

URGENT ACTION

VENEZUELAN DETAINEES NEED IMMEDIATE CARE

On December 20, 2023, Guillermo Zárraga was conditionally released after over three years of arbitrary detention in Venezuela. Three other victims of arbitrary detention continue suffering the authorities' neglect of their right to health and safety. Emirlendris Benítez is a mother and tradeswoman arbitrarily detained in August 2018 and subjected to torture. Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado are a married couple detained since March 2019. All are unfairly held by authorities under the responsibility of President Nicolas Maduro. We call on him to ensure their unconditional release and, while in custody, ensure they receive adequate medical attention immediately.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 96.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

President Nicolas Maduro
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Avenida Urdaneta,
Caracas, Venezuela
Email: correo@presidencia.gob.ve
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Consulate of Venezuela in Boston
Consul General Mr. Omar Fernando Sierra
545 Boylston Street, 3th Floor Boston Massachusetts
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Phone: (617) 266-9368
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Dear Mr. Nicolas Maduro,

The continued neglect of the health and safety of those imprisoned in Venezuela is alarming. **Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado** are currently unfairly detained for political reasons in Venezuelan detention centers. All three are suffering from severe health conditions that need urgent medical attention, which has been repeatedly and unduly denied by authorities under your command.

Emirlendris Benítez's is a victim of arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, discrimination, unfair trial, and inhumane prison conditions. While she endures these unacceptable conditions, she requires urgent surgery to treat grave health conditions resulting from the grave human rights violations she's suffered since her arrest in August 2018. María Auxiliadora Delgado and Juan Carlos Marrufo require urgent medical tests to assess concerning health conditions that put their safety, and potentially their lives, at risk. They were first arrested on March 19, 2019, by the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM).

Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo, and María Auxiliadora Delgado should be immediately and unconditionally released. While they remain in custody of the state, you must guarantee their life, health, and safety. We urge you to urgently grant them access to trusted and adequate medical care.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Emirlendris Benitez is a Venezuelan mother, sister, and tradeswomen. On August 5, 2018, Emirlendris was arbitrarily detained on fabricated grounds. Authorities falsely linked her to acts of violence committed against high profile political leaders in Venezuela; an accusation for which there is no evidence and which she has consistently stated that she had no part in. In custody, she was subjected to torture while pregnant. A few weeks after her arrest, she was forcibly transferred to a medical facility and her pregnancy was terminated without her knowledge or consent. The torture she was subjected to left her needing the long-term use of a wheelchair for mobility. In 2022, she was sentenced to a 30-year prison sentence by a partial and politically motivated court.

Juan Carlos Marrufo and **María Auxiliadora Delgado** were first arrested on March 19, 2019, by the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM). They are a married couple that had decided to undergo an in vitro fertilization treatment when they were arrested. Their only connection to criminal offenses seems to be limited to María Auxiliadora being the sister of a retired military officer with alleged ties to an attack on Nicolás Maduro. Not only are they victims of arbitrary detentions, but they have also been deprived of their plans of growing their family.

Guillermo Zárraga is a Venezuelan engineer who worked as an operator technician for Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA, the Venezuelan state-owned oil company). He was also a leader in the Sindicato Único de Trabajadores (Unique Workers' Union) within that organization. He was detained at his home on December 14, 2020. During his detention, Guillermo was subjected to inhumane prison conditions. Prison authorities did not provide him with adequate sustenance and drinking water, severely deteriorating his health while in custody. On December 20, 2023, Guillermo was conditionally released, as were other victims of politically motivated arbitrary detention including **Gabriel Blanco** and **John Álvarez**.

Nicolás Maduro's government has continually harassed, prosecuted, and censored activists and civil society organizations working to protect the rights of Venezuelans amidst a complex humanitarian emergency and a deep human rights crisis that is making Venezuelans flee in unprecedented numbers in search of safety and protection. By November 2023, over 7.72 million had fled the country, representing over 25% of the country's total population. Since 2020, four reports from the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have thoroughly documented hundreds of cases of extrajudicial executions; enforced disappearances; arbitrary detentions; and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment committed in the country since 2014; as well as the ways in which the justice system serves as a tool for the government's policy of repression, and concluded that these grave human rights violations may amount to crimes against humanity.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: March 7, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Emirlendris Benítez (she/her), Juan Carlos Marrufo (he/him), María Auxiliadora Delgado (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/7288/2023/en/