

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION MEMBER DETAINED AMID PROTESTS

A city mayor and member of the opposition party Voluntad Popular was detained on 19 March on suspicion of rebellion and conspiracy to commit a crime for his involvement in anti-government protests. The government and opposition leaders must both promote respect for human rights as the protests continue and the number of people injured or killed escalates.

Daniel Ceballos, mayor of San Cristobal, Táchira State, and member of opposition party Voluntad Popular (Political Will) was arrested by the Venezuelan Intelligence Security Services (SEBIN) on 19 March on suspicion of rebellion and conspiracy to commit a crime (*rebelión civil y agavillamiento*) for his involvement in the anti-government protests that have taken place since the beginning of February. His assistant, Ronni Pavolini, who was present during the arrest, told the media that no arrest warrant was produced and that Daniel Ceballos was ill-treated.

Following his arrest, the Minister of Justice and Interior, Miguel Rodríguez Torres, published the following messages on Twitter: "The arrest of Daniel Ceballos is an act of justice! This Mayor facilitated and supported the irrational violence that erupted in San Cristobal" (*La detención de Daniel Ceballos es un acto de justicia! Este Alcalde facilitó y apoyó la violencia irracional que se desató en San Cristóbal*) and "A mayor has an obligation to enforce the Constitution and laws, not to promote violence, anarchy and civil rebellion!" (*Un Alcalde tiene la obligación de hacer cumplir la Constitución y las Leyes, no de fomentar la violencia, la anarquía y la rebelión civil!*)

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure Daniel Ceballos is protected from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Ensure he is given immediate access to his lawyer, family, and any medical care he may require;
- Urging the authorities to refrain from making statements that undermine the presumption of innocence;
- Acknowledging that the state has a duty to maintain public order, and reminding the authorities that they must respect human rights, must not use excessive force, and must ensure that the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly are respected;
- Informing them that Amnesty International is also calling on opposition leaders to send a clear message to their supporters not to commit human rights abuses.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 MAY 2014 TO:

President of Venezuela

Nicolás Maduro Moros
Final Avenida Urdaneta, Esq. De Bolero
Palacio de Miraflores
Caracas, Distrito Capital
Venezuela
Twitter: @NicolasMaduro
Salutation: **Señor Presidente /**
Dear President

Attorney General of the Republic

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
Edificio Sede Principal del Ministerio
Público, Esquinas de Misericordia a Pele
El Ojo Avenida México, Caracas
Venezuela
Email: ministeriopublico@mp.gob.ve
Fax: +58 212 578 3239
Salutation: Dra. Fiscal / Dear
Prosecutor

And copies to:

Amnistía Internacional Venezuela
Av la Salle, Torre Phelps, piso 17,
Oficina 17A
Plaza Venezuela
Los Caobos, Caracas 1050
Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 793 1318 ext. 116
Email: info@aiven.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 33/14. Further information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR53/004/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The headquarters of opposition party Voluntad Popular (Popular Will) were raided by security forces on 17 February. Other members of opposition political party Voluntad Popular (Political will), including its leader Leopoldo López have either been detained or have arrest warrants issued against them for their involvement in the protests that have taken place throughout Venezuela since the beginning of February.

Violent clashes continue throughout the country and according official sources, the death toll has reached 31 people, including six members of the security forces. Over 400 have been injured, more than 140 of whom are members of the security forces, and almost 1,700 have been detained, including 15 members of the security forces. However, most people arrested have been conditionally released pending investigations. In the most recent fatality, on 19 March National Guard officer Jhon Rafael Castillo was killed outside the National Experimental University of the Armed Forces (Universidad Nacional Experimental Politécnica de la Fuerza Armada Bolivariana, Unefa) in Táchira State. According to press reports, clashes in the Unefa began when masked men set fire to the library, the deanery and the only route to the university. A national newspaper photographer was also injured.

Name: Daniel Ceballos (m) and members of Voluntad Popular
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 33/14 Index: AMR 53/010/2014 Issue Date: 20 March 2014