

# URGENT ACTION

## ARBITRARY DETAINEES ON HUNGER STRIKE

**The physical integrity and lives of 14 police officers arbitrarily detained for politically motivated reasons are at risk in Venezuela, since they began a hunger strike 23 days ago to demand that authorities execute their pending release warrant.**

**Fourteen members of the municipal police of Chacao**, Miranda state, near Caracas, have been arbitrarily detained by the National Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN) since 22 June 2016. On 8 August 2016, a court issued an order that they be released, but this order has been ignored by the SEBIN authorities. Several of these police officers thus began a hunger strike on 24 June 2017 demanding their release warrant be executed. Over the past 23 days, all 14 detained police officers have participated in the hunger strike, some for a few days, and at least one has been on hunger strike continuously for the full 23 days.

On 17 July, the five police officers who are still on hunger strike decided to sew their lips shut. Following this, El Helicoide authorities forced them to watch the other police officers no longer on hunger strike eat in front of them. That same day, prison authorities carried out additional punishments against the remaining hunger strikers, including banning them from using the bathroom. El Helicoide authorities have also restricted visits by the lawyers and families of the detained police officers. In addition, Venus Medina, one of the five police officers still on hunger strike, is suffering serious health complications due to the hunger strike, and her lawyer has stated that the SEBIN authorities have refused to bring her to a medical facility

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Demanding the authorities comply with the court order for the release of the 14 police officers and immediately end their arbitrary detention;
- Calling on them to refrain from using measures to punish hunger strikers or to coerce them to end a hunger strike, which would be a violation of their right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that the absolute prohibition of torture and other forms of ill-treatment is upheld;
- Calling on them to provide the 14 police officers with access to any medical attention they may require while in detention.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 AUGUST 2017 TO:**

Director of the National Bolivarian

Intelligence Service (SEBIN)

Gustavo González L

Avenida Casanova, Plaza Venezuela

Caracas 1050, Venezuela

Twitter: @SEBIN\_OFICIAL

**Salutation: Dear Director/ Estimado**

**Señor Director**

Vice President of the Republic

Tarek El Aissami

Esq. Carmelitas, Avenida Urdaneta,

Caracas 1010, Venezuela

Phone: +58 212-8010500

Twitter: @TareckPSUV

**Salutation: Dear Vice President/**

**Estimado Señor Vicepresidente**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY ROCÍO MANEIRO, Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 1 Cromwell Road SW7 2HW, 020 7584 4206 or 020 7581 2776, Fax 020 7589 8887, [despacho.londres@mppre.gob.ve](mailto:despacho.londres@mppre.gob.ve), [embavenezuk@venezlon.co.uk](mailto:embavenezuk@venezlon.co.uk), [info@venezlon.co.uk](mailto:info@venezlon.co.uk), <http://reinounido.embajada.gob.ve/>

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 26 April 2017, Amnesty International launched the campaign *Silenced by Force* calling for the release of 22 persons arbitrarily detained for politically motivated reasons in Venezuela, including these 14 members of the Chacao police force. This campaign also highlights two other cases in which SEBIN officers are refusing to execute existing court orders for their release: Yon Goicoechea and Jose Vicente Garcia.

The release warrant for the 14 detained police officers has been taken to the SEBIN's El Helicoide facility numerous times and yet, according to the proceedings drawn up by the bailiff of the court, the SEBIN officers have refused to accept the release warrant, claiming "they do not have orders from their superiors to do so". The Vice-presidency of Venezuela has the role to oversee the SEBIN.

UA: 174/17 Index: AMR 53/6758/2017 Issue Date: 18 July 2017