



CENTRO PARA  
LOS DEFENSORES  
Y LA JUSTICIA

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# **SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN VENEZUELA**

## **AUGUST 2025**

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## SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN VENEZUELA

The Center for Defenders and Justice (CDJ) documented **49 attacks and security incidents** in Venezuela during August 2025.

The risks remain high for those on the front lines responding to the country's social, political, and human rights crisis.

Policy of repression, criminalization and control hinder actions to promote, defend, and demand human rights.

Actions aimed at closing civic and democratic space continue to be implemented, increasing obstacles to the exercise of the rights of association, expression, assembly, and defense of rights.

### ATTACKS AUGUST 2025



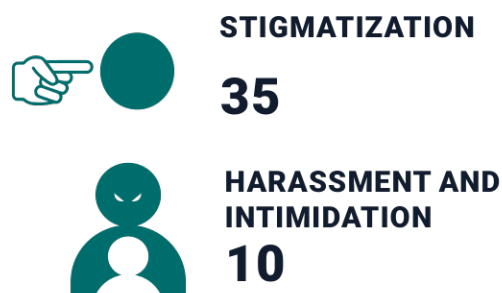
49 documented attacks and security incidents during the period show an increase in attacks against individuals and organizations defending human rights compared to previous months, with August being the month with the second highest number of attacks so far this year.

Systematic stigmatization campaigns continue unabated, with individuals and organizations being discredited and labeled as enemies, terrorists, destabilizers, and others.

The continued acts of intimidation, harassment, threats, arbitrary detentions, and the use of the criminal justice system to persecute and prosecute human rights defenders are of concern.

The 49 incidents recorded during the month of August were characterized by:

### ATTACK CHARACTERIZATION:



## ATTACK CHARACTERIZATION:

### OTHERS

OTHERS

2



JUDICIALIZATION

1



ARBITRARY  
DETENTION

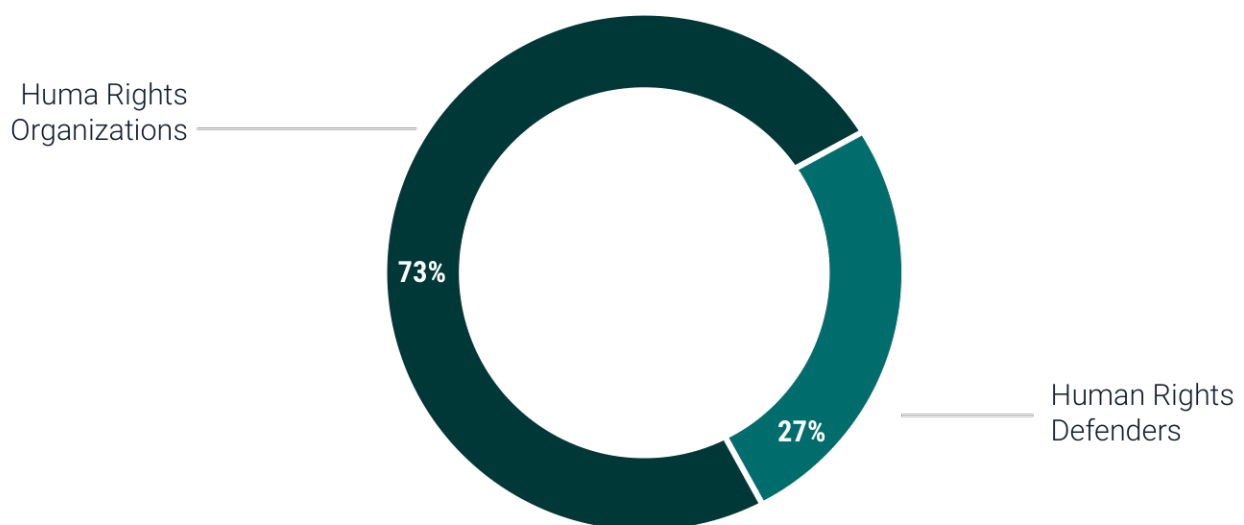
1

State repressive and control measures continue to seriously affect the right to defend, promote, and demand rights, affecting the operation and security of human rights individuals and organizations.

Human rights defenders and organizations must be able to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. Effective mechanisms must be implemented for the full and free exercise of fundamental freedoms, ensuring a safe and enabling environment for this.

## VICTIMS OF THE ATTACKS

Of the total number of attacks documented during August 2025, 36 were directed against human rights organizations, representing 73% of the total. While 13 were identified against human rights defenders, representing the remaining 27%.



## SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN VENEZUELA

Among some of the cases we highlight the systematic nature of the stigmatization campaigns and threats against the organizations *Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos* – PROVEA.

Likewise, the widespread disqualification, threats and intimidation against the work of human rights organizations in the country are of concern.

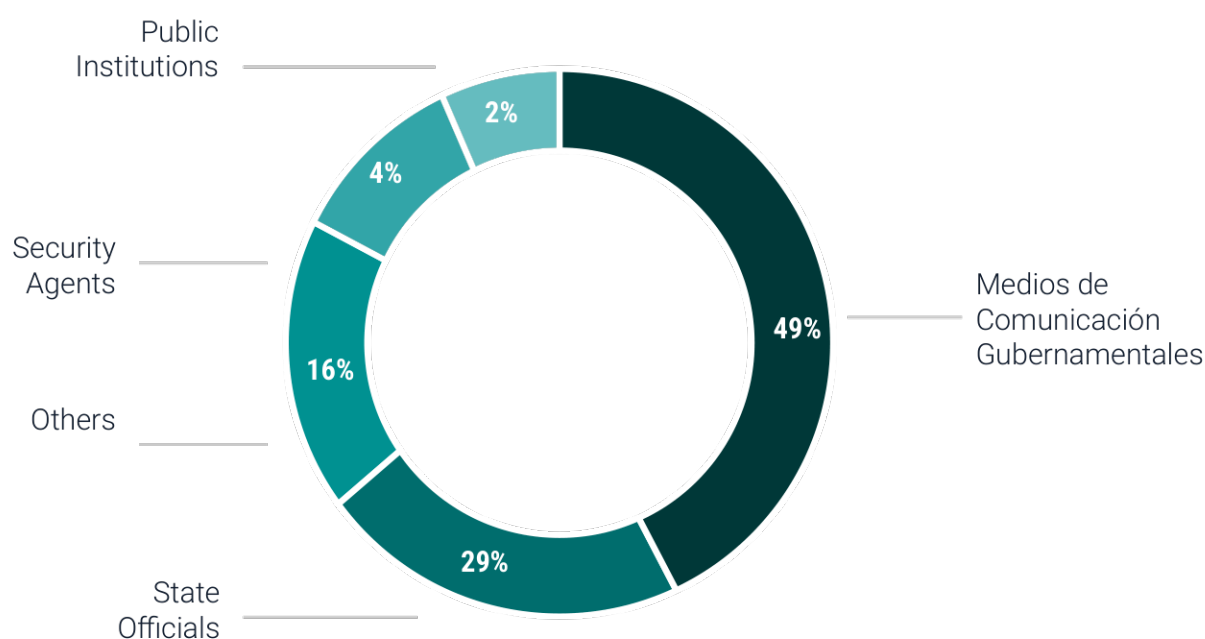
The judicial harassment of *FundaRedes* defenders Javier Tarazona, Rafael Tarazona, Omar de Dios García, Rocío San Miguel, Kennedy Tejeda, and Eduardo Torres must cease.

Human rights defenders who are deprived of their liberty must be released.

### PERPETRATORS

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

A total of 24 attacks were perpetrated through traditional and digital state media outlets and their social media accounts (49%); 14 attacks (29%) were carried out by public officials, who used their social media profiles or statements in government media outlets to stigmatize and intimidate; another 8 of the violations (16%) were committed by other actors aligned with the government or associated with the Popular System for the Protection of Peace (SP3); 2 of the incidents were carried out by state security agencies (4%); and finally, 1 of the incidents was the responsibility of public institutions (2%).



## 01

## CRIMINALIZATION OF THE DEFENSE, DEMANDING AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In August, the number of attacks against individuals and organizations defending human rights increased compared to previous months, demonstrating that the policy of criminalization, repression, and control remains in place.

The stigmatizing rhetoric against those who defend, promote, and demand human rights continued, primarily discrediting those who carry out activities associated with international cooperation or who take action to enforce them. There continues to be an attempt to link the human rights movement to “foreign interference” and “political proselytism.” Consistent with previous months, this disparaging rhetoric originates from various actors, including officials, and is widely replicated as part of disinformation through channels belonging to or associated with the National Public Media System<sup>1</sup>.

Along these same lines, statements and acts of intimidation and harassment have occurred, the aim of which is to neutralize those who defend human rights through fear of being subject to possible reprisals for the exercise of their work.

The CDJ warns that stigmatizing statements, in addition to reinforcing criminalization, constitute a risk factor and can trigger other types of actions that directly affect the performance of activities or the integrity of those who make up the human rights movement in the country.

Furthermore, we emphasize our concern regarding the continued use of the judicial system to criminalize, as well as the increase in persecution that has resulted in arbitrary arrests, deprivation or restrictions on personal liberty, judicial harassment, violations of due process, and, in some cases, short-term disappearances, among others.

The defense, demand, and promotion of human rights continue to be under attack, thus hindering the rights to association, assembly, and defense in Venezuela. Criminalization, repression, and social control as state policy, in a context of widespread impunity, demonstrate that the closure of civic and democratic space in Venezuela hinders the actions of civil society, including the human rights movement.

The closure of the Civic Space and a widespread context of impunity foster a hostile and adverse environment for the defense and demand of rights. It is necessary to guarantee the protection of human rights individuals and organizations, so that they can carry out their activities freely and safely.

The State must take the necessary corrective measures to reverse this policy and its effects; defending, demanding, and promoting human rights is not a crime; it is a right and a legitimate activity necessary for rebuilding a democratic society and restoring the rule of law.

<sup>1</sup><https://venezuela-news.com/conozca-los-delitos-por-los-que-el-mp-imputo-a-martha-grajales-incitacion-al-odio-conspiracion-con-gobierno-extranjero-y-asociacion/> YouTube. With Maduro+. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSO-QI-lhTQ4> Available at: <https://venezuela-news.com/maduro-accuses-us-financed-ngo-of-whitewashing-terrorists-venezuela/>

## 02

**RESPONSE TO THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENSE IN VENEZUELA**

In the face of the advances made by the Policy of Criminalization of the Defense and Demand for Human Rights in Venezuela, international organizations and international human rights protection bodies continue to speak out against the attacks committed and demand that the State fulfill its duty to promote and protect the work of human rights defenders.

On August 6, Gloria de Mees, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (IACHR) Rapporteur for Venezuela, addressed the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), in which she warned, among other things, about the arrests of human rights defenders and the closure of civic space in the country<sup>2</sup>.

Among the pronouncements of international organizations are:

On August 2, Amnesty International issued a statement marking the one-year anniversary of the detention of lawyer and human rights defender Kennedy Tejeda, a member of the organization Foro Penal. They demanded his immediate and unconditional release<sup>3</sup>.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint program of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), Amnesty International and the organization Front Line Defenders have spoken out against the arrest of activist Martha Lía Grajales, demanding her release and an end to the harassment<sup>4</sup>.

On August 15, Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal regarding the arrests and detentions of human rights defenders in Venezuela, demanding their immediate release<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Observations of the IACHR before the Permanent Council of the OAS on the situation of human rights in Venezuela Washington, DC August 6, 2025. [https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/actividades/discursos/2025/08\\_05\\_GloriaDeMees.pdf](https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/actividades/discursos/2025/08_05_GloriaDeMees.pdf) and <https://x.com/CIDH>

Statement by Commissioner Gloria de Mees, Special Rapporteur for Venezuela

<sup>3</sup> See: Amnesty International Americas on X: <https://x.com/AmnistiaOnline/status/1951659259323658480>

<sup>4</sup> ee: Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint program of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT): <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/venezuela-forced-disappearance-arbitrary-detention-and-subsequent> ; Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/documents/amr53/0196/2025/en/> ; Front Line Defender: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/case/venezuela-arbitrary-detention-woman-human-rights-defender-martha-lia-grajales>

<sup>5</sup> See Amnesty International: <https://www.amnistia.org/es/noticias/2025/08/venezuela-un-defensor-liberado-cinco-continuan-detenidos/>



# 03

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Criminalization, persecution, the closure of civic and democratic space, and a climate of fear make it difficult for those who promote, defend, and demand rights, due to the hostile environment in which they must carry out their activities.

Given the complexities surrounding the Venezuelan sociopolitical environment, we reiterate that the work of defending, demanding, and promoting human rights is essential for protecting human dignity and ensuring the continued existence of peace and the restoration of the rule of law. Therefore, these efforts must be able to be carried out freely and safely without fear of reprisals.

We remind you that human rights organizations and individuals are essential actors in ensuring respect for democratic values and fundamental freedoms, and their actions must therefore be promoted and protected.

As long as the legal and practical actions that reduce civic and democratic space continue, risks for civil society in the country will continue to exist. Therefore, we demand an end to the criminalization of human rights defenders.

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