



CENTRO PARA  
LOS DEFENSORES  
Y LA JUSTICIA

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# SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN VENEZUELA

JULY 2024

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## SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN VENEZUELA

The Center for Defenders and Justice (CDJ) **recorded 56 attacks and security incidents during July 2024** in Venezuela.

The Policy of Criminalization, Repression and Social Control advanced in the pre-electoral context, organizations and individuals defending human rights faced serious risks.

As the continuous closure of civic and democratic space in the country progresses, attacks against defenders increase.

State violence is implemented with greater force to intimidate in order to limit the actions of civil society through fear, terror and inhibition.

### ATTACKS JULY 2024



The 56 attacks and security incidents documented during the month of July reflect the systematicity of the patterns of aggression that conform the Criminalization Policy.

It stands out that, as of July 28, in the context of post-electoral repression, 20% of the total attacks documented during the month were registered.

Stigmatization campaigns persist and are accompanied by acts of intimidation, harassment and threats.

The systematicity of these events is worrying. The lack of a free and safe civic space in the context of electoral events affected the development of civil society activities safely and without fear of being subject to reprisals and attacks.

The 56 events recorded during the month of July were characterized by:

#### ATTACK CHARACTERIZATION:



**ATTACK CHARACTERIZATION:**



**ARBITRARY  
DETENTION**

**1**

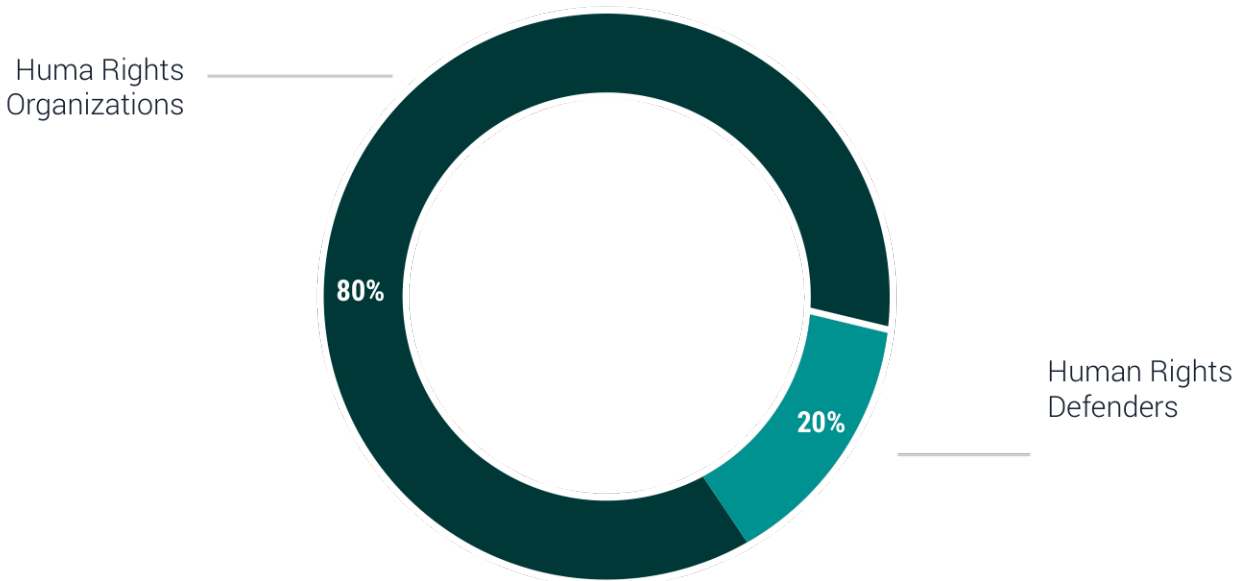
In July, the use of communication platforms to intimidate and stigmatize people and organizations was constant, with the aim of distorting their activities under the logic of the internal enemy and attempting to link their activities to destabilization or political-partisan events.

Likewise, acts of intimidation, harassment and threats remain constant as part of the State's repressive response.

Finally, digital attacks were present, organizations documenting and promoting transparency in the electoral context were subject to blocks on their websites.

**VICTIMS OF THE ATTACKS**

Of the total attacks documented during the month of July 2024, 45 were directed against human rights organizations, equivalent to 80% of the total. While 11 were identified against human rights defenders, representing the remaining 20%.



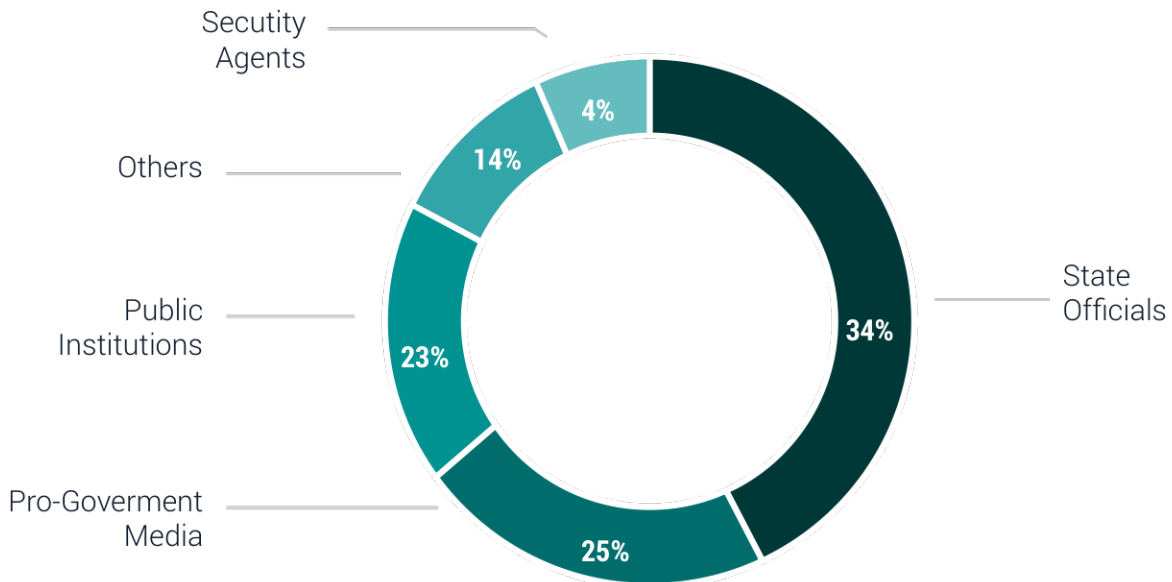
Among some of the cases we highlight the systematic nature of the stigmatization, intimidation and threats campaigns against the organization *Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos – PROVEA*; stigmatization and digital attacks on *Espacio Público*, *Instituto Prensa y Sociedad Venezuela*, *Transparencia Venezuela*, threats of widespread intimidation against the work of human rights organizations in the country.

Likewise, the continuity of the trial of the defenders who are members of the *FundaRedes* organization Javier Tarazona, Rafael Tarazona and Omar de Dios García is worrying. The judicial harassment against him must stop and Javier Tarazona must be released.

**PERPETRATORS**

The main perpetrators of the attacks and security incidents documented during the month of July were distributed as follows:

A total of 19 attacks (34%) were carried out by public officials, who used their profiles on social networks, or statements in government media to stigmatize, intimidate and threaten; 14 of the events were perpetrated through the State’s traditional and digital media and its social media accounts (25%); Another 13 of the attacks were the responsibility of Public Institutions (23%); 8 of the events were perpetrated by other actors related to the government or associated with State entities (14%); and 2 were carried out by security agencies (2%).



# 01 CRIMINALIZATION OF THE DEFENSE, DEMAND AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The 56 events documented during July 2024 will generate great concern as they originate in a context of a general increase in violence and state repression. The right to defend, demand

and promote human rights is directly affected as those who carry out these activities are under constant attack by the State.

In the electoral context, the civic and democratic space was affected, which made the environment for the exercise of the activities of civil society, and in particular human rights organizations, increasingly adverse and hostile, as deepened the Policy of Criminalization, repression and social control.

The patterns of aggression continue to be applied with force against those who carry out activities related to the claim and protection of rights. Particularly during the month, those people and organizations that documented or carried out activities related to the electoral process were affected.

Those who ensure the protection of human dignity face attacks and intimidation, without there being effective mechanisms to guarantee the exercise of their work.

The stigmatization campaigns do not cease, and on the contrary, a discourse that seeks to link the work of human rights organizations with “destabilization” activities, or partisan political activities to question independence, as well as to discredit complaints issued by international mechanisms, intensifies and disqualify them in the framework of international cooperation activities<sup>1</sup>.

Likewise, the threats issued against organizations and defenders who cooperate with international protection mechanisms and who have documented the violations and events that occurred after the presidential election of July 28 are of concern<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, we express our concern that, at the closing of this report, and during the month of August, two situations occurred that violated the right to defend human rights and freedom of association, such as those indicated below.

In the post-election context, there have been a series of arbitrary arrests, including that of at least 4 defenders. Likewise, there is concern about the massive cancellation of passports that has also affected members of organizations and people in their families. Finally, we warn of the approval of the Law on supervision, regularization, performance and financing of non-governmental organizations

Given the continuity of the socio-political crisis and a complex humanitarian emergency that is still in force, the work of defense, demand and promotion of human rights is more necessary, which is why it is essential that measures be established that allow action without reprisals or arbitrary limitations.

# 02 INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN VENEZUELA

Faced with the advances of the Criminalization Policy to the defense and demand of human rights in Venezuela, international organizations and international organizations for the protection of human rights continue to speak out in rejection of the attacks committed and demanding that the State comply with its duty to promote and protect the work of human rights defenders.

Among those called by international organizations registered during the month of July are:

On July 3, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Session No. 56 of the Human Rights Council presented an update and follow-up report on recommendations made to the Venezuelan State<sup>3</sup>. In the text, he expressed concern about the restrictions imposed on civic space, and called to *“protect it and guarantee fully transparent, inclusive and participatory electoral processes, in line with international standards”*. He also referred to the cases of human rights defenders Rocío San. Miguel and Javier Tarazona. The report also warns about the increase in stigmatization against civil society, including defenders<sup>4</sup>.

Within the framework of the presentation of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Session No. 56 of the Human Rights Council, different countries including the Delegation of the European Union, Portugal, Peru, Ecuador, France, Canada, United States The United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Spain, Georgia, Australia, and Uruguay, among others, spoke out regarding the closure of civic and democratic space in Venezuela, particularly about the importance of respecting the work of organizations and defenders and stopping attacks against their rights<sup>5</sup>.

On July 19, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued a press release in which it warned about the increase in political persecution in Venezuela in the electoral context and pointed out cases such as that of defender Rocío San Miguel. The Commission warns that *“These events affect democratic institutions and the freedoms of association, assembly and expression, since they discourage the political participation of opposition members, their electorate and citizens in general”*. Finally, it calls to guarantee the independence of powers and guarantee the exercise of political rights<sup>6</sup>.

Regarding international organizations, the following stand out:

In Session No. 56 of the Human Rights Council, the interventions of Aula Abierta, Amnesty International, Center for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), Civicus Alliance, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) ) and Human Rights Watch , warned of the closure of civic space and expressed concern about attacks on defenders and the situation of criminalization<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>24th Meeting – 56th Regular Session of Human Rights Council. 3rd July 2024 <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1w/k1wbjihh8j>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/advance-revisions/a-hrc-56-63-unofficials.docx>

<sup>5</sup>24th Meeting – 56th Regular Session of Human Rights Council. 3rd July 2024 <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1w/k1wbjihh8j>

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2024/166.asp&utm\\_content=country-ven&utm\\_term=class-mon](https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2024/166.asp&utm_content=country-ven&utm_term=class-mon)

<sup>7</sup>25th Meeting – 56th Regular Session of Human Rights Council. 4th July 2024 <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k16/k16zmc33my>

# 03 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The violence, repression and social control of the State continues to generate negative impacts on the enjoyment of human rights in Venezuela and restrict civic and democratic space.

In the post-electoral context, violations of the exercise of activities to defend, promote and demand human rights are of concern. Their activities must be fully guaranteed and without reprisals.

The State must stop criminalization against civil society and provide a safe and conducive environment for the exercise of the work of people and organizations defending human rights.

We alert the international community and call to implement measures that contribute to mitigating and responding to the risks that currently exist for those who defend, demand and promote human rights in Venezuela.

Venezuelan society requires the work and actions of documentation, denunciation, accompaniment and assistance carried out by the human rights movement, which is why at the CDJ we demand guarantees for the exercise of these activities.

We urge the State to fully comply with its international obligations to respect, protect and guarantee rights and to refrain from classifying people who work within their framework as enemies and to immediately cease the Policy of Criminalization, Repression and Social Control.

The laws, mechanisms and instruments contrary to the defense and demand of rights must be repealed and the State must seek the reestablishment of democratic institutions and the rule of law in the country.

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