



CRISIS EN VENEZUELA

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www.crisisenvenezuela.org



Acceso a la Justicia - www.accesoaljusticia.org

The FFM and UN-HCHR took a stance on the growing offensive against organized civil society in Venezuela



The Parliament's decision of approving in first discussion the Law on Control, Regularization, Operations and Financing of Non-Governmental and Related Organizations and dusting off the Bill of the International Cooperation Act has set off alarms in international authorities that consider them as threats to fundamental freedoms of any democracy. This was warned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-HCHR) and the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela (FFM) in the oral updates presented to the United Nations Human Rights Committee on March 21st and 22nd.

After affirming that a “free and vibrant space for people to express their opinions is vital”, the High Commissioner, Volker Türk, expressed that he shares “the

serious concerns” that have been formulated by civil society facing the legal initiatives that pro-government officials have implemented against NGOs and other non-profit organizations in 2023. Likewise, he insisted on the call made upon authorities in January when he visited the country so that any approved legislation “meets international human rights standards”. The Mission, on its part, made echo of the High Commissioner’s position, but with a harsher tone: “The new regulation, if approved, would consolidate an abusive control by the State on the existence, financing and activities of NGOs”, warned the President of this authority, the Portuguese jurist, Marta Valiñas.

But not only the laws set off alarms. Volker Türk and Marta Valiñas denounced to the Council the attacks, acts of intimidation and harassment and detentions against anyone who dares wander off the official discourse or that claims a right or denounces an irregularity. Thus, both oral updates corroborate that human rights in Venezuela aren't being guaranteed and that the institutional reforms and restructures undertaken by the authorities haven't just served as, but they're just a façade to simulate a will of change that doesn't really exist.

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Espacio Público - www.espaciopublico.org

Officers from the State of Anzoátegui Police detained woman for complaint on the lack of public services

On Friday March 31st, two officers from the State of Anzoátegui Police detained Ms. Zikiu Rivas, who protested against the constant failures of the water supply and public lighting services in the City of Piritu, in the north of the region.



The detention occurred during the annual report and accounts of the Mayor of that entity, Jesús Méndez. Rivas, where the woman was present and complained about the failures of the public services. Two officers detained and transferred her to Precinct number 3 of the police headquarters in Piritu. She was accused of “public disorder” and “contempt”.

Rivas didn't have any access to food or water during her first hours of detention. She was presented before the 2nd Municipal Court on April 3rd, accompanied by attorneys and was fully acquitted. The community leader and member of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela [PSUV by its Spanish acronym] was victim of cruel treatment while she was detained, including acts of violence for being a transgender woman.

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Defiende Venezuela - www.defiendevenezuela.org



IACHR grants cautionary measures in favor of seven union leaders

Defiende Venezuela requested the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to grant a cautionary measure in favor of union leaders that since 2022 have expressed their disconformity with the approval of a technical instructive from the National Budget Office [ONAPRE by its Spanish acronym] that, among other things, stipulated a reduction on salary payments in violation of collective conventions.



The organization alerted the IACHR that the beneficiaries have been suffering repeated threats, harassments and surveillance from State security officers for participating in protests; what's more, these pursuits have come directly from the Assistant Director of the National Bolivarian Intelligence Service [SEBIN by its Spanish acronym]. Likewise, they're being monitored in their homes and when they're going anywhere and additionally their families are object of intimidation.

In view of this, the IACHR issued Resolution 15/2023 on April 1st, 2023 granting cautionary measures to Anneliese Josiel Toledo Castillo, Carlos Eduardo Salazar Ojeda, Elsa Isabel Castillo González, José Paulino Patines Guanique, Leída Rosa Brito de Lobo, Petra Margot Monasterios, and Rafael Octavio Arreaza Padilla, union leaders from the National Coalition of Union Workers [CSNT by its Spanish initials]. The Venezuelan State is called upon to guarantee the rights to life and personal integrity, as well as rights regarding the exercise of union activity in Venezuela.

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PROVEA - www.provea.org



News from The Hague

In a document published on March 30th, 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, Karim Khan, responded to the arguments of Venezuelan authorities questioning his office's investigation regarding the alleged crimes against humanity occurred in Venezuela. The text is disclosed after the Victims Participation and Reparations Section (VPRS) informed that it had received over 2,000 opinions and concerns from Venezuelan victims about the need to continue the process initiated against the country based on the Rome Statute.



As to the arguments regarding the ICC's lack of competency, Khan responds that all of the steps stipulated for initiating an investigation were met. An assessment concerning the gravity threshold had already been performed and the interests of justice were duly considered. As to the non-compliance of the admissibility criteria, the ICC recalled the denouncement of other Member States of the Rome Statute. The Preliminary Examination determined that there was indeed a

"systematic" attack against the civilian population. The Venezuelan State and its spokespersons allege that the crimes committed weren't "serious enough". The ICC responds that it found reasonable basis to believe that crimes against humanity were committed in Venezuela. As to the alleged violation to due process on behalf of the ICC, it responds that the authorities haven't demonstrated that credible national investigations or trials haven't been or aren't being performed.

The Prosecutor alleges that a postponement of the procedure isn't justified and requests the Pre-Trial Chamber to authorize the reinstatement of the investigation. On its part, on April 3rd, this Chamber authorized the Venezuelan State to send a partial response to the last report from the Prosecutor's Office before April 20th, 2023. In view of the absence of national justice administration mechanisms, victims still have their hopes set on the actions of international protection entities.

Caleidoscopio Humano - www.caleidohumano.org

Latin American organizations unite in favor of transgender people

In the context of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, Caleidoscopio Humano, along with Latin American organizations, joined the “I simply want to live, just like you” campaign as a way of raising its voice in favor of transgender people’s rights. Even though in 2017 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court H.R.) affirmed, in an advisory opinion, that the States of the region must establish simple and efficient legal gender-recognition procedures based on self-identity, without invasive or stigmatizing requisites, and the United Nations Human Rights Committee has urged governments to guarantee the rights of transgender people, including the right to legal recognition of their gender, this isn’t guaranteed in several Latin American and Caribbean countries.



medications, hormone treatments and specialized medical protocols, as well as extreme poverty, failures in public services, low salaries and the lack of access to employment worsen the community’s situation of vulnerability.

Transgender people don’t legally exist on public records, identification systems or census in Venezuela. The State doesn’t fulfill its duty to respect their rights. As part of

this campaign, the report *Persecuted in Democracy: Undocumented, Excluded and Marginalized by the Governments* [*Perseguides en democracia: indocumentados, excluides y marginados por los gobiernos*] was presented.

This is the case of Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, and Honduras, where transgender people face social exclusion as a consequence of the lack of legal acknowledgment of their gender identities. Guarantees for transgender people in Venezuela have suffered a setback. Access to

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Un Mundo Sin Mordaza - www.sinmordaza.org

Venezuelan State obstructs, criminalizes and censors the work of the UN FFM

The purpose of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela (FFM) is to investigate crimes against humanity and violations to international law in Venezuela, and its duration was extended for two more years towards the end of 2022 by the United Nations Human Rights Council. However, since its beginning in 2019 the Venezuelan State has rejected it arguing that it’s “fascist” and “meddling”.



sense, the FFM can’t enter Venezuelan territory and can only document cases inasmuch as people within Venezuela and abroad digitally send them information.

Although D’Andrea specified that UN mechanisms need for the States to participate and

provide good faith in the compliance of their international obligations, he pointed out that in the case of Venezuela is quite the opposite, due to the fact that it criminalizes and censors information regarding the findings broadcasted by mass media and this is precisely why the Mission requested to receive the same treatment as the HCHR from the State.

In the space *Entrevista Sin Mordaza*, the Director of the NGO Civilis, Mario D’Andrea, explained that the Venezuelan State publicly decided that it’s only willing to cooperate with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR). In this

CEPAZ - www.cepaz.org

The dimension of human movement is a mirror of the Venezuelan crisis



According to the Inter-Agency Regional Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide for February 2023 was 7,177,885 people. In order to avoid that this massive exodus becomes a forgotten crisis that disappears from the international agenda, the Fourth Conference of Solidarity with Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees, their Host Countries and Communities was held. The organizing nations made clearly visible the current situation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees and the goals reached in Latin America and the Caribbean for contributing to move the financial aid necessary for facing the challenges that still persist. At the end of the conference, 807 million euros had been pledged for providing humanitarian aid to Venezuelan refugees and migrants.



its origin in the Complex Humanitarian Emergency and urges that these organizational processes of Venezuelans abroad be taken into account when preparing any response to the movement crisis.

Before the conference was held, member countries of the Quito Process, comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay presented a declaration in which they emphasized the relevance of international cooperation in order to face the challenges of human movement in the region. They kept in mind that these processes must favor international dialogue and preparing public policies in favor of refugees and migrants, and renewed the commitment of the Member States of the Quito Process of seeking long-term solutions, regularization and integration. Additionally, the Red de Activistas Ciudadanos por los Derechos Humanos (Redac) issued a statement demanding that Venezuelan refugees' and migrants' human rights are the essence of any plan in response to this crisis. Furthermore, it points out that this exodus has

Among the interventions made during the conference stood out the need for continuing to provide this aid, since the causes that originated the movement of millions of Venezuelan people have yet to be resolved. "It's good that we are moving and that we continue to make very clear that the people in this crisis mustn't be forgotten", highlighted the Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General "European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation" (DG ECHO), Michael Köhler. On his part, Eduardo Stein, UNHCR and IOM Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants, affirmed that "the situation has become complicated three years after the first conference on solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants". Ana María Díez, President of the Coalición por Venezuela [*Coalition for Venezuela*], requested that 20% of the resources pledged during the conference be destined to organizations led by refugees created in host countries in Latin America. She also called upon Venezuelans who are abroad may exercise their right to political participation through voting in the 2024 presidential elections.

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