

LASA condemns Venezuelan regime for violating the rights of the university community

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The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) condemns the flagrant violations of human rights and the right to peaceful protest committed by the Venezuelan regime against students and the university community in response to suspicions of elections fraud on July 28. We also express our concern for the absence of the rule of law that guarantees free exercise of thought, which is fundamental to a democratic educational system.

The perception that the election results were not respected has awakened indignation and the citizenry has taken to the streets in peaceful protest, demanding transparency and verification of the facts. Once more, as occurred during the mass protests in 2014 and 2017, the government is responding with repression. To do so, it uses civilian officers who operate as armed paramilitary gangs—popularly known as “colectivos”—and is also supported by the National Guard and Police, repeating the same pattern of grave human rights violations that were brought before the [International Criminal Court \(ICC\) to open an investigation of Venezuela](#) in 2018, which is still ongoing.

The Venezuelan [Penal Forum](#) confirms that there have been 1102 arrests since July 29 as a result of political repression, of which 100 are teens and 5 Indigenous people. Meanwhile, the government itself declares it has arrested more than [2000 people](#). For its part, the [Victims' Monitor](#) has counted 23 executions since that same date. The documented human rights violations include the forced disappearance of 25 students from the Universidad Nacional Experimental de Seguridad (UNES) and the arbitrary detentions of at least 10 students from the Universidad de Carabobo, Universidad de los Andes, Universidad Alejandro de Humboldt and Universidad Central de Venezuela. The illegal detentions of professors Gustavo Torres, from Universidad de los Andes, Edni López and Salvador Enrique Rivera Pulpillo of Universidad Central, have also been reported.

In addition to this, at least 6 students denounced coercion and intimidation to force them to vote for Maduro through the assisted vote mechanism and the Universidad Central de Venezuela facilities were subjected to vandalism against Faculty of Political and Juridical Sciences on July 30 ([Aula Abierta](#)). Students are also being stigmatized and threatened through social media which involve posts of “Wanted” signs with their photos and names ([Aula Abierta](#)). [Amnesty International](#), in turn, is denouncing restrictions on internet Access.

Given this scenario of grave human rights violations, LASA calls upon the Venezuelan government to respect the election results and guarantee the freedom of thought necessary for any aspiration of academic freedom.

About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the world's largest professional association constituted by individuals and institutions devoted to the study of Latin America and the Caribbean. LASA currently has over 12,000 members from around the world and a committee that defends academic freedom and human rights.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or send an email to lasa@lasaweb.org.

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