

URGENT ACTION

ONE DEFENDER RELEASED, FIVE STILL DETAINED

At approximately 21:00 on 12 August 2025, human rights defender Martha Lía Grajales was conditionally released after being arbitrarily detained since 8 August in Caracas, Venezuela. The charges against her haven't been dropped and five other human rights defenders remain arbitrarily detained, including Javier Tarazona, Rocío San Miguel, Kennedy Tejeda, Eduardo Torres, and Carlos Julio Rojas, who has been kept in incommunicado detention since 30 July. We call on Nicolás Maduro to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained individuals and protect their rights to life, physical integrity, and fair trial, specifically ensuring trusted medical care and family visits.

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

President of the Republic Nicolas Maduro

Palacio de Miraflores,
Av. Nte. 10, Caracas 1012,
Caracas, Venezuela

Mr Nicolás Maduro,

We welcome Martha Lía Grajales' release from her arbitrary detention on 12 August. She should have never been detained, let alone forcibly disappeared in the days following her arrest, and we demand that the charges against her be immediately dropped. We also reiterate our condemnation of the attacks against mothers, activists and human rights defenders who peacefully demand the protection and release of their detained loved ones.

While we are relieved to know Martha Lía is no longer imprisoned, we remain concerned over the safety and personal integrity of other human rights defenders who continue to be arbitrarily detained for their activism, including Javier Tarazona, detained since 2 July 2021; Rocío San Miguel, detained on 9 February 2024; Carlos Julio Rojas, detained since 15 April 2024; Kennedy Tejeda, detained on 2 August 2024; and Eduardo Torres, detained on 9 May 2025.

We condemn the incommunicado detention of Carlos Julio Rojas. Since 30 July and without explanation, his family have not been allowed any contact with him, being denied phone calls, visits, and even deliveries of food and medication that are not provided by the authorities at El Helicoide, the detention centre where he is being held. We also note that Eduardo Torres is similarly not allowed direct contact with his loved ones, and that Rocío San Miguel still awaits being granted surgery and rehabilitation by her trusted doctors.

Over 800 other politically motivated arbitrary detainees and forcibly disappeared people, including nationals from Spain, Colombia, and Ukraine, amongst other nationalities, are currently being unfairly held in Venezuelan detention centres, suffering an endless list of other human rights violations and international crimes. Venezuelan authorities that commit crimes under international law and grave human rights violations should recall that they are being monitored and scrutinized by international justice and accountability mechanisms, including the UN and the International Criminal Court.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Eduardo Torres, Javier Tarazona, Rocío San Miguel, Carlos Julio Rojas, and Kennedy Tejeda, and that of all arbitrary detainees in Venezuela. We also demand that the fate and whereabouts of all forcibly disappeared persons are immediately disclosed and that, whilst in your custody, detainees receive adequate medical care, are allowed family visits, and see their fair trial guarantees protected.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Martha Lia Grajales was taken by alleged police officers in Caracas, Venezuela, on 8 August 2025. Her fate and whereabouts were unknown until 11 August, when the Attorney General's Office announced on social media that she had been in fact detained and had been brought before a judge accused of the crimes of incitement of hatred, conspiracy with a foreign government, and criminal association. Lacking credibility or evidence to support these allegations, these are criminal offenses commonly used to persecute and punish any real or perceived dissent. Upon her conditional release, Martha continues facing criminal prosecution.

Nicolás Maduro's government's long-standing policy of repression to silence any form of real or perceived dissent reached a historic peak after the 28 July 2024 election, which saw over [2,000 people arbitrarily detained](#) for political reasons, many of them charged with seemingly unfounded counts of terrorism and incitement of hatred, including vulnerable groups such as [children and people living with disabilities](#). According to the local organization Foro Penal, as of 5 August 2025, at least 807 people remain arbitrarily detained for political reasons, including 95 women, four teenagers, and 44 whose fate and whereabouts are reportedly unknown.

In its latest report, [Detentions Without a Trace](#), Amnesty International profiled 15 individuals whose stories demonstrated the widespread use of enforced disappearances in Venezuela, specifically between August 2024 and June 2025. As of 11 August 2025, eight of those individuals remained forcibly disappeared, namely: Andrés Martínez (Spanish), Damián Rojas, Danner Barajas (Colombian), Eudi Andrade, Jorgen Guanares, Jose María Basoa (Spanish), Rory Branker, and Yevhenii Petrovich Trush (Ukrainian). The whereabouts of Alfredo Díaz, Dennis Lepaje, Eduardo Torres, Raymar Pérez and Rosa Chirinos have been established, but they remain arbitrarily detained.

Within this policy of repression, the 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 May 2025, [7.9 million](#) had fled Venezuela.

As Amnesty International has repeatedly denounced, human rights defenders in Venezuela are at a constant risk of harassment, attacks and detention. Nicolás Maduro's government is currently pursuing several initiatives to control and silence human rights and civil society organizations. The [law adopted](#) in August 2024 titled 'Law for the audit, regularization, action and financing of non-governmental and related organizations', or so-called 'anti-NGO law', imposes strict controls that include handing over lists of members and personnel and their assets, lists of donors, and registration of financial movements. Non-compliance with registration requirements could lead to the closure of civil society organizations and possible criminal prosecutions. The bill entered into force in February 2025.

Since 2020, reports from the UN independent international [fact-finding mission](#) on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFM) 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, concluding that some of these international crimes and human rights violations amount to crimes against humanity. Specifically in 2024, the FFM concluded that it has "reasonable grounds to believe that the crime of persecution on political grounds has been committed during the timeframe covered by its mandate".

Since November 2021, the Office of the [Prosecutor](#) of the [International Criminal Court](#) is conducting a criminal investigation into the situation in Venezuela, specifically regarding the "[c]rimes against humanity of deprivation of liberty or other serious deprivation of physical liberty (...); torture (...); rape and/or other forms of sexual violence of comparable severity (...); and politically motivated persecution against persons detained (...), which were committed since at least April 2017, by members of the State security forces, civil authorities and pro-government persons (or groups called "collectives")".

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 January 2026

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Venezuelan human rights defenders (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/0196/2025/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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Salutation: Your Excellency