

URGENT ACTION

FREE VENEZUELAN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

At least four human rights defenders are currently arbitrarily detained for defending rights in Venezuela: Javier Tarazona, detained in 2021; Rocío San Miguel, Carlos Julio Rojas, and Kennedy Tejada, all three detained in 2024. They are prisoners of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally. We demand Nicolás Maduro ensures they are released as a matter of urgency and, while in state custody, protects their life and safety, right to not be subjected to torture, 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,

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Javier Tarazona, Rocío San Miguel, Carlos Julio Rojas, and Kennedy Tejada. They are all prisoners of conscience detained solely for defending, educating, and promoting human rights. They should never have been detained and now their lives have been forever changed.

Javier Tarazona is an educator and director of NGO FundaRedes. He was detained on 2 July 2021 when trying to report harassment from authorities to the public prosecutor's office. Rocío San Miguel is a lawyer and president of the civil society organisation Control Ciudadano. She was detained on 9 February 2024 and sustained a shoulder fracture while in custody that requires urgent surgery and rehabilitation. Carlos Julio Rojas is a journalist and community organiser, detained since 15 April 2024 for raising concern over problems affecting his community. Kennedy Tejada is a young lawyer and volunteer for Foro Penal. He was detained on 2 August 2024 when inquiring over the whereabouts of two men who had allegedly been arrested.

All four prisoners of conscience have suffered a myriad of other grave human rights violations, including enforced disappearance in the days following their detention, denial of trusted legal defence, periods of incommunicado detention, denial of medical care, and some have even reported being subjected to torture.

These possible crimes under international law and grave human rights violations are being monitored and scrutinized individually by international justice and accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court.

The harassment, threats and detention of human rights defenders and the attacks on civil society more broadly must cease immediately. Their role, in the midst of the ongoing humanitarian emergency and human rights crisis should be protected and celebrated.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Javier Tarazona, Rocío San Miguel, Carlos Julio Rojas, and Kennedy Tejada, and every victim of arbitrary detention in Venezuela. As long as they remain in your custody, we demand their rights to life and medical care, to not be subjected to torture, and to enjoy all fair trial guarantees to be fully protected.

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 17 February 2025, at least 1,061 people remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons, including 121 women, four teenagers, and 58 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 November 2024, over [7.8 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 [bill 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: 26 August 2025

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Venezuelan prisoners of conscience (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/8909/2025/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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Salutation: Your Excellency