

# URGENT ACTION

## VENEZUELA: MASS DETENTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Between July 29 and August 7, 2024, over two thousand people were arrested for protesting or being seen as critical of the government. Most of the detainees are young people, including at least 105 aged between 13 and 17. At least 16 people with disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments, remain in detention. Credible allegations of incommunicado detention and denial of legal counsel persist, leading to a high risk of ill-treatment and torture. We urge the authorities to release all those detained for exercising their rights and call on the Attorney General to protect persons who are vulnerable because of their age or because of living with a disability or serious or chronic health condition.

### 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 72.24**. 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.

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Dear Attorney General of the Republic, or Dear Permanent Representative of Venezuela,

Official reports of the arrest of more than two thousand people for exercising their right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and political participation are appalling. Among them are more than 100 teenagers aged between 13 and 17 and at least 16 people with disabilities who have been victims of this wave of repression. Protest must be protected, not punished.

It is extremely alarming that virtually all of these people, including teenagers and vulnerable groups such as young pregnant women, are experiencing a total lack of due process guarantees, such as not being allowed to communicate with their families, denial of representation by trusted counsel, and unjustified transfers to maximum security prisons. It is alarming to learn of the real risks of ill-treatment or even torture faced by thousands of people.

These arrests, torture, killings, and excessive use of force, carried out arbitrarily and with impunity, are characteristic of a policy of repression that has been in place for years and is aimed at silencing dissent, including protest.

We therefore urge you to protect those exercising their right to peaceful assembly, to immediately release all those detained for protesting, and to protect those who are vulnerable because of their age, disability, or serious or chronic health condition.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Venezuela has been experiencing a profound human rights crisis for at least ten years. During this time, Amnesty International has reported serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, and a complex humanitarian emergency, which have caused more than 25% of the population to flee the country.

On July 28, Venezuela saw a massive turnout for the presidential elections, despite a pre-election environment characterized by persecution, censorship, and threatening discourse. When voting ended, the electoral authorities declared Nicolás Maduro the winner. However, the opposition claimed that this result was not supported by the official polling documents they had collected during the election. The electoral authority has not published official results, as required by Venezuelan law. Since then, mass demonstrations have broken out across the country in support of the opposition.

In addition to the mass arrests of protesters between July 29 and August 7, 2024, Amnesty International has noted a dramatic increase in the government's repressive policies, including:

- At least 17 people killed through the use of lethal and less lethal force.
- Credible allegations of arrest warrants being issued against opposition leaders, including the presidential candidate and the head of the opposition.
- Reports of torture committed against at least one senior opposition figure, allegedly to obtain a self-incriminating confession.
- Dozens of illegal home raids with use of force to harass, intimidate, and detain activists and protesters.
- Credible reports of widespread deployment of non-uniformed security forces and armed groups using lethal and excessive less lethal force.
- Repeated and continued stigmatization by senior government officials and government-linked authorities against opposition leaders, activists, human rights defenders, protesters, and CSOs. Several human rights defenders have been arrested, including Edni López, Kennedy Tejeda, Edward Ocariz and others whose identities are being withheld for safety reasons.

The events that are currently unfolding fall within existing patterns of crimes against humanity on a very worrying scale that merits an international response. In this regard, the ongoing investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court would have jurisdiction to investigate the perpetrators of possible acts of detention, torture, gender-based violence, and persecution committed in the context of the elections.

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

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** September 27, 2024

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Persons detained for protesting (they, them, their)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/8390/2024/en/>