

## VENEZUELA

- **VEN-18:** María Corina Machado (Ms.)
- **VEN-COLL-06:** 136 parliamentarians



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# Venezuela

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 214th session (Geneva, 17 October 2024)*



María Corina Machado in a meeting with supporters in Caracas on 22 October 2023. @ Pedro Rances Mattey / ANADOLU via AFP

## VEN-18 – María Corina Machado (Ms.)

### Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity

### A. Summary of the case

Ms. María Corina Machado served as an elected member of the National Assembly of Venezuela from 2011 to 2014. According to the complainant, on 24 March 2014, the then Speaker of the National Assembly announced, reportedly without any discussion in plenary, that Ms. Machado had been stripped of her parliamentary mandate after she had taken part in a meeting on 21 March 2014 held by the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington DC. Ms. Machado had been invited by Panama to give her account at the OAS meeting of the situation in Venezuela at the time. The Speaker of the National Assembly reportedly said that Ms. Machado had contravened the Constitution by accepting the invitation to act as a Panamanian official at the meeting. The complainant asserts that the decision to revoke Ms. Machado's mandate was taken without any respect for due process and was unfounded in law. Ms. Machado then became the subject of two criminal investigations and was excluded from the parliamentary elections of 6 December 2015,

### Case VEN-18

**Venezuela:** Parliament affiliated to the IPU

**Victim:** A female opposition member of parliament

**Qualified complainant(s):** Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

**Submission of complaint:** February 2013

**Recent IPU decision:** March 2024

**IPU Mission:** August 2021

**Recent Committee hearing:** Hearing with members of the National Assembly elected in 2020 at the 173rd session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (January 2024)

### Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Ambassador of Venezuela in Geneva (January 2024)
- Communication from the complainant: August 2024
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Ambassador of Venezuela in Geneva (September 2024)
- Communication to the complainant: September 2024

as the authorities claimed that she had presented an inaccurate declaration of assets, which the complainant considers to be untrue and a frivolous excuse to exclude her from the election race. In this context, the Comptroller General took the decision to disqualify Ms. Machado from holding public office for 15 years. According to the complainant, Ms. Machado was never formally notified of this, nor was she given the opportunity to defend herself during the proceedings that led to this decision.

Presidential elections took place in Venezuela on 28 July 2024. Ahead of this, several opposition factions organized an internal presidential primary contest to elect a single opposition candidate. On 23 October 2023, Ms. Machado emerged as the opposition's chosen candidate. On 26 January 2024, Venezuela's Supreme Court upheld the Comptroller General's 15-year ban on Ms. Machado from holding public office.

On 19 April 2024, the opposition selected former diplomat Edmundo González as its joint presidential candidate, given it was impossible for Ms. Machado to run for office. Ms. Machado continued to campaign on his behalf. According to information received by the IPU, several arrest warrants have been issued against members of Ms. Machado's campaign team, some of whom have been arrested, while others have sought refuge in the Argentine Embassy in Caracas. On 29 July 2024, the National Electoral Council (CNE) announced that President Maduro had been re-elected. The opposition rejected the CNE's announcement, describing it as fraudulent. According to information received by the IPU, Ms. Machado is currently in hiding, facing systematic harassment and threats, including possible detention and trial, under allegedly politically motivated charges.

In a letter sent by the Venezuelan authorities in January 2024, it was stated that there had been no political persecution or other arbitrary actions against former or current parliamentarians. The cases of former parliamentarians that are under investigation, which led to the actions of the competent organs of the Venezuelan State, are based on alleged facts that constitute a violation of the established norms of the Venezuelan legal system, in which the accused enjoy all the legal guarantees established by the Constitution and laws of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This position was reiterated by a delegation of members of the National Assembly elected in 2020 during a meeting with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in January 2024. The delegation also expressed its willingness to work with the Committee to find solutions to the Venezuelan cases before it. However, the Committee's request for updated and official information on all those cases remains unanswered to date.

## **B. Decision**

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Regrets* the lack of response from the Venezuelan authorities to its recent requests for information and official observations regarding this and other Venezuelan cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; *recalls* in this regard that, in accordance with its Rules and Practices, the Committee does everything possible to promote dialogue with national authorities with a view to reaching a satisfactory settlement in the cases before it; and *sincerely hopes* that the competent Venezuelan authorities will engage in regular exchanges of views with the Committee in order to facilitate progress towards a satisfactory resolution of this long-standing case;
2. *Strongly condemns* the fact that Ms. Machado was prevented from standing as a candidate in the presidential elections held on 28 July 2024 as a result of a unilateral act by *the* Comptroller General, a non-judicial authority, and a procedure that did not allow her to exercise her right of defence; *recalls* that *Ms. Machado* had already been prevented from standing as a candidate in the legislative elections of December 2015; and *reiterates its view* that the position taken by Venezuela's Supreme Court on Ms. Machado's ban from holding public office appears to be a continuation of ongoing actions by state institutions to restrict Ms. Machado's rights, which began when she was a prominent opposition member of parliament;
3. *Solemnly reaffirms*, as stated in the IPU's Universal Declaration on Democracy, that the "key element in the exercise of democracy is the holding of free and fair elections ... enabling the people's will to be expressed ... on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage so that all voters can choose their representatives in conditions of equality, openness and transparency"; and *expresses its firm hope*, therefore, that the national authorities will urgently take measures to ensure that, in future elections, opposition candidates and their supporters will be allowed to

exercise their basic human right to take part in the conduct of public affairs on a par with the ruling party and its supporters;

4. *Solemnly reaffirms* its stance that the issues in this case are part of the broader complex situation in Venezuela, which can only be resolved through political dialogue and by the Venezuelans themselves; in this regard, *expresses its grave concern* at the allegations received of continued acts of harassment against Ms. Machado, which appear to demonstrate that the long-standing concerns expressed by the IPU in relation to this case have not been addressed by previous efforts of dialogue; *calls on, once again*, all relevant political actors to act in good faith and to commit fully to inclusive political dialogue that will bring about a new social pact through participatory and non-violent means, without foreign interference and in compliance with the State's international human rights commitments; *reaffirms* that the IPU stands ready to assist in these efforts; and *invites the relevant authorities to provide* further official information on how this assistance can best be provided;
5. *Renews its call on* all IPU Member Parliaments, IPU permanent observers, relevant human rights organizations and the international community in general to take concrete actions in support of any effort to strengthen democracy in Venezuela in a manner consistent with human rights values and within the boundaries of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
7. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining the case and to report back to it in due course.



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

## Venezuela

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 214th session  
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*



View of the National Assembly building in Caracas, Venezuela © Luis ROBAYO / AFP

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| VEN-10 – Biagio Pileri          | VEN-87 – Juan Pablo García                 |
| VEN-11 – José Sánchez Montiel   | VEN-88 – Cesar Cadenas                     |
| VEN-12 – Hernán Claret Alemán   | VEN-89 – Ramón Flores Carrillo             |
| VEN-13 – Richard Blanco         | VEN-91 – María Beatriz Martínez (Ms.)      |
| VEN-16 – Julio Borges           | VEN-92 – María C. Mulino de Saavedra (Ms.) |
| VEN-19 – Nora Bracho (Ms.)      | VEN-93 – José Trujillo                     |
| VEN-20 – Ismael García          | VEN-94 – Marianela Fernández (Ms.)         |
| VEN-22 – Williams Dávila        | VEN-95 – Juan Pablo Guanipa                |
| VEN-24 – Nirma Guarulla (Ms.)   | VEN-96 – Luis Silva                        |
| VEN-25 – Julio Ygarza           | VEN-97 – Eliezer Sirit                     |
| VEN-26 – Romel Guzamana         | VEN-98 – Rosa Petit (Ms.)                  |
| VEN-27 – Rosmit Mantilla        | VEN-99 – Alfonso Marquina                  |
| VEN-28 – Renzo Prieto           | VEN-100 – Rachid Yasbek                    |
| VEN-29 – Gilberto Sojo          | VEN-101 – Oneida Guanipe (Ms.)             |
| VEN-30 – Gilber Caro            | VEN-102 – Jony Rahal                       |
| VEN-31 – Luis Florido           | VEN-103 – Ylidio Abreu                     |
| VEN-32 – Eudoro González        | VEN-104 – Emilio Fajardo                   |
| VEN-33 – Jorge Millán           | VEN-106 – Angel Alvarez                    |
| VEN-34 – Armando Armas          | VEN-108 – Gilmar Marquez                   |
| VEN-35 – Américo De Grazia      | VEN-109 – José Simón Calzadilla            |
| VEN-36 – Luis Padilla           | VEN-110 – José Gregorio Graterol           |
| VEN-37 – José Regnault          | VEN-111 – José Gregorio Hernández          |
| VEN-38 – Dennis Fernández (Ms.) | VEN-112 – Mauligmer Baloa (Ms.)            |
| VEN-39 – Olivia Lozano (Ms.)    | VEN-113 – Arnoldo Benítez                  |
| VEN-40 – Delsa Solórzano (Ms.)  | VEN-114 – Alexis Paporoni                  |
| VEN-41 – Robert Alcalá          | VEN-115 – Adriana Pichardo (Ms.)           |
| VEN-42 – Gaby Arellano (Ms.)    | VEN-116 – Teodoro Campos                   |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| VEN-43 – Carlos Bastardo          | VEN-117 – Milagros Sánchez Eulate (Ms.) |
| VEN-44 - Marialbert Barrios (Ms.) | VEN-118 – Denncis Pazos                 |
| VEN-45 – Amelia Belisario (Ms.)   | VEN-119 – Karim Vera (Ms.)              |
| VEN-46 – Marco Bozo               | VEN-120 – Ramón López                   |
| VEN-48 – Yanet Fermin (Ms.)       | VEN-121 – Freddy Superlano              |
| VEN-49 – Dinorah Figuera (Ms.)    | VEN-122 – Sandra Flores-Garzón (Ms.)    |
| VEN-50 – Winston Flores           | VEN-123 – Armando López                 |
| VEN-51 – Omar González            | VEN-124 – Elimar Díaz (Ms.)             |
| VEN-52 – Stalin González          | VEN-125 – Yajaira Forero (Ms.)          |
| VEN-53 – Juan Guaidó              | VEN-126 – Maribel Guedez (Ms.)          |
| VEN-54 – Tomás Guanipa            | VEN-127 – Karin Salanova (Ms.)          |
| VEN-55 – José Guerra              | VEN-128 – Antonio Geara                 |
| VEN-56 – Freddy Guevara           | VEN-129 – Joaquín Aguilar               |
| VEN-57 – Rafael Guzmán            | VEN-130 – Juan Carlos Velasco           |
| VEN-58 – María G. Hernández (Ms.) | VEN-131 – Carmen María Sivoli (Ms.)     |
| VEN-59 – Piero Maroun             | VEN-132 – Milagros Paz (Ms.)            |
| VEN-60 – Juan A. Mejía            | VEN-133 – Jesus Yanez                   |
| VEN-61 – Julio Montoya            | VEN-134 – Desiree Barboza (Ms.)         |
| VEN-62 – José M. Olivares         | VEN-135 – Sonia A. Medina G. (Ms.)      |
| VEN-63 – Carlos Paparoni          | VEN-136 – Héctor Vargas                 |
| VEN-64 – Miguel Pizarro           | VEN-137 – Carlos A. Lozano Parra        |
| VEN-65 – Henry Ramos Allup        | VEN-138 – Luis Stefanelli               |
| VEN-66 – Juan Requesens           | VEN-139 – William Barrientos            |
| VEN-67 – Luis E. Rondón           | VEN-140 – Antonio Aranguren             |
| VEN-68 – Bolivia Suárez (Ms.)     | VEN-141 – Ana Salas (Ms.)               |
| VEN-69 – Carlos Valero            | VEN-142 – Ismael León                   |
| VEN-70 – Milagro Valero (Ms.)     | VEN-143 – Julio César Reyes             |
| VEN-71 – German Ferrer            | VEN-144 – Ángel Torres                  |
| VEN-72 – Adriana d'Elia (Ms.)     | VEN-145 – Tamara Adrián (Ms.)           |
| VEN-73 – Luis Lippa               | VEN-146 – Deyalitzza Aray (Ms.)         |
| VEN-74 – Carlos Berrizbeitia      | VEN-147 – Yolanda Tortolero (Ms.)       |
| VEN-75 – Manuela Bolívar (Ms.)    | VEN-148 – Carlos Prospero               |
| VEN-76 – Sergio Vergara           | VEN-149 – Addy Valero (Ms.)             |
| VEN-79 – Mariela Magallanes (Ms.) | VEN-150 – Zandra Castillo (Ms)          |
| VEN-80 – Héctor Cordero           | VEN-151 – Marco Aurelio Quiñones        |
| VEN-81 – José Mendoza             | VEN-152 – Carlos Andrés González        |
| VEN-82 – Angel Caridad            | VEN-153 – Carlos Michelangeli           |
| VEN-83 – Larissa González (Ms.)   | VEN-154 – César Alonso                  |
| VEN-84 – Fernando Orozco          | VEN-155 - Auristela Vásquez (Ms.)       |
| VEN-85 – Franco Casella           | VEN-156 – Ana Mercedes Aponte (Ms.)     |
| VEN-86 – Edgar Zambrano           |   |

### **Alleged human rights violations**

- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Excessive delays
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Violation of freedom of movement
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Other acts obstructing the exercise of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Impunity
- ✓ Other violations: right to privacy

## A. Summary of the case

The case concerns allegations of human rights violations affecting 135 parliamentarians from the coalition of the *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* (Democratic Unity Roundtable – MUD), against the backdrop of continuous efforts by Venezuela’s executive and judicial authorities to undermine the functioning of the National Assembly elected in 2015. At the time, the MUD coalition was opposed to President Nicolás Maduro’s Government and obtained a majority of seats in the National Assembly in the parliamentary elections of 6 December 2015. New parliamentary elections were held on 6 December 2020.

According to the complainant, almost all parliamentarians listed in the present case have been attacked or otherwise intimidated with impunity by law enforcement officers and/or pro-government officials and supporters. Between 2015 and 2020, at least 11 National Assembly members were arrested, reportedly due to politically motivated legal proceedings against them, and subsequently released. All were detained without due respect for the constitutional provisions on parliamentary immunity. There are also serious concerns regarding respect for due process and their treatment in detention. People associated with opposition parliamentarians have also been detained and harassed. At least 27 parliamentarians were illegally stripped of their parliamentary immunity, some 40 have left the country, allegedly for fear of reprisals for their political activities, 30 are facing legal proceedings, and at least 29 have been barred from holding public office as a result of a unilateral act by the Comptroller General – a non-judicial authority – and a procedure that did not allow them to exercise their right of defence. The passports of at least 13 parliamentarians have been confiscated, not been renewed, or cancelled by the authorities, reportedly as a way to exert pressure and to prevent them from travelling abroad to report what is happening in Venezuela.

On 31 August 2020, President Nicolás Maduro pardoned 110 members of the political opposition who had been accused of committing criminal acts. The decision meant the closure of ongoing criminal proceedings against 26 parliamentarians listed in the present case and the release of four of them.

The complainant states that the harassment of opposition parliamentarians elected in 2015 has continued and intensified after the presidential elections that took place on 28 July 2024. Some of the most recent reported incidents are described below:

- According to the complainant, Venezuelan judges have issued arrest warrants and extradition requests against several former members of parliament, including Mr. Julio Borges and Mr. Juan Guaidó, both former presidents of the National Assembly, Ms. Dinorah Figuera, Ms. Marianela Fernández and Ms. Auristela Vásquez. All of them live in exile. The complainant also reported that on 25 January 2023 the properties of Ms. Figuera and Ms. Vásquez had been seized by the judicial authorities. In September and December 2023, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP) received detailed information about new death threats and intimidation against former Vice-president of the CHRP, Ms. Delsa Solórzano. In March 2024, the complainant reported that an arrest warrant had been issued against Mr. Omar González, who was a member of the campaign team of the opposition presidential candidate, Ms. María Corina Machado, for allegedly being linked to a destabilization plan to create violence in the country.
- The complainant has also reported the detention of former parliamentarians Ms. Dignora Hernández on 20 March 2024, Mr. Freddy Superlano on 30 July, Mr. Williams Dávila on 8 August, Mr. Américo de Grazia on 9 August and Mr. Biagio Pilieri on 28 August. According to the information received, all these former members of parliament are in detention, with no access to their lawyers, and have not been informed of the reasons for their detention. In the cases of Ms. Hernández and Mr. Dávila, the complainant informed the Committee that they

### Case VEN-COLL-06

**Venezuela:** Parliament affiliated to the IPU

**Victims:** 135 opposition members of parliament (92 men and 43 women)

**Qualified complainant(s):** Section I.(1)(c) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

**Submission of complaint:** March 2017

**Recent IPU decision:** March 2024

**IPU mission:** August 2021

**Recent Committee hearing:** Hearing with members of the National Assembly elected in 2020 at the 173rd session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (January 2024)

#### Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: January 2024
- Communication from the complainant: October 2024
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Ambassador of Venezuela in Geneva (September 2024)
- Communication to the complainant: September 2024

suffer from serious health problems requiring special care, which they have not received. The Committee also received information on the arrest and subsequent release of former member of parliament Mr. Piero Maroun on 16 August 2024, together with several members of his family, including two minors. On 28 August 2024, two other parliamentarians elected in 2015, Mr. Juan Pablo Guanipa and Ms. Solórzano, were allegedly subjected to attempted arrests by groups of unidentified armed individuals. Both are reported to be in hiding.

- In a letter sent by the Venezuelan authorities in January 2024, it was stated that there had been no political persecution or other arbitrary actions against former or current parliamentarians. The cases of former parliamentarians that are under investigation and that have led to the actions of the competent organs of the Venezuelan State are based on alleged facts that constitute a violation of the established norms of the Venezuelan legal system, in which the accused enjoy all the legal guarantees established by the Constitution and laws of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This position was reiterated by a delegation of members of the National Assembly elected in 2020 during a meeting with the CHRP in January 2024. The delegation also expressed its willingness to cooperate with the Committee in finding solutions to the Venezuelan cases before it. However, the Committee's request for updated and official information on all cases before it remains unanswered to date.

## B. Decision

### The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Regrets* the lack of response from the Venezuelan authorities to its recent requests for information and official observations regarding each of the individual situations before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; *recalls* in this regard that, in accordance with its Rules and Practices, the Committee does everything possible to promote dialogue with national authorities with a view to reaching a satisfactory settlement in the cases before it; and *sincerely hopes* that the competent Venezuelan authorities will engage in regular exchanges of views with the Committee in order to facilitate progress towards a satisfactory resolution of this long-standing collective case;
2. *Remains deeply concerned* by reports that the various human rights violations committed against the parliamentarians listed in the present case, while they were members of parliament and as a result of their work in the parliamentary opposition, seem to remain unpunished; *recalls* that impunity, by shielding those responsible from judicial action and accountability, decisively encourages the perpetration of further human rights violations, and that abuses against members of parliament, irrespective of their opinions, when left unpunished, not only violate the fundamental rights of individual parliamentarians and of those who elected them, but also affect the integrity of parliament and its ability to fulfil its role as an institution; *urges* the competent Venezuelan authorities to take concrete actions in support of the resolution of this case in a manner consistent with the respect for democratic values and human rights; and *wishes* to receive official and detailed information on any steps taken in this regard;
3. *Solemnly reaffirms* its stance that the issues in this case are part of the broader complex situation in Venezuela, which can only be resolved through political dialogue and by the Venezuelans themselves; in this regard, *expresses its grave concern* at the allegations received of continued intimidation, persecution, arbitrary detention, threats, restrictions on political rights and other acts of harassment against members of the political opposition, including former parliamentarians, which appear to demonstrate that the long-standing concerns expressed by the IPU in relation to the cases referred to the Committee have not been addressed by previous efforts of dialogue; *calls on*, once again, all relevant political actors to act in good faith and to commit fully to inclusive political dialogue that will bring about a new social pact through participatory and non-violent means, without foreign interference and in compliance with the State's international human rights commitments; *reaffirms* that the IPU stands ready to assist with these efforts; and *invites the relevant authorities to provide* further official information on how this assistance can best be provided;
4. *Renews its call on* all IPU Member Parliaments, IPU permanent observers, relevant human rights organizations and the international community in general to take concrete actions in support of any effort to strengthen democracy in Venezuela in a manner consistent with human rights values and within the boundaries of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs;



5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent Venezuelan authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining the case and to report back to it in due course.