

REQUEST FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR LEOPOLDO LÓPEZ

Family of Venezuelan opposition leader and prisoner of conscience has not had any updates on his conditions for the past three weeks, and has not been able to see him for almost a month.

López's lawyers have not been able to see him for nearly three months.

Washington, D.C. – Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo López has been completely incommunicado for the past three weeks. The only interaction that López has had with his family was on June 23, 2017 when he yelled to his wife Lilian Tintori from his prison cell that he was being tortured.

López is currently being held in Ramo Verde Military Prison in Los Teques, Miranda State, Venezuela. Since June 10, 2017, the family has received no update on the status of wellbeing of López from prison officials. Family members have not been able to see López since June 4, 2017, a total of 26 days, and his lawyers have not been able to see him since April 6, 2017, a total of 85 days.

In response to López's solitary confinement, Tintori said, "We are very worried about the life of Leopoldo. We have been trying for weeks to see him and the military guards do not let us enter. We have complained directly to those responsible for Leopoldo's conditions- Ombudsman Tarek Saab, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, and Ramo Verde Military Prison Director Captain José Boston Silva- but they have ignored our plight. We have no way to confirm if Leopoldo is in good health and after the situation last week, we fear he is still being tortured. I call upon the Venezuelan government to allow, on humanitarian grounds, the International Red Cross or another independent organization to visit Leopoldo and ensure his well-being. "

López's extreme isolation has occurred at a time of unseen repression in Venezuela. Since April 1, 2017, the Venezuelan people have been in the streets, exercising their fundamental rights to non-violently protest the humanitarian and human rights crisis in the county. The Government of Venezuela has resorted to violence to try and quell this dissent. Since the start of the protests, 78 Venezuelans have been killed as a result of clashes with the government and its supporters. Rights groups have reported that 415 civilians have faced proceedings in military tribunals in recent days, with 245 still detained. In total, over 3,500 people have been arrested, with 1,188 still behind bars.

López's international lawyer, Jared Genser adds "This incommunicado detention of Leopoldo is in flagrant violation of international law, as Leopoldo has the right to access his family

members and his lawyers. Additionally, these claims of torture require urgent and immediate investigation. The Maduro Government has shown repeatedly that it has no qualms using lethal force against its own citizens and thus, we fear Leopoldo's life is in danger. The international community should demand access to Leopoldo by his family and lawyers be restored immediately. And we would ask the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the Vatican, and the Catholic Church to request access to Leopoldo on humanitarian grounds."

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