



# CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

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## Transparencia Venezuela - [www.transparencia.org.ve](http://www.transparencia.org.ve)

### The IACHR and the United Nations demand that digital justice does not put due process at risk

Videoconferences, remitting briefs via email and the use of the WhatsApp application to send notifications and subpoenas are some of the technological tools that American judicial powers have used since 2020 in order to avoid the complete standstill of the courts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision is welcomed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Rapporteur for the Independence of Magistrates and Attorneys, the Peruvian Diego García-Sayan. Nevertheless, they demanded that the measure does not put due process at risk nor end up turning into that which is sought to impede: an obstacle for access to justice.

In a joint communication both authorities expressed their concern before the possibility that the use of new technologies in judicial processes diminish due process of the parties and of the participants in virtual hearings “especially the right to defense in criminal matters, the right to counsel or legal representation, to an adversarial procedure, and to the right to be judged without delay.” They demanded that measures be adopted in order to assure “confidentiality and security of transmitted information” via videoconference. They also advised of



the risks that large sectors of the population cannot exercise their right to access justice administration entities because of their ignorance of the new tools used to make judicial decisions.

Even though the communication doesn't criticize the management of any specific Judiciary Power, a reading of the document allows to see that the Venezuelan judicial authorities have not complied with what is set forth therein. Thus, for example, Venezuelan courts such as in matters of labor, contentious administrative disputes, and agriculture remained closed for almost seven months complying de Presidential Decree of State of Alarm imposed in March 2020 due to the pandemic. In October 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice allowed these instances to start working during the weeks where there is no “strict quarantine schedule” and use the new technologies when the Executive Power imposes the standstill of all activities.

[Read more in spanish here](#) 



## Un Mundo Sin Mordaza - [www.sinmordaza.org](http://www.sinmordaza.org)

### 2020 was a serious year for freedom of speech in Venezuela

In our annual report regarding freedom of speech it was evidenced that 2020 has been the most serious year for freedom of speech and free press in Venezuela in a long time, since attacks, threats and detentions of journalists and *infocidadanos* [average people that use journalism principles to inform any type of news, using social networks or any other media, such as WhatsApp or Telegram] that tried to defeat the communicational predominance instituted by Nicolás Maduro's regime for informing the population.

The investigation shows that last year there was a systematization and encroachment of the right to freedom of speech and access to information in Venezuela. Between January and December 2020, 998 freedom of speech violations were recorded, according to



the NGO Espacio Público. According to claims recollected throughout the country a total of 71 incidents were accounted: 40 arbitrary detentions and 31 retentions of journalists and civilians.

Furthermore, the report records a fact that had not happened in the country for years: the murder of journalists exercising their profession by State security groups. In 2020 two cases add up to a total of 18 murders of media workers that have occurred since 2002, according to figures from the Instituto de Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS).

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**PROVEA - [www.derechos.org/ve](http://www.derechos.org/ve)**

*Lupa por la Vida [Loupe for Life] initiative emerges*

Centro Gumilla (Centro de Investigación y Acción Social - CIAS - of the Society of Jesus in Venezuela) and Provea made known the “*Lupa por la Vida*” [*Loupe for Life*] project, directed towards reclaiming the right to life, saying enough to extrajudicial executions and contributing with the victims’ relatives in demanding justice.



Executions in Venezuela have become a State policy. Armed forces participate in them with national, state or municipal competency. They act fully confident that their actions will not be investigated or sanctioned before the complacent omission of the Office of the Ombudsman and the lack of will from the Office of the District Attorney in attaining to reach

justice.

Through *Lupa por la Vida* a national monitoring is performed regarding police and military institutional violence, demanding that the officers act within the framework of the Constitution and the law. It advocates for a civic security policy that is effective in the fight against crime with full respect towards human rights.

According to this monitoring, in the month of January, 223 people were murdered by police or military officers, including 5 teenagers. The National Bolivarian Police is the law enforcement agency that is pointed out to be the most responsible of the alleged executions.

**Acceso a la Justicia - [www.accesoalajusticia.org](http://www.accesoalajusticia.org)**

Persecution against Members of Parliament elected in 2015 continues in 2021

The recovery of the Parliament by the followers of former President Hugo Chávez’s policies [*Chavismo*] hasn’t put an end to the persecution of members of the former Parliament elected in 2015. On the contrary, the results of the questionable legislative elections in December 2020 – that the government won by a large margin with its electoral system to their convenience – seem to have given more energy to intensify persecution towards political dissidence. During the first weeks of 2021, Acceso a la Justicia recorded threats against members of the former Parliament arising from their successors, from the Supreme Court of Justice, and even from the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic.



would summon other opponents, starting with Juan Guaidó and other 11 MP regarding alleged negotiations to condone Paraguay’s debt.

The new government dominated Parliament decided to create a special commission for investigating “the crimes” committed by their predecessors, presided by the MP José Brito, who went to the Office of the District Attorney in order to request that a prohibitive measure from leaving the country be issued against 22 of his once partners and collaborators of the opposition which he himself represented before his expulsion from the Primero Justicia political party. Likewise, he announced that he

The Office of the Comptroller has also become part of the attack by demanding that the Members of Parliament elected in 2015 file forthwith their definitive assets affidavit because otherwise they risk being disbarred for up to twelve months from exercising their public positions or to present themselves as candidates for future elections. Days later, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice [*TSJ by its Spanish initials*], Magistrate Maikel Moreno, left very clear that he considers that the majority of the opposition of the Parliament elected in 2015 should end up behind bars. Threats against the Parliament elected in 2015 reveal that the polarization and exasperation in Venezuela, far from dying down, tends to increase, which complicates the possibility of any accord and negotiated political exit to the current political, social, economic, and humanitarian crisis the country is going through.

**Read more in spanish here** 

**CEPAZ** - [www.cepaz.org](http://www.cepaz.org)

## There were 79 acts of persecution against people, communication media and organizations in Venezuela in January

It's the beginning of 2021 and criminalization and political persecution worsen in Venezuela. Anyone who expresses themselves or is considered a dissident of Nicolás Maduro's regime is a victim of systematic violations to their human rights through threats, stigmatizations, censorship, arbitrary detentions, irregular raids, and cruel and inhuman treatments, among others. Since 2014, at the Centro de Justicia y Paz (Cepaz) we have been consistent in the documentation and reports of political persecution and criminalization in Venezuela.



Before a State policy that seems to be headed towards increasingly applying these patterns, we have decided to perform a monthly monitoring, presenting in this opportunity the results of the investigation and documentation from January 1st, 2021 to January 31st, 2021. During this period we have recorded a total of 79 events that constitute acts of persecution or criminalization on behalf of Nicolás Maduro's regime against people, communication media and organizations. We recorded in a dispersed manner the following: 20 direct attacks against journalists and communication media, 14 civil society organizations victims of criminalization, and 45 Members of Parliament elected in 2015 through popular vote were politically persecuted.

Out of the 79 persecution victims recorded in January 2021, a case stands out against a woman harassed and threatened through social media. However, we emphasize the impossibility of determining how many women were dismissed from their workplace at Parliament and how many cautionary measures have been imposed upon women members of parliament in these acts of collective persecution exercised by the regime. The record of documented cases doesn't necessarily constitute the total number of acts of persecution and criminalization

occurred during the month of January, but they do show that they aren't isolated events, on the contrary, they constitute a pattern of repression, persecution, and criminalization against any person or organization that may be considered an obstacle in State policies headed towards the perpetuation in power of Nicolás Maduro's regime. We alert against this serious situation of massive and generalized human rights violations, we demand an end to the persecution and criminalization of those who exercise their legitimate work from different spaces, and we insist in the need for strengthening international action that puts an end to the Venezuelan crisis.

[Read more in spanish here](#) 

**Foro Penal** - [www.foropenal.com](http://www.foropenal.com)

## 12 Pemon indigenous people were released even though they don't have full freedom

As of February 19th, 2021 Foro Penal recorded 15,696 arbitrary arrests in Venezuela since January 1st, 2014. 870 civilians have been presented before military courts. Up to this date we have accrued a historical number of 3,567 political prisoners, of which 3,238 have been released under different modalities.



As of April 2014 we recorded 117 political prisoners in the country. As of February 19th the number is 329 people, out of which 24 are women. Additionally, 9,331 people were or are being unjustly subjected to criminal procedures under cautionary measures.

Last week, thanks to the strategy and work of the Foro Penal attorneys, the release of 12 Pemon indigenous people under injunctions was achieved who had been arbitrarily detained at the Rodeo II prison for over a year. Their return to their communities in the Gran Sabana (more than 800 kilometers from where they were detained) was accomplished with

the commitment of presenting themselves before court should this be required from them. They remained at the orders of local authorities, but at least they're back with their families. We cannot forget that one of them, Salvador Franco, died in prison without receiving any medical attention.

**Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía - [www.codehciu.org](http://www.codehciu.org)**

**Abandonment of educational facilities in the State of Bolívar worsens human rights violations**



Students from the Universidad Nacional Experimental de Guayana (UNEG) alerted the Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía (Codehciu) that their institution has been partially burglarized during the quarantine. One of them stated: “The real scope of the damages is unknown due to the fact that the authorities didn’t offer any details and the students aren’t allowed access to the facilities because they aren’t operational.”

These denouncements have accumulated for years, which show a complete defenselessness of university education. In October 2018, regional communication media reported the constant robberies in both university

facilities; three months later there were claims of robberies of equipment and batteries of the transportation units of the institution. In March 2019, just like in previous years, there were repeated student protests demanding better conditions in the facilities: they didn’t have transportation or cafeteria, besides they were victims of delinquency.

Codehciu urges the Venezuelan State to comply with what is set forth by international rules in regards to the right to education at all its levels. University institutions, as well as elementary and high schools need to be free from delinquency and also in optimal conditions so that, once the pandemic is overcome, the students may enjoy an educational quality. The context of COVID-19 and social distancing because of the virus shouldn’t be excuses for neglecting public educational institutions.

**Read more in spanish here** 

**Acción Solidaria - [www.accionsolidaria.info](http://www.accionsolidaria.info)**

**The first doses of Sputnik V arrive without a structured vaccination plan**

On February 13th 100,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccines arrived to the country from Russia. According to information provided by Venezuelan authorities, it’s the first batch out of a total of 10 million doses that they have accorded. Yesterday, Nicolás Maduro affirmed that the State had invested 200 million dollars in their acquisition.



whose cost would be around \$10 per dose, according to figures from Jarbas Barbosa, Assistant Director of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). In other words, the doses of the COVAX vaccines would be cheaper than the option chosen by the Venezuelan government that, even though they are safe, they’re more expensive.

Now then, based on those figures, we have that the cost per dose of the Sputnik V vaccine is less than \$10, reason for which there is a disparity between the advertised amount and what the Russian authorities have said that they actually cost. On the other hand, Venezuela, through the COVAX mechanism, will be assigned a little more than one million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine,

Likewise, another situation generating uncertainty is the scarce information regarding the vaccination plan that will be implemented in Venezuela. Maduro announced that healthcare workers would be vaccinated during the first stage; he also included security personnel and political authorities. Facing these announcements the doubt arises of why certain sectors were prioritized, such as security, over the population at risk.

