



CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

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www.crisisenvenezuela.com



Espacio Público - www.espaciopublico.org

The general situation of the right to freedom of speech. The January - April 2021 Report

During the first quadrimester of 2021 there have been at least 74 cases that provide 150 freedom of speech violations in Venezuela. 16 cases were counted during the month of January, 21 in February, 18 in March, and 19 in April.



Even though the restrictions imposed from the beginning of the pandemic have been less strict during these last months, the press's work keeps being object of limitations on behalf of the authorities and governmental institutions. The closing of communication means, attacking and blocking of websites, impeding coverage, and harassment against citizens for the use of social media have been documented in many opportunities.

In regards to the violations accounted for, we find that censorship occupied one third of the total with 49 cases; followed by intimidations, with 31; administrative restrictions, 21 cases; verbal harassments, 16 cases; and threats, with 15 cases. Judicial harassments, attacks and aggressions complete the list, with 11, 5, and 2 cases, respectively.

[Read more in spanish here](#) 



REDUNI - www.redunivenezuela.com

University workers have nothing to celebrate on International Workers' Day

May 1st of every year in Venezuela becomes a favorable opportunity for wielding mottos referring to workers' claims. 2021 was no exception. Government officials broadcasted their messages alluding to this day, everyone from the President to the Minister of University Education made emphasis that whoever holds the power fights for the interests of the working class, without leaving out 21st century socialism.



scientific articles in indexed journals, earns less than \$10 per month in a country that has 41 months of hyperinflation, making it the highest in the world. How, in the case of a full-time tenured professor, can they live with dignity with a salary of \$10 per month, with a basic

Moreover, in the specific case of university workers, as expected, there were multiple declarations rejecting the working conditions they're facing, marked by the pulverization of the purchasing power and the annihilation of any type of social security. The fair claims of the university professors who asked themselves how was it possible that a tenured professor, which is the highest ranking position, who has at least 15 years of teaching and research experience, who has produced and published Promotion Research Studies (PRS) and

food basket that, according to data from the Documentation and Analysis Center for Workers [*Cendas by its Spanish acronym*], cost \$322 in March for a family of 5 members.

Those who speak of the working class are the same people who led university workers and Venezuelans in general to their ruin. Unfortunately, the future doesn't look any different; the necessary measures for facing the economic debacle that has dragged all workers aren't being taken, thus, it can be assured that Venezuelan workers, including university workers, have nothing to celebrate.

Transparencia Venezuela - www.transparencia.org.ve

Great Mission Housing Venezuela: a decade of opacity

Ten years ago, on April 30th, 2011, the Great Mission Housing Venezuela was launched, one of the leading programs of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro's administrations. From that moment, the opacity and lack of transparency in official documents and figures have characterized this program, even more than its main purpose: building houses. The Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela (Ipsy Venezuela) [*Institute of Press and Society of Venezuela*], the Efecto Cocuyo news portal, and Transparencia Venezuela performed the investigation "10 years of the Great Mission Housing Venezuela: the dark foundations of a promise" that gives an account of the irregularities that have surrounded this mission during its first decade.



overprices and bribery payments, deficient constructions, unfinished works, theft and diversion of materials, as well as illegal money applications to assign houses", it says.

According to this work, the financial performance during the first decade of Mission Housing surpassed 15.5 billion dollars, whose destination isn't clear. Furthermore, it points out that "between 2011 and 2019, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. [*PDVSA by its Spanish acronym*] contributed with 44.67% of this program's financial performance". In spite of that, the report emphasizes that there's no way to audit the mission and that beyond the announcements, the absence of official documents that support the figures raises suspicion on its compliance.

The comprehensive report related that this program was launched to tend to affected families, but it has received complaints regarding corruption cases and alleged uses for social control. "The irregularities involve the discretionary assignment of contracts, alleged

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PROVEA - www.derechos.org.ve

Old-age pension and poverty

The WHO has declared the decade comprised between 2021 and 2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing. With this initiative, the Member States of this world organization commit themselves to collaborate in order to improve the lives of the elderly. After the COVID situation, these types of actions have become especially relevant. In a time in which the emotional wellbeing of the elderly has suffered, the declaration of the Decade of Healthy Ageing is good news for the world, but a sad utopia for Venezuelans.



May 1st, 2021 to 7 million bolivars, equal to 2.4 dollars per month. Whoever depends solely on a pension from the Venezuelan Social Security Institute [*IVSS by its Spanish initials*] isn't only condemned to misery, but could barely survive.

The symbolic old-age pension granted by the *de facto* government to over 4 million elderly adults condemns them to poverty, hunger and precarious health, since they don't count with access to medications either due to shortage and high costs. The old-age pension, which was equal to less than one dollar per month, was adjusted on

In reality, the social security system has been substituted by improvised, discriminatory and ineffective assistance programs. While the world works towards the decade of healthy ageing, thousands of elderly people scrape out a living or waste away in Venezuela, with a fictitious pension and still without vaccines to protect them from the pandemic.

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Acceso a la Justicia - www.accesoalajusticia.org

New International Cooperation Bill affects freedom of association of NGOs



After over three lustrums hanging over the heads of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the sword of Damocles, the International Cooperation Bill today seems to be a threat more real than ever for the Venezuelan civil society. Why? On April 15th, the Foreign Policy, Sovereignty and Integration Committee of the government biased Parliament approved the bill that would limit international financing to civil groups.



This bill has the same text as the one from 2005. At that time the initiative was stopped by the danger that it meant for the human rights defense activity and the autonomy of the NGOs. Nevertheless, Nicolás Maduro's regime dusts off the issue in midst of an attack against civil society that includes raids and detentions of activists, as well as the order of monitoring the financial operations performed by civil organizations; in addition when it has just ordered the charity, humanitarian and human rights assistance groups to deliver, among other things, information about their financiers and beneficiaries to the National Office against Organized Crime and Financing of Terrorism.

According to this bill, the NGOs would be obligated to register before a special registry called the Non-Governmental Organizations Registry Integrated System, dependent to an authority created by the President of the Republic. Only the NGOs who are registered would be acknowledged as legal by the national government and, consequently, could receive contributions from abroad in the terms authorized by the National Executive Power. All of the above shows that Nicolás Maduro's Government has little interest in promoting freedom of association. Its policy is that of dictating more and more restrictive measures that impede exercising said freedom; a key piece in a Social State based on the Rule of Law and Justice, especially if it concerns organizations that defend human rights and provide humanitarian assistance.

Read more in spanish here 

Bloque Constitucional - www.bloqueconstitucional.com

Salary increase for Venezuelans violates their constitutional right to a dignified salary



On May 1st, Nicolás Maduro's regime decreed an increase of the minimum wage to 7 million bolivars per month, with which 1.8 million bolivars represents an increase of almost 300%; in the hyperinflation economy of Venezuela, this represents 2.5 dollars at the current exchange rate that is complemented with the food vouchers to reach \$3.5 per month.



Article 91 of the Constitution sets forth: "All workers have the right to a sufficient salary that allows them to live with dignity and cover for themselves and their families the basic material, social and intellectual needs...". It also indicates that workers must be guaranteed a vital minimum wage adjusting it every year and taking as reference the cost of the basic food basket.

Besides of how embarrassing the event was, the fact that this increase, which isn't even \$3.5 per month, was announced with great fanfare, it constitutes a violation to every worker's right to have an income with which he can live with dignity, taking as reference that the cost of the basic food basket in Venezuela in April was \$229.92 according to the Documentation and Analysis Center for Workers [*Cenda by its Spanish acronym*]. However, the regime pretends that a Venezuelan worker can live for one month with less than what the World Bank considers that a person who's in the poverty limit earns (\$1.90 per day).

Defiende Venezuela - www.defiendevenezuela.org

DEFIENDE VENEZUELA

Partial modifications to Administrative Ruling 001-2021 insist on associating human rights NGOs with organized crime and terrorism

Nicolás Maduro's regime made a partial modification to the sublegal rank rule imposing the registration of non-profit civil associations, among others, before the National Office against Organized Crime and Financing of Terrorism, which was published in the Official Gazette N° 42.118 dated May 3rd, 2021.



Civil Code, they're under the supervision and control of civil registry offices and, just as any other subject of law in the country, they're subject to the control and monitoring of the National Integrated Service of Customs and Tax Administration [*SENIAT* by its Spanish acronym]. Likewise, the modification of the administrative ruling keeps imposing the duty of offering the list of organizations or entities from which they receive national and international cooperation.

This modification improved the composition and specified the general registration requisites, the procedure and the obligations of the "compliance officer"; there were also changes in the duty of providing the list of people who are beneficiaries of the non-profit civil associations' activities and their allies with which they perform their work.

All in all, the modification of the administrative ruling seems to be a partial victory for the movement of non-profit organizations, due to the fact that accountability isn't a problem, we advocate transparency, but this doesn't imply or supposes that we accept the association of promoting and defending human rights with organized crime and terrorism.

However, it still incurs in the error of wanting to regulate human rights non-governmental organizations, because according to the Venezuelan

Acción Solidaria - www.accionsolidaria.info

Acción Solidaria

The costs of COVID-19

Nicolás Maduro's government declared the raise of minimum wage to 10 million bolivars on May 1st; in other words, about \$3.5 dollars per month. If we exonerate all the expenses a person could have and dedicates the whole salary to prevent or tend to a mild, moderated or serious case of COVID-19, it would barely be enough to buy some facemasks to prevent getting infected and a few acetaminophen tablets to tend to the mildest symptoms of the disease.



to the Tu Buen Doctor website (a specialized laboratory in Caracas), depending on the type of test, being the most expensive the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. Likewise, if they don't have access to an infectious diseases physician at a public assistance center, a private consult costs around \$30 and \$50.

Some examples: the purchase of a disposable facemask at the Farmatodo pharmacy chain costs around \$0.31, if it's the KN-95 (the most recommended) the price increases to \$1.5, and if it's a reusable cloth facemask it can cost between \$1 and \$5. In order to tend to some mild COVID-19 symptoms, acetaminophen could be prescribed with a cost of \$0.65 for 10 tablets. Now then, if they can't perform a COVID-19 diagnosis test in a public health center, those tests cost between \$40 and \$80, according

In order to tend to moderate cases of COVID-19, the support with oxygen tanks for respiratory distress is usually recommended; renting an oxygen tank reaches up to \$150, while refilling the tanks costs between \$35 and \$40. And if the person requires hospitalization, one day can cost between \$800 and \$2,250. Furthermore, the use of the antiretroviral Remdesivir has become very popular in Venezuela for reducing the effects of COVID-19, a drug that can cost up to an additional \$200. The lack of a structured vaccination plan and of clear public policies to tend to the pandemic constitutes violations of the right to health of all Venezuelans.

CEPAZ - www.cepaz.org

The appointing of the National Electoral Council is a first step towards recovering electoral institutionality in Venezuela

The plural configuration of the new National Electoral Council [CNE by its Spanish initials] opens a new cycle in the history of an institution whose questionable performance undermined the trust in votes. It concerns a first step towards the difficult recon-

quest of democratic institutionality in Venezuela, a process that we consider should be conceived as a journey by stages and that requires the commitment and work of all Venezuelans. Appointing a plural electoral authority opens an opportunity and constitutes a first sign of political will. Some may value it as insufficient, and if we consider all that it's lacking, undoubtedly it is. However, the social and political effort that derived in the appointment of this new administration is an example of what can be accomplished by joining wills.

We're aware that there are sectors that see this process with concerns. Nevertheless, from this space, we consider that it's prudent to evaluate the opportunity that's emerging with serenity and a sense of broadness in order to build the democratic project in Venezuela. We need to keep advancing together so that the electoral agenda becomes a reality. This agenda includes an electoral schedule; the reestablishment of the political parties' right to use their symbols and to be directed by



their legitimate authorities; the qualification of political leaders of the opposition; the qualified national and international electoral observation; total audits and updating of the Electoral Registry so that the millions of Venezuelans who are out of the electoral census can exercise their

right to political participation.

It's imperative that the new directors assume in a firm manner a comprehensive commitment with democracy, in agreement with the historical moment in which they're being appointed. They must show the will and the ability to implement agreements that give back the sovereignty to the people, promoting trust and participation. It's essential that the new CNE works for all Venezuelans. From the spaces we are summoned we'll continue with the firm and peaceful fight for the defense of citizens' rights: the right to participate, the right to vote freely, the right to choose and be chosen, and the right to the democratic rotation of power.

Read more in spanish here 

Foro Penal - www.foropenal.com

Changes in Administrative Ruling 001-2021 still forces NGOs to renege their duties to the victims and international organizations

As of May 7th, 2021 Foro Penal recorded 15,725 arbitrary arrests in Venezuela since April 1st, 2014. 872 civilians have been presented before military courts. Up to this date we have accrued a historical number of 3,603 political prisoners, of which 3,296 have been released under different modalities.



The pressure from the international community and the NGOs led the Venezuelan government to republish Administrative Ruling 001-2021 that basically stipulates that NGOs that defend human rights are criminal organizations, alleging supposed "material errors". The new

administrative ruling, in spite of mitigating some of the repressive aspects of the original one, still puts the NGOs in a position in which they are obligated to renege their duties to the victims and international organizations. In conclusion, the repressive and stigmatizing framework hasn't ceased.

As of April 2014 we recorded 117 political prisoners in the country. As of May 7th, 2021 the number is 307 people, out of which 22 are women. Additionally, 9,378 people were or are being unjustly subjected to criminal procedures under cautionary measures.

