

## [Venezuela | Failing to meet criteria for UN Human Rights Council membership](#)

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Venezuela's brutal crackdown on dissent, and its failure to tackle a humanitarian crisis that is largely of its own making, give rise to serious concerns about its fitness as a candidate for the United Nations Human Rights Council. Members of the UN's premier human rights body are expected to maintain the highest standards of human rights and to cooperate with the council. We, a coalition of 54 international and Venezuelan organisations, strongly believe that Venezuela falls short on both counts.

Earlier this year, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [issued a damning report on Venezuela](#). That report echoed the alarming findings of Venezuelan and international human rights organisations about numerous grave human rights violations by the government, including arbitrary arrest, torture, extrajudicial executions, and violations of the rights to food and health. These abuses have caused more than four million Venezuelans to flee across the borders.

UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, which created the Human Rights Council, urges UN member States voting for prospective Council members to "take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights." This applies to candidates' efforts to promote and protect human rights in their own countries and abroad. Members of the Human Rights Council are required to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and to "fully cooperate with the Council."

Venezuela has a long record of attempting to frustrate efforts by the Human Rights Council to tackle serious human rights violations.

Last month, the Human Rights Council passed a resolution establishing an independent fact-finding mission to investigate allegations of extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, and other cruel or degrading treatment committed in Venezuela since 2014. Venezuela has already rejected that resolution.

Seats on important UN bodies like the Human Rights Council should not be the subject of bargaining, trading, or pre-arranged agreements. Countries should support the candidates with the strongest human rights records. Were Venezuela to serve on the Council while at the same time exacerbating the country's human rights and humanitarian crisis, the Council's mission and credibility would be severely undermined.

The Human Rights Council was created 13 years ago to replace the Human Rights Commission, whose credibility had been shattered in large part because of the participation of States with records of gross human

rights violations. In the interest of safeguarding the integrity of the Human Rights Council and fulfilling the vision of its creators, we urge delegates to the UN General Assembly to apply the membership criteria of its own resolution when casting their secret ballots on 17 October. Venezuela clearly falls far short of those standards.

The signatories are:

- 1.ACAT
- 2.ACATGermany (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture)
- 3.Acceso a la Justicia
- 4.Acción Solidaria
- 5.Alfa Ciudadana
- 6.Article 19
- 7.Asociación Civil Fuerza, Unión, Justicia, Solidaridad y Paz (FUNPAZ)
- 8.Asociación Civil Mujeres en Línea
- 9.Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos APRODEH
- 10.Caleidoscopio Humano
- 11.Casa de la Mujer Juana Ramírez La Avanzadora
- 12.La Cátedra de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroccidental Lisandro Alvarado
- 13.Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello
- 14.Centro de Justicia en Paz (Cepaz)
- 15.Centro para la Defensores y la Justicia (CDJ)
- 16.Civilis Derechos Humanos
- 17.Comisión Nacional de DDHH de la Federación de Colegios de Abogados de Venezuela-Mérida
- 18.Comisión Nacional de DDHH de la Federación de colegios de Abogados de Venezuela del estado Táchira
- 19.Comisión para los Derechos Humanos del Estado Zulia (Codhez)
- 20.Convite AC
- 21.Defensores Activos del Foro Penal
- 22.Defensor de Derechos Humanos - CADEF
- 23.Espacio Público
- 24.EXCUBITUS Derechos Humanos en Educación
- 25.Federación Nacional de Sociedad de Padres y Representantes (FENASOPADRES)
- 26.Foros Ciudadano
- 27.Foros Hatillano

28. Foro Penal
29. Fundación Agua Clara
30. Fundación para la Prevención de la Violencia Doméstica hacia la Mujer (FUNDAMUJER)
31. Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect
32. Gobiernatec
33. Human Rights House Foundation
34. Human Rights Watch
35. Human Rights Without Frontiers
36. Instituto Interamericano de Responsabilidad Social y Derechos Humanos (IIRESODH)
37. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
38. International Humanist and Ethical Union
39. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
40. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
41. Jacob Blaustein Institute
42. Justicia y Paz O.P. Venezuela
43. Mujeres con Derechos
44. Nürnberger Menschenrechtszentrum (NMRZ)
45. Observatorio Global de Comunicación y Democracia
46. Observatorio Venezolano de los DDHH de las Mujeres
47. Proiuris
48. Promoción Educación y Defensa en DDHH - PROMEDEHUM Venezuela
49. PROVEA
50. Sociedad Hominis Iura (SOHI)
51. Sinergia - Red Venezolana de Organizaciones de Sociedad Civil
52. Un Mundo Sin Mordaza
53. Una Ventana a la Libertad
54. Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

*Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré*