

URGENT ACTION

WOMAN DETAINEE NEEDS VITAL HEALTH CARE

Emirlendris Benítez is a 42 year-old mother, sister and tradeswoman who in August 2018 was arbitrarily detained for political reasons and subjected to torture in Venezuela. She now faces an unjust 30-year prison sentence in inhumane detention conditions and needs urgent medical care, including a comprehensive diagnosis and holistic treatment for the severe aftereffects she carries because of the torture she was subjected to since her arrest and during a period of incommunicado detention. We call for Emirlendris to be released, and while in custody, for authorities to guarantee the adequate and trusted medical care she urgently needs.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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
Twitter: @CelsaBautistaO

Dear Mrs. Bautista Ontiveros,

I am deeply concerned over the health of Emirlendris Benítez, who is currently imprisoned at the INOF centre at Los Teques, Caracas, Venezuela. Not only is Emirlendris serving a draconian and unjust 30-year prison sentence, but she also has to endure intolerable prison conditions without proper medical care.

Emirlendris Benítez has been subjected to an appalling amount of grave human rights violations since her arrest in August 2018, including arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, discrimination, unfair trial, and inhuman detention conditions. The severe torture she endured at the hands of state authorities have left her suffering from health conditions that require urgent medical care, which has been repeatedly requested by her lawyers and family members.

I call upon you to promptly grant the request filed by Emirlendris' lawyers and to ensure she receives immediate, adequate and trusted medical care. Emirlendris Benítez should be immediately released and the torture and other grave human rights violations she's suffered fully investigated and punished.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Emirlendris Benitez is a Venezuelan mother, sister, and tradeswomen. Since her arrest in August 2018, she has been a victim of countless human rights violations; including arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, discrimination, unfair trial, and inhuman detention conditions. She is an example of the Venezuelan government's terrifying policy of repression. Although she had not undertaken any form of political activism, she was incriminated in a political case and was not allowed to exercise her right to a fair trial.

On 5 August 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.

The prison conditions she is currently enduring are so dire that her family has to provide her with her basic needs, including water, food and medication. This is further complicated by the humanitarian emergency that is currently crippling Venezuela, as it severely limits their own access to food, medicines, and transportation (she is imprisoned approximately 30 km away from Caracas, where her family lives).

Emirlendris should have never been detained, as it is believed the charges are politically motivated. Furthermore, the draconian sentence against her should be revoked and she must be immediately released.

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 March 2023, over 7.24 million had fled the country.

Since 2020, three 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

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 JUNE 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Emirlendris Benítez (she/her/hers)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Please copy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, in tweets using his handle @volker_turk

Mrs Rocío Maneiro
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Salutation: Your Excellency