

Meeting the Needs of Suffering Venezuelans Will Require Expertise and Commitment to Humanitarian Principles

As organizations deeply concerned by the suffering of the Venezuelan people, we urge all relevant actors to ensure that any aid brought into the country is organized and distributed in accordance with the humanitarian concerns of actors with technical expertise, both at the border towns where aid is being transported, as well as within Venezuela.

The regime of Nicolas Maduro has repeatedly refused to recognize the scale of the humanitarian emergency in Venezuela, and has limited initiatives to provide assistance on the scale necessary to alleviate the conditions that are causing many to flee the country. Until the country is able to overcome its deep economic crisis, it is clear that the most vulnerable Venezuelans will need assistance from the international community. The Venezuelan health system is in disarray and the scarcity of medicine and functioning medical equipment are having an acute impact on public health. Similarly, hyperinflation and scarcity of basic foods have led to widespread malnutrition. Those who are suffering the most are the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of Venezuelan society. For this reason we believe that aid must be planned, organized, and distributed in close coordination with national and international humanitarian organizations that have experience in such operations.

In spite of its limited reach compared to the severe effects of the complex humanitarian emergency, it is important to note that the Maduro regime has not entirely prevented the international community from sending in aid. Venezuelan civil society organizations have been receiving international support for over three years to fight malnutrition and broaden access to medication, including through the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). In some cases these organizations have worked with UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) through the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The UN system has an important role to play, which Venezuela's National Assembly noted in a January 26 letter to the UN Secretary General in which it [requested](#) the "activation of early support and crisis management mechanisms of the United Nations system."

Because of their technical expertise and knowledge of existing systems, we believe that the organizations that have been actively engaged in the aforementioned efforts should be consulted on an ongoing basis regarding any humanitarian initiatives.

It is noteworthy that many of these same organizations have maintained a distance from current efforts to bring aid over the Colombia-Venezuela and Brazil-Venezuela borders. Instead, they have stressed that humanitarian responses must follow standard humanitarian and protection principles, including: neutrality, impartiality, independence, humanity, and doing no harm. These groups have distinguished humanitarian aid from other activities of political, ideological or military nature, out of a concern for the wellbeing of those most deeply affected

by Venezuela's crisis. In their operations they have insisted on a strict emphasis on human rights and rejection of the use of force.

We echo these concerns and make them our own. Ultimately any effort to provide humanitarian aid to Venezuelans should be organized in order to maximize efforts to get to the most people possible in a way that avoids doing harm, regardless of political considerations.

Venezuelan signatories:

A.C. Equipo de Proyectos y Asesoría Social (EDEPA)
Acceso a la Justicia
Acción Ciudadana Contra el SIDA (ACCSI)
Acción Solidaria
Asociación Civil Fuerza, Unión, Justicia, Solidaridad y Paz (FUNPAZ)
Asociación Civil Mujeres en Línea, Venezuela
Asociación Civil Red de Casas Don Bosco
Asociación Civil Vida y Luz (Asoviluz)
Asociación Venezolana para la Conservación de Áreas Naturales (ACOANA)
Asociación Venezolana para la Hemofilia
Aula Abierta, Venezuela
Caleidoscopio Humano
Centro de Acción y Defensa por los Derechos Humanos (Cadef)
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (CDH-UCAB)
Centro de Investigaciones para la Infancia y la Familia (CENDIF), Universidad Metropolitana
Centro de Justicia y Paz
Centro Gumilla
Centro para la Paz y los Derechos Humanos, Universidad Central de Venezuela
Civilis Derechos Humanos
Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Políticas, Universidad del Zulia
Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos de la Federación de Colegios de Abogados, Estado Táchira
Comisión para los Derechos Humanos del Estado Zulia (Codhez)
Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía (CODEHCIU)
Comité de Derechos Humanos de Guajira
Conciencia Ciudadana A.C
Confederación Sordos de Venezuela (Consoven)
Control Ciudadano para la Seguridad, la Defensa y la Fuerza Armada Nacional
Convite A.C
Defensa En Acción
Escuela de Vecinos de Venezuela
EXCUBITUS - Derechos Humanos en Educación
Epikeia Observatorio Universitario de Derechos Humanos

Espacio Público
Federación Nacional de Sociedad de Padres y Representantes en defensa del Derecho a la Educación; (Fenasopadres) capítulo Anzoátegui
Funcamama
Fundación Aguaclara
Fundación de lucha contra el cáncer de mama (Funcamama)
Fundación Rehabilitarte
Fundación MAVID Carabobo
Fundamujer
Humano Derecho Radio Estación
Instituto Mead de Venezuela A.C
Laboratorio Ciudadano de Noviolencia Activa
Laboratorio de Paz
Linda Loaiza López
Monitor Social, A.C.
Movimiento SOMOS
Mulier
Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Los Andes
Observatorio Venezolano de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres
Prepara Familia
Proadopcion Asociación Civil
Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA)
Proiuris
Promoción Educación y Defensa en DDHH (PROMEDEHUM)
Proyecta Ciudadanía A.C
Red Acción y Defensa (RADDH - Cojedes)
Red de Activistas Ciudadanos por los Derechos Humanos (REDAC)
Red por los Derechos Humanos de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes (REDHNNA)
RedesAyuda
Red Venezolana de Gente Positiva
Servicio Jesuita de Refugiados
Sinergia, Red Venezolana de Organizaciones de Sociedad Civil
StopVIH
Un Mundo Sin Mordaza
Uniandes
Unión Afirmativa de Venezuela
Unión Vecinal para la Participación Ciudadana A.C
Ventana a la Libertad de Caracas

International signatories

APUK – Servicios Legales Comunitarios, Ecuador
Caribe Afirmativo, Colombia

Center for Justice and International Law, United States

Conectas Direitos Humanos, Brazil

Red Jesuita con Migrantes

Sin Fronteras IAP, Mexico

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), United States