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Presidente de la República Nicolas Maduro

Palacio de Miraflores,

Av. Nte. 10, Caracas 1012,

Caracas, Venezuela

**c/o** Botschaft der Bolivarischen Republik Venezuela

Waldeggstrasse 47

Postfach 237

3097 Liebefeld

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President Maduro,

**We are writing to demand the release and protection of the lives and physical integrity of all those deprived of their liberty for political reasons in Venezuela, including members of the opposition who are being punished for their political opinions.**

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the Venezuelan authorities are using enforced disappearance to remove detained persons from the protection of the law and to facilitate acts of torture and other ill-treatment against them, including their families. In many cases, even when families are able to learn of the whereabouts of detainees, they are subjected to full, prolonged and arbitrary incommunicado detention.

In the cases of **Pedro Guanipa, Perkins Rocha, Rafael Ramírez, Américo de Grazia, Biagio Pilieri, Freddy Superlano, Luis Somaza, Alfredo Díaz, Luis Palocz, Ricardo Estevez, Jesús Armas, María Oropeza, Nélida Sánchez, Roland Carreño, Williams Dávila** and **Edwin Moya**, many of their relatives were unaware of their whereabouts for days or weeks. In some cases, to this day they are still unsure of whether their family member is actually in the prison centre that the authorities claim they are, and are often only able to locatetheir family member through unofficial sources.

Enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment are absolutely prohibited under international human rights law. The victims of these crimes have the right under international law to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. In this regard, investigations conducted by independent courts abroad are of enormous importance.

**We demand that you immediately release the persons mentioned above and all other persons arbitrarily detained for political reasons, and that while they remain in detention you ensure their access to family visits, the appointment of a trusted defence counsel, medical care and all guarantees of a fair trial.**

Yours sincerely,

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