



# CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

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[www.crisisenvenezuela.org](http://www.crisisenvenezuela.org)

## Espacio Público - [www.espaciopublico.org](http://www.espaciopublico.org)

### Espacio Público revealed its report on the right to freedom of speech situation in Venezuela in 2021



In the second year of quarantine after the decreeing the State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the informative opacity and possible retaliations for broadcasting information created an atmosphere of inhibition in communication media and journalists. The measures implemented by the Venezuelan State for facing the pandemic directly violated the right to freedom of speech. In this sense, many people suffered

retaliations after questioning public officials and policies through their social media.

We recorded a decrease in the total number of cases, for a second year in a row, in a period characterized by reducing the news agenda. In parallel, the political conflict remained in hiatus, in spite of the high levels of social conflict.

2021 was the year with the least number of cases after 2015, when 237 cases were recorded. During the last period, at least 246 cases were documented, which constitutes a decrease in 37% compared to the number of cases in 2020, when 390 freedom of speech violation cases were accounted.

[Read more in spanish here](#) 

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

### 26 people disappeared in mining territories of the State of Bolivar in 2021



According to the most recent update of the monitoring of the Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía (Codehciu), approximately 26 people disappeared in the south of the State of Bolivar in 2021. Most of these people disappeared in the mines of the Municipality of Sifontes (10). The rest disappeared in the municipalities of El Callao (4), Sucre (3), Cedeño (2), Angostura del Orinoco (1), and Gran Sabana (2).

The figure is barely the underregistration of a pattern of enforced disappearances occurring more frequently since Nicolás Maduro activated the Orinoco Mining Arc National Strategic Development Zone (OMA) in 2016, a lifesaver facing the nosedive of the oil industry. Since the second half of 2019, the Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía (Codehciu) in alliance with the news portal *Correo del Caroní* have collected 175 disappearance reports in the south of the State of Bolivar that occurred between 2012 and 2021.

Although these disappearances can be considered a systematic pattern that can't be separated from the gold-mining in the south of Venezuela, the State still hasn't implemented public policies that guarantee the search and rescue of these people. The victims face a



legal loophole: there aren't any laws in the country that deal with the investigation processes, monitoring and redress of the mining conflict victims. Their families are on their own.

[Read more in spanish here](#) 

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

### #TúTambiénPuedes: A campaign for donating medications you no longer need

With the aim of broadening aid channels and mechanisms, Acción Solidaria initiated its campaign “*Tú También Puedes*” [“*You also Can*”] whose purpose is to collect medications that other people aren’t using and wish to donate in order to give them to those in need through our humanitarian response program.

It’s a way of letting people know that they can offer help, the same as our organization does. We seek creating a support network between everyone for mitigating the need or coming to the aid of others. It’s important to insist that, as an organization, Acción Solidaria doesn’t



have the capacity for tending to all the requests. But through the campaign, we could even find medications that don’t regularly arrive or aren’t common in the stockroom.

All you have to do in order to be part of this initiative is to check that the medicines haven’t expired. Donations must be given to the reception in Acción Solidaria’s headquarters, at Avenida Orinoco de Bello Monte, Caracas, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and with that you’ll be helping another person with their treatment.

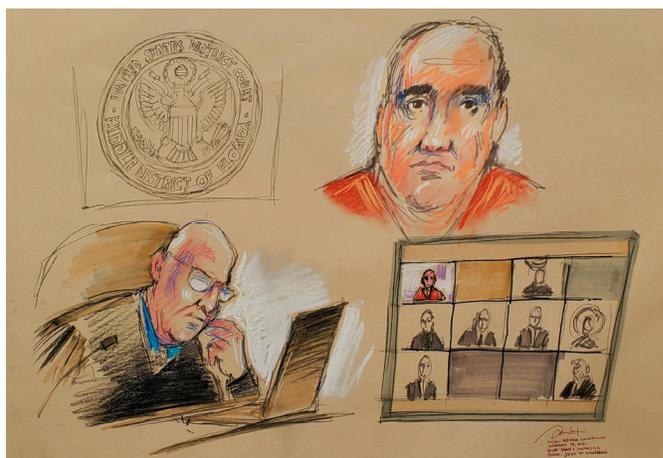
## Transparencia Venezuela - [www.transparencia.org.ve](http://www.transparencia.org.ve)

### Alex Saab started informing the DEA of his businesses in Venezuela in 2016

The versions that indicated that the entrepreneur Alex Saab would’ve attempted an agreement with the United States prior to his capture in Cape Verde in June 2020 gained hold on February 16th after two documents that are kept in the Southern District Court of Florida that’s processing the Colombian citizen were made public. According to the texts, Nicolás Maduro’s presumed front man started cooperating with agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 2016, providing information on his criminal activity, participating as a confidential source, and even delivering over \$10,000,000 that were part of the ill-gotten money.

The documents were sealed in the docket against Saab, but they were declassified after a closed hearing with the Colombian entrepreneur’s defense team. These briefs specify that Saab provided information to the DEA on the bribes he paid and the crimes he committed in regards to contracts with the Venezuelan government, they also specify that the entrepreneur agreed to turn himself in to US authorities in May 2019, but didn’t do so.

The alleged irregularities in the contracts undersigned between Saab and the Venezuelan government were made public through journalistic investigations over six years ago. Later, the former Prosecutor General of the Republic, Luisa Ortega Díaz, assured that the entrepreneur was the Venezuelan president’s front man. The government kept silent on this accusation and only



referred to Saab when he was detained in Cape Verde. Then, the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs assured that he was a diplomatic representative and had to be released.

**Read more in spanish here** 

## Defiende Venezuela - [www.defiendevenezuela.org](http://www.defiendevenezuela.org)

**DEFIENDE VENEZUELA**

### Oncological patient is detained without any medical attention and in a state of malnutrition



*"(...) He's dying. He's been bleeding for weeks, with sharp pains and paralysis, and they don't take him to the doctor. (...) He's going to be one of the detainees that loses their life without the right to attention in this dungeon. They're now eleven since July 2021. (...) We're protesting so he can go out and get medical attention. He had his medicines for chemo for months, and he hasn't been tended to or transferred. He's requested it several times and nothing. Now he's dying and they*

*have no respect for his life. It's urgent. He's bleeding and has trouble breathing; he's had convulsions seven times today. He's in very bad shape."* This was the cry for help of a detainee at the Scientific Police jail in Plaza Toros, Valencia, who contacted Defiende Venezuela asking for help for José Ernesto Lasorsa.

He was diagnosed with cancer for the first time in 2016, but he recovered thanks to an adequate medical treatment. However, the cancer reappeared in May 2020. José Lasorsa is father of six children and has been detained since September 8th, 2020. Without medical attention and in a state of malnutrition, Lasorsa has convulsions several times a day, and currently he can't move his left arm and has speech and mobility problems, therefore, he's forced to drag himself across the cell.

Defiende Venezuela calls for the protection and guarantee of José Ernesto Lasorsa's human rights, reminding that the State must guarantee his right to life and personal integrity, providing health services and access to an adequate medical treatment. The inmates completely depend on the State's attention and the demand of a less serious detention measure is justified because of his state of health.

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

**Foro Penal**

### Two elderly people were detained for protesting peacefully

As of February 18th, 2022 Foro Penal recorded 15,770 arbitrary arrests in Venezuela since January 1st, 2014. 875 civilians have been presented before military courts. Up to this date we have accrued a historical number of 3,652 political prisoners, of which 3,414 have been released under different modalities.

As of April 2014 we recorded 117 political prisoners in the country. As of February 18th, 2022 the number is 238 people, out of which 13 are women. Additionally, 9,420 people were or are being unjustly subjected to criminal procedures under cautionary measures.

On Thursday February 17th, William Echarry and Juan Ramón Blanco, leaders of the "Mover" movement from La



Guaira were released under cautionary measures, who had been arbitrarily preventively detained on February 14th for allegedly committing the crimes of instigating hatred and conspiracy. The release, although not complete, was granted after civil society exerted pressure criticizing through all possible means that these elderly people had been arrested for protesting peacefully and without having committed any crime. The process, however, continues.

Moreover, we would like to thank PwC Venezuela for granting the "Marca Venezuela" mention "Human Rights" award to Foro Penal on February 18th, acknowledging our almost 20 years dedicated to the defense of human rights.

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

## There won't be a real recovery in Venezuela while human rights keep being threatened

We've gotten used to hearing "Venezuela is fixed". Even though it's true that after seven years of recession some economic sectors have started showing a shy recovery, this doesn't mean a structural change of Venezuelan economy. What we see is the effect of the unofficial dollarization; the possibility of counting on sufficient payment means has allowed to somewhat recover the commerce and services sector.



shortages are also a majority because they don't have the resources for buying water tanks or an electric power plant.

Proof that the massive impoverishment and the violation of economic and social rights of Venezuelans persist is the social mobilization that goes on. Retirees protested in front of the Prosecutor

In parallel to the scandals for the squandering of luxury of the new (and old) economic oligarchy for parties on the top of a tepuy or at fancy restaurants inside a military base, the reality for most Venezuelans are the miserable salaries in bolivars with which they don't have any access to basic consumer goods that currently fill up the supermarket shelves. Those who must keep dealing with electric power, drinking water and cooking gas

General's Office on February 15th, the health guilds gathered in front of hospitals across the country, and workers of basic service companies claimed their rights in front of the Corporación Venezolana de Guayana [CVG by its Spanish initials] headquarters in Puerto Ordaz. A government that wishes to show stability sees the social protest with unease and therefore criminalizes it. An example of this was the detention of William Echarry, 70 years old, and Ramón Blanco, 66 years old, for holding a banner in a protest in La Guaira on February 12th. There won't be a real recovery in the country while the Venezuelan people's human rights keep being threatened.

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

## The Supreme Court of Justice has an opportunity for improving the LGBTQI collective's situation in the Military Justice Organic Code

Venezuela figures along with Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, and Suriname, among the South American countries in which the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersexual (LGBTQI) collective, aren't only forbidden to marry, adopt children or inherit assets, but also suffer from some legal rules that criminalize them. A situation that the Supreme Court of Justice [TSJ by its Spanish initials] has allowed to remain the same. However, this could change the future, due to the fact that the TSJ will revise the unconstitutionality of one of those provisions.



The challenged rule punishes as a crime the fact that uniformed members sustain sexual consensual relations with same-sex people for considering that this "diminishes their dignity or offends them", which wouldn't just require a perceptive action of the reproached "conduct", but it must also be clearly established and procedurally proven.

On November 26th, 2021, the Constitutional Chamber issued is ruling Nº 651 in which it admitted the appeal for annulment against Article 565 of the Military Justice Organic Code [COJM by its Spanish initials] filed by the Asociación Civil Venezuela Igualitaria [an Unincorporated Nonprofit Association] in December 2016, because it discriminated against homosexual people.

An eventual decision of the TSJ annulling the challenged article would represent an advancement for the LGBTQI collective in the Bolivarian National Armed Forces and would put an end to the persecution that they suffer inside the military quarters. Likewise, it would guide the country towards the normalization in this matter by starting to put it on the same page as the rest of the region.

**Read more in spanish here** 

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

## New legislative reforms in Venezuela: A guarantee of justice for human rights violations victims?

Two new laws concerning the guarantee of access to justice come into force in Venezuela. The reform to the Supreme Court of Justice Organic Act [LOTSJ by its Spanish acronym] modifies the current makeup of the TSJ, reducing the number of magistrates from 32 to 20. The Constitutional Chamber will be comprised of five magistrates, while the Political-Administrative, Electoral, Civil Cassation, Criminal Cassation, and Social Cassation Chambers will be comprised of three members each. The Nominations Committee still exists, who will be in charge of appointing the TSJ's new main and alternate magistrates, but with the reform, this Committee goes from having 11 to 21 members, more specifically 11 representatives and 10 people from civil society, this means that the Nominations Committee is still under the Parliament's control, such aspect contradicts what is set forth in Article 270 of the Constitution that stipulates that it must be comprised of representatives of society's different sectors.



Parliament elected in 2020, three people will be appointed by their distinguished career in human rights matters, two people will be members of human rights defense organizations and movements, and two will be Members of Parliament. The commission's president will also be elected by the Parliament.

The Commission for the Guarantee of Justice and Redress of Victims of Crimes against Human Rights Act has a temporal character, effective for two years and the possibility of being extended. Its purpose is to "create the Commission in order to generate recommendations and facilitate study, monitoring and confirmation mechanisms in this matter". This Commission doesn't replace the attributions and competencies of the Justice System. The Justice and Redress Commission will be an independent entity assigned to the Republican Moral Council. It'll be comprised of seven members appointed by the

What do these laws mean within a context like in Venezuela? We consider that they don't respond to the country's need of re-institutionalization for accessing independent justice in favor of the victims of crimes against human rights. They seem to respond to an evident intention of Nicolás Maduro's government of evading the international response claiming the cease of human rights violations against the population and demanding a process of justice and redress in favor of the victims. Furthermore, the level of politicization framing these new rules alters the nature of the institutions' rebuilding processes and of a true search of justice and redress in favor of the victims and their families. Thus, under the current context, these reforms aren't enough for putting an end to the systematic human rights violations, although they open small windows of which different sectors of society and human rights activists must seize and use them in order to obtain better protection conditions of the victims' rights.

**Read more in spanish here** 

## Bloque Constitucional

### The incarceration policy for all types of dissidents remains intact in Venezuela

Last week, while there was a pacific protest in public roads of Macuto, La Guaira, two citizens were detained, William Echarry, 70 years old, and Juan Blanco, 66 years old, representatives of the pensioned and retired, who carried two banners in which they denounced the serious conditions suffered by the elderly in the country due to the miserable pensions that don't even amount to 2 dollars per month.



instigating hatred, a crime set forth in Article 20 of the Anti-Hatred Act, which evidences once more that the incarceration policy for all dissidents remains intact in our country.

Both people were transferred to the First Court of Control of that judicial circuit where they were accused of

With the aforesaid, the right to protest, which is set forth in Article 68 of the 1999 Constitution, is not only still being violated, and strikes a harder blow because it concerns the elderly, but also violations of the rights to nourishment, to life with dignity, and the protection to the elderly keep happening and getting worse every day.

