

URGENT ACTION

VENEZUELAN PRISONERS FACE CRITICAL NEGLECT

Since February 2024, Juan Carlos Marrufo is enduring inhumane prison conditions in the Venezuelan prison, Rodeo I, and has been held in politically motivated arbitrary detention since March 2019. As well as subjecting him to isolation and lack of drinking water, the authorities deny him medical testing and treatment. María Auxiliadora Delgado, married to Juan Carlos and detained for over five years, requires immediate medical tests. Emirlendris Benitez, arbitrarily arrested in August 2018, suffers ailments resulting from the torture she was subjected to which require immediate surgery. We call on minister Celsa Bautista to ensure they receive 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 **Fourth 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.

Celsa Bautista Ontiveros
Minister of Penitentiary Affairs
Ministerio del Poder Popular para Asuntos
Penitenciarios,
Avenida Venezuela, Edificio Platinum,
Urbanización El Rosal, Municipio Chacao,
Caracas Venezuela

**Permanent Mission of Bolivarian Republic of
Venezuela to the United Nations**
Ambassador Mr. Héctor Constant Rosales
335 East 46th Street
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 557-2055

Dear Minister Celsa Bautista, or Dear Ambassador,

For months, authorities in Venezuela have withheld medical care for victims of politically arbitrary detention: **Emirlendris Benítez**, **María Auxiliadora Delgado**, and **Juan Carlos Marrufo**. Their safety and health cannot wait any longer and I urge you to ensure they receive immediate medical care and that their lives are safeguarded.

Emirlendris Benítez is serving an unfair 30-year prison sentence at the INOF center at Los Teques, Caracas, after being arbitrarily detained and subjected to torture in August 2018. María Auxiliadora is also in your custody at the same INOF center, having been detained since March 2019 together with her husband, Juan Carlos Marrufo. He is in your custody at the re-established Rodeo I prison.

Specifically, Emirlendris requires immediate surgery to treat the conditions derived from the torture and gender-based violence she endured after her unfair arrest. María Auxiliadora awaits medical imaging and testing that are needed to prevent and treat a life-threatening condition. Juan Carlos Marrufo, who was first arrested on March 19, 2019, together with his wife, María Auxiliadora, was unexpectedly transferred to Rodeo I prison in February. The conditions in this prison are extremely alarming and could amount to torture and other ill treatment.

Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo, and María Auxiliadora Delgado should be immediately and unconditionally released. Pending their releases, we urge you to urgently grant them access to trusted and adequate medical care, including urgent testing and treatment.

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 denied. 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. They are a married couple, holding dual Spanish and Italian nationalities, respectively. They had decided to undergo an in vitro fertilization treatment when they were arrested. Their only connection to criminal offenses seems to be that María Auxiliadora is the sibling 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.

María Auxiliadora and Juan Carlos were held in custody of the DGCIM at their detention center in Boleíta, Caracas, for the first few years of their detention. Since, María Auxiliadora was transferred to the INOF prison in Caracas on April 10, 2024, while Juan Carlos was transferred to the prison referred to as Rodeo I. Reports indicate that prison conditions at Rodeo I include solitary confinement for the first 30 days of custody, family visitors being hooded, detainees having to sleep on concrete beds, attending their court date via video conference without the company of their lawyers, and having no access to drinking water or basic hygiene products, which may constitute torture.

Their detentions are not an isolated issue. They fall within a widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detentions -amongst other international crimes and human rights violations- used to target those considered critical of Nicolás Maduro's government and could therefore constitute crimes against humanity.

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: June 28, 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/amr53/7761/2024/en/