trial.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Spanish
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 27 September 2024
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Persons detained for protesting (they, them, their)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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