



CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

Bulletin No. 183

From May 17 to 24, 2021

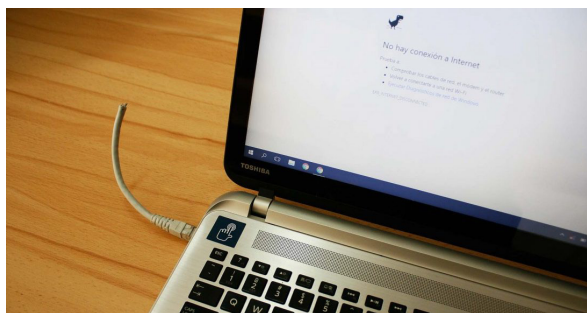
www.crisisenvenezuela.com

Espacio Público - www.espaciopublico.org

Freedom of speech in confinement; protecting and broadening public debate is imperative



On Internet Day, the most recent report of the Article XIII series produced by the Regional Alliance for Free Speech and Information revealed that the preexisting structural limitations in, at least, 14 Latin American countries were maintained and worsened as product of the pandemic and State policies.



appeared in order to restrict content, while there was a sophistication of blockings and attacks in social media and digital platforms. In eight out of the fourteen countries studied by the Alliance there were cases of blocking of followers on behalf of government officials; monitoring, surveillance or

Among the main findings concerning freedom of speech on the web, there's one that in 2020 there was a "progressive refinement of practices for restricting the exercise of human rights on a digital level", among them is the invocation of rights to promote censorial practices on behalf of official entities.

cyber-patrol dynamics towards critical sectors were recorded in nine nations; and internet blockings, connection hindrances or blackouts limiting freedom of speech were produced in two countries (Cuba and Venezuela).

Marysabel Rodríguez, Freedom of Speech Observatory Coordinator of Espacio Público, a Venezuelan organization that forms part of the Regional Alliance, pointed out that in 2020, rights such as intellectual property, privacy and reputation were

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Un Mundo Sin Mordaza - www.sinmordaza.org

Illegal seizure of the *El Nacional* headquarters is a criminal act against the free press



The illegal seizure measure executed against the headquarters of the *El Nacional* journal is a blatant violation to the right to freedom of speech and to property that comes from a corrupt process, and it's a criminal act of the dictatorship in using security forces to continue with the political persecution of the free press in Venezuela.



Spanish acronym]. The journal didn't receive notification from court regarding the steps to be taken for making the payment of the debt accredited by decision of the Supreme Court of Justice [TSJ by its Spanish initials].

On May 14th, 2021, the Fourth Municipal Ordinary Court Executor of Measures of the Judicial Circuit for the Metropolitan Area of Caracas executed an illegal seizure measure against the C.A. Editora El Nacional company for the journal's supposed civil liability in the commission of alleged moral damages against Diosdado Cabello, First Vice-President of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela [PSUV by its

Within the framework of the recent efforts of opposition factors to reestablish a dialogue with Nicolás Maduro's dictatorship whose purpose is to achieve free and just elections that are the initial impulse for facing the crisis that Venezuela is going through, the political harassment against the *El Nacional* journal is the glimpse of a clear lack of will of the regime to fulfill the terms concerning the democratic values and the human rights of this possible process.

Transparencia Venezuela - www.transparencia.org.ve

Lácteos Los Andes, another example of justice subordination to the government

Article 26 of the Constitution sets forth that “the State shall guarantee free, accessible, unbiased, ideal, transparent, autonomous, independent, responsible, fair, and expedited justice, without undue delays, without useless reversals or formalities”. However, in practice, the different authorities that comprise the justice administration system never get tired of showing their commitment and subordination to Nicolás Maduro’s orders. The most recent case is the corruption scandal that shakes the State-owned company Lácteos Los Andes.

Even though organizations like Transparencia Venezuela have denounced irregularities in State-owned companies for several years, including Lácteos Los Andes, such as low performance, non-compliance of their plans and projects, and corruption events, authorities have decided to turn a blind eye. Nevertheless, on May 7th, the focus was on the company nationalized in 2008, after an employee made a series of denouncements against the



Board of Directors and Nicolás Maduro ordered an investigation.

One week after Maduro’s instruction, the Prosecutor General appointed by the questionable National Constituent Assembly, Tarek William Saab, informed that he had dismantled a “corruption conspiracy” in the company with the cooperation of the much feared Military Counterintelligence General

Directorate [*DGCIM by its Spanish acronym*]. Saab said that they had acted under the “express instructions of President Nicolás Maduro Moros”, and announced the detention of the President of Lácteos Los Andes, Colonel Luis Augusto Piligra Jiménez, who had occupied said position since August 30th, 2019.

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PROVEA - www.provea.org

Credible and secure elections. Vaccines are lacking

The National Electoral Council [*CNE by its Spanish initials*] has summoned an electoral process for November 21st, day on which the Venezuelan people may vote for governors, regional representatives and councilpersons.

The changes initiated by the CNE could guarantee a more transparent electoral process and with this they could generate more confidence in voting. The elections, however, will be performed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though there’s an electoral plan, there’s no vaccination plan.



One of the conditions that must be included for advancing towards the elections is vaccination, that for the month of November should reach the largest possible number of people and be performed without any discrimination or demanding the *Patria* ID, with well-defined criteria in regards to prioritizing people and with sufficient guidance

and information. It would be seriously irresponsible to call upon a massive participation in the upcoming elections in a context of high risk of infection and with collapsed health centers.

CEPAZ - www.cepaz.org

There was a femicide action every 34 hours in Venezuela during April

The Femicide Digital Observatory of the Centro de Justicia y Paz (Cepaz) recorded 15 perpetrated femicides and 6 attempted femicides in Venezuela from April 1st to April 30th. In average, there was a femicide action every 34 hours. Six children were orphaned as a result of their mothers' femicides. Two of them witnessed the violent events.

There were 75 perpetrated femicides and 15 attempted femicides during the first quadrimester in Venezuela. Furthermore, 37 perpetrated femicides and 4 attempted femicides of Venezuelans abroad. 20% of the cases occurred in the State of Carabobo; 13.3% in the State of Bolivar; 13.3% in the Capital District; and 13.3% in the State of Guarico. 33.3% of the attempted femicides occurred in the State of Carabobo and another 33.3% in the State of Tachira. There were 12 violent deaths of Venezuelan women abroad during the same period. There was one femicide every 60 hours. Four children were orphaned and one of them witnessed his mother's femicide. Three of the femicide victims were pregnant. 33.3% of the cases occurred in Colombia; another 33.3% in Ecuador. 25% of Venezuelan femicide victims abroad were teenagers between the ages of 16 and 17.



We demand, as civil society organizations, that the Venezuelan State promotes the investigation of the femicides and their associated phenomena. Data collection and statistics compilation on violence against women as a social phenomenon, and promoting investigations regarding their causes and consequences is imperative. The systematic gathering of data classified by categories and their periodical publication with the pertinent explanation of the methodology applied including elementary biographical background is also urgent; as well as the relation between the victims and the perpetrators of the violent acts; the contexts in which the violent acts against women take place; the complaint filed and the search for help, and their inconveniences; the forms of damage and their derivations in order to conceive and to put into practice a real and effective preventive policy.

Read more in spanish here 

Acción Solidaria - www.accionsolidaria.info

Vaccination Tourism: a solution for the few

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the existence of at least five vaccines approved by the WHO that have been administered to millions of people around the world, we observe the appearance of a new phenomenon within the so-called medical tourism: "vaccination tourism".

"Vaccination tourism" isn't more than an escape route for those who, in midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, haven't been able to be vaccinated in their countries and decide to travel to other



nations where the immunization process is much more advanced.

According to the aforesaid, some Venezuelans have opted for seeking the possibility of immunization against COVID-19 abroad in any country allowing vaccination to not only their residents, but also to anyone who can afford a ticket or journey to their territory. International media have pointed out Venezuela as a pioneer in the activity of crossing borders for immunization, being the United States and Colombia the main destinations.

Foro Penal - www.foropenal.com

Sending political prisoners to common jails doesn't imply a positive change in incarceration conditions



As of May 21st, 2021 Foro Penal recorded 15,728 arbitrary arrests in Venezuela since January 1st, 2014. 872 civilians have been presented before military courts. Up to this date we have accrued a historical number of 3,605 political prisoners, of which 3,299 have been released under different modalities.



centers dependent on the Ministry of Penitentiary Affairs was published on May 12th. It's important to point out that the irregular transfers of political prisoners and common prisoners from the DGCIM and the SEBIN facilities to the different jails in the country were already being done, thus, this order only justifies what had been happening for some time.

As of April 2014 we recorded 117 political prisoners in the country. As of May 21st, 2021 the number is 306 people, out of which 22 are women. Additionally, 9,378 people were or are being unjustly subjected to criminal procedures under cautionary measures.

The Official Gazette with the Presidential Decree forcing the National Bolivarian Intelligence Service [SEBIN by its Spanish acronym] and the Military Counterintelligence General Directorate [DGCIM by its Spanish acronym] law-enforcement authorities to transfer all the prisoners kept in said security entities to detention

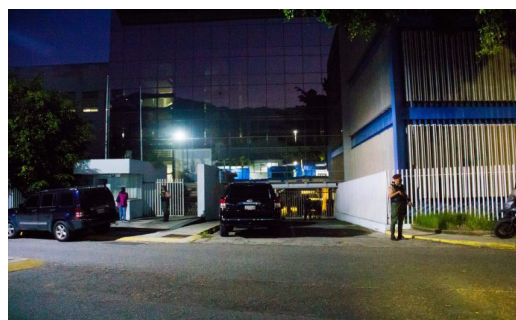
The Presidential Decree standardizes the illegality of the inmate transfers, whose jail destination can only be modified following the guidelines set forth in the Penitentiary Organic Act. All in all, in executing this State policy, the political prisoners are transferred (violating the Penitentiary Organic Act) from where they were arbitrarily detained and in bad conditions to other facilities in which they'll still be arbitrarily detained and in even worse conditions. Each particular case must be individually assessed, but, generally speaking, the change in detention centers doesn't imply a positive modification in incarceration conditions.

Bloque Constitucional - www.bloqueconstitucional.com

Without the right to freedom of speech



We've alerted the country in several opportunities of the serious human rights violations that are systematically repeated, that undermine our system of liberties and that have progressively dismantled our Constitution, democracy and the Rule of Law. As the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has expressed, freedom of speech is the fundamental base of every democratic society. We add that without freedom of speech, society stops having access to information on the perils that lay ahead of us, on how our public resources are used, on the bloody events that mourn our people, and on the measures taken in order to fight crime and make our society safer.



recent trial against C.A. Editora El Nacional is nothing but the criminalization of freedom of speech and information by applying a modality of "the enemy's criminal law", that doesn't seek to compensate an alleged moral damage, but, solely to judicially neutralize a journalistic institution that isn't

Channels for exchanging all types of ideas and information are closed without freedom of speech, as well as every citizen's growth as an individual is hindered, and society's development as a whole is discouraged. In relation to freedom of speech violations in Venezuela, the

aligned with the interests of the governing political regime in Venezuela.

The violation of this right has gotten to a point that systematic attacks on free mass communication media in Venezuela have reached international notoriety, and in this regard, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), the governments and democrats of free societies have taken note of this.



Acceso a la Justicia - www.accesoalajusticia.org

The new National Electoral Council appointed by the government-biased Parliament comes with manufacturing defects

For the first time in over a decade, the Parliament, and not the Supreme Court of Justice [TSJ by its Spanish initials], appointed the members of the National Electoral Council [CNE by its Spanish initials]. However, the new CNE is appointed by an illegitimate authority; in other words, the government-biased Parliament. This was a product of a corrupt electoral process that started when the Constitutional Chamber of the TSJ appointed an illegitimate CNE, who organized parliamentary elections favoring the interests of Nicolás Maduro's Government in which there was no political pluralism, and led to a practically monochrome Parliament.



Preliminary Commission didn't disclose at any moment the methodology for choosing the candidates, or even less the criteria and the scale used. Additionally, the Súmate organization denounced that 60% of the CNE's new members (three main directors and three alternate directors) are or

Another aspect that taints the current CNE concerns the appointment of the Electoral Nominations Committee, an authority who selected the candidates to the CNE. Why? Because its constitution rested on the questionable constitutionality of Article 19 of the Electoral Power Organic Act [LOPE by its Spanish acronym], a rule that stipulated that the committee must be comprised of twenty-one members, out of which eleven are parliamentary representatives. This provision is absolutely contrary to what is set forth in Article 295 of the Constitution, which points out that the evaluating authority «shall be comprised of representatives of the different sectors of society» and not by parliamentary representatives, not even partially.

were linked to the United Socialist Party of Venezuela [PSUV by its Spanish acronym], consequently, «the eligibility requirement set forth in the LOPE that demands that they are people with no ties to organizations with political purposes is reneged». But not only have the followers of former President Hugo Chávez's policies [Chavismo] seemed to have their directors, the Vice-President of the entity, Enrique Márquez, was a leader of the Un Nuevo Tiempo (UNT) political party, and thanks to that education he was elected as a representative of the Parliament for the legislative period of 2015-2020. Finally, it must be said that in the new CNE there appear directors and alternates that were candidates nominated by non-governmental organizations, such as the case of the Alternate Director Griselda Colina and the Main Director Roberto Picón. Their presence may give the CNE a fresh face, but it'll depend up to what point the technical criteria will prevail over the political ones.

Furthermore, the selection of the civil society representatives that comprised the Electoral Nominations Committee was covered by a shroud of opacity, since the

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