



CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

Bulletin No. 100

From August 26 to September 2, 2019

www.crisisenvenezuela.com

EDITORIAL

In the context of the installation of the Constituent National Assembly (ANC), this weekly **Bulletin Crisis in Venezuela** appeared, as the result of a joint effort by civil society's organizations for promoting and defending Human Rights in our country. The Bulletin's main aim was –and still is– at informing national and international communities about violations and attacks against Human Rights in Venezuela; and also at exposing denouncements and documenting cases concerning this matter.

Crisis in Venezuela includes contributions by Civilis Derechos Humanos, Foro Penal, Acceso a la Justicia, Provea, Transparencia Venezuela, Centro de Justicia y Paz (CEPAZ), Espacio Publico, Un Mundo Sin Mordaza, and Codevida. Recently, Bloque Constitucional, Defiende Venezuela and RedUni joined the aforementioned. Today we are celebrating our **100th edition**, always presenting reports that reflect different aspects of how Venezuela's institutional crisis aggravates by the day; and how venezuelans suffer permanent violations of their most fundamental Human Rights.

PROVEA - www.derechos.org.ve

Adding up to go back to democracy

Our country began to step away from democracy after Parliamentary elections in December 2015, when Nicolás Maduro became an electoral and social minority; and even more so, since the installation of fraudulent Constituent National Assembly (ANC). Therefore, we, Venezuelan organizations pro Human Rights, have to do more and better than we usually did, in order to get more efficiently involved in recovering democratic institutionality. As a consequence of such a need of articulation, this bulletin, *Crisis in Venezuela* was created.

***Crisis in Venezuela* has circulated punctually every week -including an English translation, which reveals how important it is for local**

organizations to keep in permanent contact with non-Spanish-speaking publics. By revising those 100 issues up to now, one can have the best possible inventory of our civil society's worries and activities -a systematic inventory that enables readers to obtain diverse learnings.

Presently, when there are vacillations and doubts about a pacific solution to our country's conflict, one of the best ways to certainty has been generating encounter spaces among democratic sectors: sites for communion and for thoughtfully making up new routes to walk on together in human dignity. One of them has been this digital bulletin, to which different entities have joined progressively. It is a sample of



resilience and of inclusion, despite most adverse circumstances. Congratulations to those who participate actively in *Crisis in Venezuela*, for their arrival to the 100th edition.

Defiende Venezuela - www.defiendevenezuela.org

On how a better-informed society helps in the reconstruction

Adopting attitudes that favor impunity is no longer a relatively simple job for States and governments, given that, nowadays, international order maintains a strict scrutiny about this matter. Besides, civil societies are more and better organized and informed, thank to **independent publications like *Crisis in Venezuela*, where a team of experts summarize**

weekly news, some of them so delicate and difficult as the one we will expose further on. Themes that deserve a special space to be read, analyzed, and debated. We thank *Crisis en Venezuela* for allowing us to figure into this initiative, which is designed for enhancing the reader's critical ability; and for setting important contributions as foundations for the reconstruction of our nation, all of us armed with knowledge and awareness.

At this particular moment in Venezuela, some sectors of Venezuelan society reject the terms "transitional justice", because they think that such processes are good merely for safeguarding and granting impunity to perpetrators of grave violations of Human Rights. Decrees during Alberto Fujimori's government in Peru; the



initiatives of Catholic Church in Chile, interested as it was in the impunity of the military; the so called "bicentennial pardon", decided by the Supreme Court of Brazil... Facts that are in the memory of people that stand for that rejecting position.

It is true that these mistakes were committed, favoring impunity. Now, there is an international order based on relative sovereignty; and internal actions and discussions concerning Human Rights are under international scrutiny. The use of unconditional general amnesties and pardons; and the approval of full-stop laws; are internationally not compatible in the context of Human Rights -and so has been repeatedly stated by Human Rights international tribunals. Besides, the international community counts now on a guide about this subject: "Principles for the protection and the promotion of Human Rights through the struggle against impunity", also known as Orentlicher Principles. It is an accurate guide for effectively obtaining respect to the right of acceding truth, and justice, and also a reparation during a process of transitional justice.

Un Mundo Sin Mordaza - www.sinmordaza.org

OEA keeps an eye on Venezuela



The Organization of American States (OEA) rejected the constant violations of Human Rights suffered in Venezuela. During their most recent sessions, a resolution was approved, in which OEA expects Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (CIDH) may accede our country “immediately and with no obstacles”, because their

last visit was in 2002.

Luis Almagro, secretary general of the organism, remarked that, at the moment, in Venezuela, crimes of lese humanity are committed. In turn, Alexis Ludwing, representative of the United States, assured that this pronouncement “is an important call for action”. This OEA’s resolution aims at strengthening cooperation between CIDH and United Nations’ High Commissioner for Human Rights, concerning surveillance of the situation of fundamental rights that Venezuela faces today.

In the middle of a complex humanitarian crisis in our country, worsened by a political and economical deterioration of dramatic

dimensions, we, Venezuelan NGOs, reaffirm our commitment with our nation. **Besides, we, Un Mundo sin Mordaza, will go on raising our voice for denouncing unfairness; and will try every possible form of collaboration with those who need it so much. That is the reason why we integrate this particular NGOs’ initiative called Crisis in Venezuela, which reaches its 100th edition this week: our participation here is a way of underlining that we will keep gagless, until we get our country back, full of opportunities and liberties.**

Acceso a la Justicia - www.accesoalajusticia.org

Bulletin *Crisis in Venezuela* has permitted to denounce institutional break in our nation

Acceso a la Justicia appeared in 2010 for monitoring the functioning of the justice system and the State of Rights in Venezuela. To comply with this, we have denounced the Judicial Power’s co-optation since the very beginning of chavism; and, particularly, since parliamentary elections in 2015. The institutional break derives from an increasing absence of limits to the Executive Power.

“What has happened in Venezuela since 2015 Parliamentary elections can be described as an institutional coup d’etat, verifiable by the fact that Nicolás Maduro has violated constitutional forms in order to overtake power absolutely, although, before him, there was an institutional overall control by Hugo Chavez”, pointed out Laura Louza, executive director of Acceso a la Justicia.

This NGO has registered –by the date– 105 sentences of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) for cutting down –eventually cutting off– Legislative Power’s functions, under the argument of disrespect. TSJ, jointly with fraudulent Constituent National Assembly (ANC), have



violated parliamentarian’s immunity against 24 deputies. Besides, ANC has appointed authorities illegally; and has usurped National Assembly’s (AN’s) functions. Nowadays, all Venezuelan public authorities are de facto, except AN. So was denounced by Acceso a la Justicia before United Nations’ High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, during her visit to our country, in June 2019.

Within this context, **the Bulletin *Crisis in Venezuela* is a key tool for difusing NGO’s struggle for guaranteeing respect to fundamental rights as established in our Constitution; and, furthermore, in international laws for protecting Human Rights.** *Crisis in Venezuela*, since its appearance in August 2017 –just when ANC was installed–, has permitted to denounce the institutional break in our country, which is the real cause of the Complex Humanitarian Emergency suffered by Venezuela. And the Judiciary has been a key factor in the social and political control held by the governing regime.

Foro Penal - www.foropenal.com

Political prisoners deprived of medicines during an internal inspection in Ramo Verde military prison

By August 30, 2019, Foro Penal has registered 15.160 arbitrary detentions in Venezuela since January 1st, 2014. 848 civilians have been presented before Military Courts. Since January 2014 up to date, we have accumulated 3.222 political prisoners; full liberty or release under caution measures have been obtained in 2.721 cases.



This week's special comment is about a situation occurred during an internal inspection in Ramo Verde military prison, in Caracas, with the balance of several injured inmates, and the privation or damage of medicaments in some cases -Vasco Da Costa, among them. Another point: last August 29 it was one year since journalist Jesus Medina Ezaine was unfairly imprisoned. He is awaiting for the beginning of his trial.

By April 2014, we had 117 political prisoners in Venezuela. The number of these type of inmates by August 26, 2019 is 501; and 39 of them are women. Besides, 8.899 persons were or still are unfairly submitted to penal processes under caution measures.

Foro Penal celebrates the centennial issue of this important weekly report, which allows people all over the world to know the real situation of Human Rights in Venezuela. These periodical informations are essential to the registration of grave violations against Human Rights in our country -and that will be definitively useful at the moment of justice and of ending impunity.

Transparencia Venezuela - www.transparencia.org.ve

TSJ cases control of autonomous universities by the government

Autonomous universities in Venezuela have maintained critical, protesting positions against Hugo Chavez's and Nicolás Maduro's governments; and chavism has tried to attract them via overtaking their boards of directors, even when, in all elections held up to now, the rulers have been defeated. However, such might change in the beginning of 2020, due to the sentence of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) that orders realizing elections to renovate authorities in all Alma Maters within the next six months. If they do not do so, "absolute vacancy" could be declared in their rectorates and deaneries.

Decision was taken by TSJ itself, that revised a claim for nullity and a caution measure solicitation, both presented in November 2009 -one decade ago- against the Organic Law on Education, approved by National Assembly (AN) that year, when AN was absolutely controlled by the Executive Power. TSJ did not decide thoroughly on the matter at that

moment; but a caution measure was granted, and #3 of art.34 of the impugned norm was temporarily suspended. This #3 establishes that all the members of university communities have identical legal weight, at the moment of electing those institutions' authorities. Besides, TSJ decision included a guide to be accomplished along university electoral processes.

The Organic Law on Education and TSJ's sentence go against art.109 of our Constitution, which recognizes university autonomy, and points out that "autonomous universities will decide their own norms for governing, functioning, and administering their patrimonies efficiently, under the control and surveillance established by the Law on the matter".

Denouncing and diffusing these kind of violations and aggressions against our Constitution is vital, when we are struggling for recuperating respect to institutionality and Law in our



country. Thus, Transparencia Venezuela is grateful for the opportunity that bulletin Crisis in Venezuela offers us to inform. Today, when it is emitting its 100th edition, we wish it to extend its circulation for a long time; and hope it will continue being an open window to and over our civil society's organizations.



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Bloque Constitucional - www.bloqueconstitucional.com

It is about time to concrete actions for restoring democracy, and for sharing them with citizenry



Inflation, devaluation, public services hecatomb, and repression applied by the regime are still increasing brakelessly. Eight months of 2019 have passed by, and the route in the Statute for Transition to Democracy- ceasing of usurpation, transitional government, and free elections- has not proved efficient yet. One reason for that is the attitude of “playing simultaneously on all chessboards” hoping to find out which one really works -but such a phrase has turned an empty one that generates uncertainty and distrust among citizens.

Actions of president in charge Juan Guaido, need to be re-oriented, to become a work line adequate for allies, in order to effectively obtain the ceasing of usurpation and having a

transitional governmental program ready, in a context of national unity, just as the Statute demands. We must go together for beating the four leviathans that impede returning to democracy: corruption, drug traffic, guerrilla, and terrorism. Recuperating citizenry’s confidence is possible with a straight plain speech, not using phrases that have nothing to do with strategy nor with action -most important at the moment of compromising a relevant international support. Such is stated in documents an declarations of analyst Laszlo Beque.

The rescue of the State sovereignty all over the national territory of our Republic is an essential task for the provisional government. It is deemed as an action, in art.29 of the Statute for Transition, which establishes that “the provisional government will be able to solicit help from the international community, in order to restore the State sovereignty in the territory of the Republic, after being authorized to do so by the National Assembly”. Thus, we cannot wait for a total occupation by guerrillas before doing

something. Citizens ask what do the military say about this situation, since they are for defending sovereignty. People also want to know what do they say, civilians who are submitted by guerrilla fighters in diverse places nationwide, according to different reports -the official ones included. This is about time for us to go ahead on the route agreed by AN and citizens. We have waited too long for something that will never happen if we do not exercise will power at full force. Time is playing against our principal objective.

Analysis like these are transmitted by Bloque Constitucional de Venezuela thanks to the space that Bulletin *Crisis en Venezuela* opens for us. In this occasion, it arrives to edition #100 -and we are really happy for that! **We recognize their communitive work -issued both in Spanish and in English- as the voice of civil organizations. They provide an expeditious access, quantitative and qualitative, to all that happens in our country. Congratulations for the constancy and the high working level, Crisis in Venezuela!**

Espacio Público - www.espaciopublico.org

The risk of self-expression in Venezuela

July finished in Venezuela with 776 violations of the right to freedom of expression, whose 436 victims are -mostly- journalists and communication mass media. Consequently, venezuelans’ right to receive information is limited. Principal victimizers are security corps, State institutions, and public officials -and that proves the existence of a State policy designed for silencing critical voices that may tell what happens daily in our country.

Journalistic work implies a special risk, given the existence of a pattern for radicalizing violence against those who responsibly inform venezuelans. By the end of



this year’s seventh month, we documented 87 detentions, from which 48 were against journalists; 15 against public workers; and 11 against cameramen and members of technical crews.

In the present times, when citizens require to be progressively more and better informed, violence gets worse against those professionals responsible for venezuelans’ information. In Espacio Publico, we firmly believe that exercising journalistic work freely, fully independent of governmental power, means nourishing democracy. Pluralism and respect for diverse opinions and beliefs are fundamental elements to enrich public debate.

Gender focus before International Penal Court and the situation in Venezuela

Historically speaking, women and girls have been objects for the bloodiest crimes, only for belonging to the feminine gender: sexual violation, unwanted pregnancy, slavery, and forced prostitution, among others. We cannot just ignore aside the people of LGTBI community, who are also objects for offences and stigmatization, one form of contempt against humanity; yet, they assume daily their part in the struggle for the recognition of their rights and the judgment of gender criminals and offenders. Another invisible and silent reality –most times due to social shame– is that, in conflict situations, both men and women, young and adult, are equally victims of sexual crimes.

Although sexual crimes may occur for diverse reasons and be discussed upon from different points of view, in the context of International Law they have been used as a tool by oppressors, for showing their supremacy; or for punishing; or for submitting and diminishing victims by attacking their physical and moral integrity, only because they belong to a given gender, or ethnos, or race, or political partiality.

The International Penal Court's Attorney's Office (CPI's Prosecutor) places this type of crimes among "the gravest", according to the Statute of Rome. Thus, it is necessary to coordinate efforts, in order to have such criminals judged, both in national and in international jurisdictions. CPI's Prosecutor remarks that elements related to "gender" will be revised; and, more specifically, whether criminals have generated practices related to explicit slavery, i.e.: traffic of persons, with a special emphasis on cases of women and children. That is to mean that, in the framework of international crimes, it would be verified, whether perpetrators profited of women and children, in addition to use them sexually. Contributions by local NGOs are crucial in these actions; therefore, it is indispensable, establishing cooperating links among civil society's organizations, in order to



prevent and document cases, and closely work with the victims of these crimes.

Consequentially, joint initiatives like the bulletin *Crisis in Venezuela* correspond with one of the leading principles of Center for Justice and Peace (CEPAZ): it is a team work with persons and organizations, who connect for widening

and strengthening their capabilities of mobilization and action; and for demanding and obtaining changes, which makes struggle pro Human Rights more democratically effective. **To us in CEPAZ, participating in the bulleting *Crisis in Venezuela* every week, is an opportunity for making visible our complex humanitarian situation, as denounced by civil society since 2015: criminalization of exercising rights, aiming at preventing citizens from moving and acting –no matter if human losses increase. The presence of participating organizations in documenting, denouncing, and difusing through spaces like this one; permits to develop solidary actions to save lives, relieve suffering, and protecting the human dignity of the most vulnerable people.**



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REDUNI - www.redunivenezuela.com

The firm will of civil society's organizations

This bulletin's name is *Crisis en Venezuela*, but its aim is not only reflecting Venezuelan crisis. **This effort speaks of the firm will of civil society's organizations at telling our country and the rest of the world what is the situation in Venezuela as for Human Rights. It is a fact: truth, justice, reparation, and a non-repetition guarantee will not be possible without a duely precise documentation of this humanitarian emergency. Each edition of this bulletin is an authentic and reliable testimony of civil society's work. Despite certain threats by the power, our work goes on.** Then, one may wonder why, no matter repression and retaliations, traditional organizations reinforce within their roles; and new ones appear, ready to add up and contribute to defend Human Rights. As we celebrate today this bulletin's 100th edition, we wish to share with our readers our satisfaction for the deeds we, RedUni, have accomplished. Because we are now one year old!

Our "Red Universitaria por los Derechos humanos" is an organization for articulating diverse university sectors in Venezuelan Alma maters, in order to strengthen and enhancing their activities pro Human Rights in our campuses. RedUni counts on a university observatory, which we call Monitor RedUni, that is in charge of collecting, processing, analyzing, and difusing data about the situation of university community nationwide. Our communication platform, www.redunivenezuela.com, is an interactive space for inter-connection of all activities of formation, activism, capturing of supporters, counseling, monitoring, and permanent denouncing. The first cohort of our Diploma Course for Human Rights Defenders had 48 graduates. This Diploma Course is an educational program to form leaders. One aspect of the evaluation strategy, the program Barrio de Derechos (Suburb of rights), developed communication capabilities and enhanced the creative talents of participants, while 18 communities were benefited.



Five Public Forums named "Human Rights: a vision by University community" gathered 461 persons. They presented distinct projects to make people sensitive to the situation of Human Rights in our Houses of Superior Studies; and there were participations by university authorities, professors, students, and leaders of university workers associations. These encounters took place in Caracas, San Cristobal, Merida, Valencia, and Maracaibo.

Each one of those cities were hostesses of our workshop University Human Rights Defenders RedUni, in which 213 persons participated. RedUni workshops aim at strengthening knowledges, competences, and abilities of Defenders in Alma maters. Besides, we started a volunteers program addressed to university students with social and public service vocation, in order to improve democratic system in our country. We have 123 young students enrolled as volunteers, who represent 18 states in 20 public and private universities. All that is said means that, undoubtfully, Venezuela counts on citizens faithfully committed in its reconstruction.