

REPORT 1.0

# Error 404:

Democracy Not Found



Record and study of the events that violated  
and restricted journalistic work in Venezuela

2022

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# REDESAYUDA REPORT

## DEMOCRACY NOT FOUND

Record and study of the events that violated and restricted journalistic work in Venezuela in 2021.

# REDESAYUDA

The non-governmental organization RedesAyuda was founded in 2014 to contribute to creating, promoting, and consolidating free and independent human social networks (digital and analog) as an indispensable instrument for the advocacy and defense of human rights in a democratic society.

Among its main areas of interest are human rights, freedom of expression, media, Internet access, and the strengthening, preparation, and training of activists, journalists, leaders, and defenders in digital and information security.

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# MOTIVATION FOR THE REPORT

For years, journalistic work in Venezuela has been constantly violated, causing press workers to carry out their work in a repressive, unconstitutional context and under restrictive regulations, which have forced them to face arbitrary detentions, threats, harassment, and physical and verbal aggression. These facts contravene the provisions of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that: *“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”*<sup>1</sup>

Given the sociopolitical context in which Venezuela finds itself under the arbitrary power of the regime led by Nicolás Maduro, who, with his executive cabinet, constantly violates the human rights of citizens in

the country, journalistic work to investigate, document, inform and disseminate is fundamental. However, press workers are increasingly limited and censored, facing in their informative work the illegal and repressive actions committed by State security forces, workers of State-owned companies, public officials, and civilians belonging to irregular armed groups.

To document, denounce and disseminate the actions against the informative work of the journalistic guild in the country, RedesAyuda undertook this study in which the cases that occurred during the year 2021 are exposed on the infringements faced by press workers, which showed censorship as a tool of the regime to restrict the free exercise of freedom of expression, freedom of the press and access to truthful information of Venezuelans.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <https://www.un.org/es/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the violations of the human rights of Venezuelans, which are reflected in a complex humanitarian emergency resulting from the actions of the Venezuelan regime and which have limited the living conditions of citizens, journalistic work to report on these facts is fundamental. However, it has faced repression and limitations that, for years, have only increased under the restrictive and unconstitutional context in which the country finds itself.

The repression faced by press workers takes the form of arbitrary arrests, threats, harassment, and physical and verbal aggression. These repressive practices are aimed at controlling and violating freedom of the press, trying to make journalistic documentation on corruption, human rights violations, the precarious conditions of access to public health, adequate food, and access to essential public services, among others, subject to the application of

extrajudicial measures carried out by State security forces, workers of State companies, public officials and civilians belonging to irregular armed groups, known as “colectivos,” whose actions are protected under the arbitrary power of the regime of Nicolás Maduro.

In the face of repression and censorship to silence truthful information disseminated in traditional and digital media, this report aims to be a tool for documenting, denouncing, and spreading the events that attempted against press workers in the exercise of their informative work, thus violating rights such as freedom of the press, freedom of expression and access to information. It also seeks to reaffirm the importance of journalistic work to confront censorship as a fundamental instrument of the regime to silence truthful information in a repressive context such as the one experienced by citizens in Venezuela.

# GLOSSARY

## STATE AGENCIES

**CONATEL (Comisión Nacional de Telecomunicaciones de Venezuela - National Telecommunications Commission of Venezuela):**

Venezuelan government agency that regulates, supervises and controls telecommunications in the country.

**TSJ (Tribunal Supremo de Justicia - Supreme Court of Justice):** Highest judicial body in the country.

**CNE (Consejo Nacional Electoral- National Electoral Council):** Governing body in national electoral matters.

**AN (Asamblea Nacional – National Assembly):** Body that exercises the Legislative Power in the country.

## STATE SECURITY FORCES

**Plan República:** Deployment of military personnel during electoral processes in Venezuela.

**PNB:** Policía Nacional Bolivariana - National Bolivarian Police.

**GNB:** Guardia Nacional Bolivariana - National Bolivarian Guard.

**SEBIN:** Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional - Bolivarian National Intelligence Service.

**DGCIM:** Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar - General Office of Military Counterintelligence.

**CICPC:** Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas Penales y Criminalísticas - Scientific, Criminal, and Criminalistic Investigation Department.

**FAES:** Fuerzas de Acciones Especiales - Special Actions Forces.

**CONAS:** Comando Nacional Antiextorsión y Secuestro - National Anti-extortion and Kidnapping Command.

## MAIN SOURCES

**Espacio Público:** Venezuelan NGO that promotes and defends freedom of expression, the right to information, and social responsibility in the media.

**Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS):** Venezuelan NGO promoting and defending the freedom of expression, the right to information, and social responsibility in the media.

**Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Prensa (SNTP):** Guild of press workers in Venezuela.

**Colegio Nacional de Periodistas (CNP):** autonomous institution authorized to grant the title of Professional Journalist (after getting the degree). It is also responsible for ensuring compliance with the “Law on the Practice of Journalism” in Venezuela and the “Code of Ethics of the Venezuelan Journalist and its Regulations.”



# INTRODUCTION

In Venezuela, the State policy of Nicolás Maduro's regime is aimed at increasingly reducing the dissemination of content that is critical of his administration. This policy is characterized by the persecution of press workers and independent media, attacking them with threatening speeches, discrediting their journalistic work, promoting fear and self-censorship, and increasingly restricting the spaces of traditional media, such as radio and television, amid an economic, political and social crisis that has limited the living conditions of Venezuelans.

During the past few years, democratic conditions in Venezuela have become almost non-existent. The regime has focused on restricting radio and television by using CONATEL to order the closure of programs, channels, and stations. According to Espacio Público, 292 media outlets have been closed since 2004.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, significant efforts have been made to limit the journalistic work of press workers in Venezuela to censor all information critical of his administration in the country.

Freedom of the press is a fundamental principle in a country's democracy, especially in cases of public interest. However, in Venezuela, press workers have had to overcome a series of restrictions and attacks when covering protests in which citizens and workers demanded better working conditions, when trying to enter health centers to record the

consequences brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination campaigns, and even in the municipal and regional elections held in November 2021.

This report documented a total of 93 infringements of journalistic work, which showed how fundamental rights such as freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and access to information are violated in Venezuela. In addition, 113 press workers were affected while performing their informative work. These limitations represent an attack against freedom of expression and information amid the critical work of journalists who seek to give visibility to human rights violations by the Venezuelan authorities.

Press workers continue to be arbitrarily detained and forced to erase material from their work equipment under threat of arrest. In addition, officials of State security forces have physically and verbally attacked them, as well as armed civilians belonging to groups known as "colectivos" and sympathizers of the Maduro regime. Likewise, journalists and media organizations continue to be victims of stigmatizing speeches by public officials, who have taken advantage of their radio and television spaces, and of their arbitrary stay in power to insult, accuse, point fingers and discredit journalistic work in Venezuela, to censor everything that is said against their narratives and management of the country.

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<sup>2</sup> Espacio Público. (May 2nd, 2022). *Informe 2021: Situación del derecho a la libertad de expresión e información en Venezuela.* [Report 2021: Status of the right to freedom of expression and information in Venezuela.] <https://espaciopublico.org/situacion-general-del-derecho-a-la-libertad-de-expresion-enero-diciembre-2021/>



# REPRESSIVE CONTEXT



Democracy, journalistic work, and human rights in Venezuela continued to be violated under a pattern of systematic violence towards the informative work of press workers in Venezuela by the regime of Nicolás Maduro, which has resulted in a significant restriction and criminalization of journalists who make those who are arbitrarily in power “uncomfortable.”

- During the year 2021, *IPYS Venezuela* conducted a study in which they surveyed 534 press workers throughout the national territory,<sup>3</sup> to evaluate their perception of the conditions of the practice of journalism in Venezuela during that year. This study concluded with the following points:
- According to the 534 journalists surveyed, access to public information and security obtained the lowest scores within the categories indicated by *IPYS Venezuela*. They were rated with 37 and 54 points on a scale of 0 to 100, respectively.
- Opacity and fear were the greatest threats to freedom of expression.
- 58.2% of those consulted stated that they did not report to State agencies or non-governmental bodies when they suffered any restriction in their professional practice during 2021.
- Gender-based violence was reflected in the Venezuelan journalistic composition. 19.9% of those surveyed said that they had been harmed, on at least one occasion, by acts of violence based on their gender. Of this percentage, 71.70% corresponded to women journalists, while 28.30% were men.

Moreover, the NGO *Espacio Público* published its annual report on the situation of freedom of expression and information in 2021. In the report, they highlighted the following points:<sup>4</sup>

- Traditional media, such as radio and television, continue to be regulated by CONATEL, an agency that has regularly shut down radio stations, exerting pressure on managers to eliminate radio programs, especially those with content critical of the regime’s public administration.
- CONATEL is also the agency in charge of ordering the blocking of websites, which predominantly affects national news portals.
- The reduction in regional print media went from 29.2% in 2016 to 1.9% in 2021.
- Among the documented violations are intimidation, censorship, restriction, verbal harassment, threats, judicial harassment, assault, and battery.
- In 2021, nine radio stations, one digital media and one print media were closed. With these figures, 292 media outlets have been closed since 2004.

The permanence of Nicolás Maduro’s regime has resulted, during the last few years, in censorship and restrictions on the free exercise of the informative work of press workers in the country, violating the rights to freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and access to information, causing Venezuelans to have to circumvent more and more barriers to stay informed, especially on issues of public interest.

3 IPYS Venezuela. (April 20th, 2022). *El periodismo en el país se ejerce con reservas, de acuerdo al Estudio de Libertades Informativas 2021 de IPYSve.* [Journalism in the country is exercised with reservations, according to IPYSve’s Freedom of Information Study 2021.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/2022/04/20/el-periodismo-en-el-pais-se-ejerce-con-reservas-de-acuerdo-al-estudio-de-libertades-informativas-2021-de-ipysve/>

4 Espacio Público. (May 2nd, 2022). *Informe 2021: Situación del derecho a la libertad de expresión e información en Venezuela.* [Report 2021: Status of the right to freedom of expression and information in Venezuela.] <https://espaciopublico.org/situacion-general-del-derecho-a-la-libertad-de-expresion-enero-diciembre-2021/>

## COVID-19: VACCINES, COVAX INITIATIVE, PROTESTS AND REPRESSION

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to aggravate the conditions of essential public services in Venezuela, the difficulties regarding fuel supply, and the negligence in the acquisition of vaccines and implementation of an accessible vaccination schedule for all citizens who already had to deal with the high costs of hospitals, the precarious conditions of health centers and the lack of medical supplies to treat the disease in a country hit by the economic crisis.<sup>5</sup>

On Thursday, February 18th, Nicolás Maduro announced that the first doses of Sputnik V vaccine, purchased by the regime in a batch of 100,000 vaccines and for which it claimed to have paid US\$200 million, had begun to be administered.<sup>6</sup> Although Dr. Glendy Rivero was the first to be vaccinated on nationwide Estate broadcast,<sup>7</sup> the most vulnerable sectors, including health care workers and the elderly, would not be a priority. Instead, Maduro announced that “among the first to receive the immunization would be political officials such as mayors, governors, and deputies to the National Assembly, controlled by the ruling party.”<sup>8</sup>

By May 2021, the Minister of Health of the Venezuelan regime, Carlos Alvarado, announced that there would be 27 vaccination posts throughout the national territory at the beginning of April and that they would activate 77 vaccination points across the country<sup>9</sup> with which they expected to vaccinate between “600 and 1,000 people” daily. Likewise, he invited citizens to register in the Patria System, since in this process, the selection was random through this system, then those selected received a text message with the data of the health center where they would be vaccinated. This policy conditioned Venezuelans to have access to vaccines.

On the other hand, the regime increasingly delayed an agreement to acquire vaccines through the COVAX initiative. In March 2021, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported that the first shipment of vaccines manufactured by the British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca would arrive; however, the Maduro regime prohibited their use in the country,<sup>10</sup> even though they announced that Venezuela was going through the second wave of COVID-19 infection, with the P.1 variant.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the first arrival of vaccines through the COVAX initiative in Venezuela was in September 2021.<sup>12</sup>

Amid the problematic access to vaccines, health sector representatives, activists, human rights defenders, and citizens embarked

5 Núñez, A. (September 7th 2020). “Es impagable”: el costo de hospitalizarse por coronavirus en Venezuela. [“It’s unaffordable”: the cost of being hospitalized for coronavirus in Venezuela.] [https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/venezuela\\_venezuela-coronavirus-costos-impagable/6067746.html](https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/venezuela_venezuela-coronavirus-costos-impagable/6067746.html)

6 BBC. (February 19th, 2021). Vacuna contra el coronavirus: qué se sabe del inicio de la inmunización del covid-19 en Venezuela y por qué es polémica. [Coronavirus vaccine: what is known about the start of covid-19 immunization in Venezuela and why it is controversial.] <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-56120882>

7 Nicolás Maduro. [@nicolasmaduro]. (February 18th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NicolasMaduro/status/1362508991641903109>

8 BBC. (February 19th, 2021). Vacuna contra el coronavirus: qué se sabe del inicio de la inmunización del covid-19 en Venezuela y por qué es polémica. [Coronavirus vaccine: what is known about the start of covid-19 immunization in Venezuela and why it is controversial.] <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-56120882>

9 Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Salud. (May 28th, 2021). Venezuela inicia II Fase del Plan Masivo de Vacunación contra la COVID-19. [Venezuela begins Phase II of the Mass Vaccination Plan against COVID-19.] <http://www.mpps.gob.ve/index.php/sala-de-prensa/notnac/1124-venezuela-inicia-ii-fase-del-plan-masivo-de-vacunacion-contra-la-covid-19>

10 Monitoreamos. (May 15th, 2021). Régimen de Maduro anunció que no autorizará la vacuna de AstraZeneca en Venezuela. [Maduro’s regime announced it will not authorize AstraZeneca’s vaccine in Venezuela.] <https://monitoreamos.com/venezuela/regimen-de-maduro-anuncio-que-no-autorizara-la-vacuna-de-astrazeneca-en-venezuela>

11 BBC News Mundo. (March 26th, 2021). Coronavirus en Venezuela | “Los hospitales están abarrotados”: la preocupación por la llegada del “peor momento de la pandemia”. [Coronavirus in Venezuela | “Hospitals are overcrowded”: concern about the arrival of the “worst stage of the pandemic.”] <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-56516746>

12 Organización Panamericana de la Salud. (September 7th, 2021). Venezuela recibe primer envío de vacunas contra la COVID-19 a través del Mecanismo COVAX. [Venezuela receives first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine through COVAX initiative.] <https://www.paho.org/es/noticias/7-9-2021-venezuela-recibe-primer-envio-vacunas-contra-covid-19-traves-mecanismo-covax>

on protests<sup>13</sup> to call for better working conditions, medicines, and medical supplies. The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict recorded 6,560 protests in 2021, 1,240 of those registered were to demand the right to health and 698 to demand vaccination campaigns.<sup>14</sup>

However, as part of its censorship policy, Maduro's administration used repressive practices to try to silence those who demanded better conditions in the health sector. An example of this was the arbitrary detention of nurse Ada Macuare, who was also charged with incitement to hatred and terrorism for demanding medical supplies, medicines, and biosecurity equipment.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the organization *Médicos Unidos Venezuela* denounced that up to September, they had registered 625 threats by the authorities of Nicolás Maduro's regime "to health personnel for attending protest demonstrations."<sup>16</sup>

## ARMED CONFLICT IN APURE STATE

On Sunday, March 21st, the director of the NGO *FundaRedes*, Javier Tarazona, informed the beginning of a new armed confrontation between guerrilla groups in several sectors of La Victoria, Apure state, bordering Colombia.<sup>17 18</sup> The conflict involved FARC dissidents

and the Venezuelan Army. On March 23rd, *FundaRedes* reported that a SENIAT building and the GNB headquarters in La Victoria were attacked with explosives.<sup>19</sup>

As a consequence of this new armed conflict, citizens living in these areas were the most affected. The NGO *Provea* published a video in which an 86-year-old woman denounced how "the National Police"<sup>20</sup> arbitrarily broke into her home and beat one of her grandchildren visiting her from Maturín. Meanwhile, journalist Junior Parra condemned the alleged murder of a family by FAES officers<sup>21</sup> in El Ripial, Apure state, on his Twitter account. According to Parra, "weapons and grenades were strategically placed for the photos and to justify their deaths."<sup>22</sup>

The Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Claudia Blum, on Wednesday, April 14th, denounced before the UN "the displacement of 5,737 people of Venezuelan nationality" to Arauquita, Colombia, since the beginning of these clashes on March 21st, 2021.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, journalists and activists were also victims of the repressive practices of Nicolás Maduro's regime for reporting and denouncing irregular situations in the affected areas. Such was the case of the arbitrary detention of journalists Luis Gonzalo Pérez and Rafael Hernández, and *FundaRedes* activists Juan Carlos Salazar and Diógenes Ti-

13 El Diario. (April 17th, 2021). *Imágenes que dejó la protesta de miembros del sector salud exigiendo la vacunación en Venezuela.* [Images from the protest by members of the health sector demanding vaccination in Venezuela.] <https://eldiario.com/2021/04/17/las-imagenes-protesta-por-vacunas-en-venezuela/>

14 Observatorio Venezolano de Conflictividad Social. (2021). *Venezuela anual 2021.* [Venezuela annual 2021.] <https://www.observatoriodeconflictos.org.ve/oc/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/INFORMEOVCS-ANUAL2021.pdf>

15 Pellicani, G. (July 28th, 2021). *Ada Macuare: la enfermera señalada de terrorismo que ayuda a comunidades.* [Ada Macuare: the nurse accused of terrorism who helps communities.] <https://elpitazo.net/oriente/ada-macuare-la-enfermera-senalada-de-terrorismo-que-ayuda-a-comunidades/>

16 Centro de Comunicación Nacional. (October 11th, 2021). *Sector salud ha recibido 625 amenazas por asistir a jornadas de protesta por sus DDHH.* [The health sector has received 625 threats for participating in human rights protests.] <https://presidenciave.com/regiones/sector-salud-ha-recibido-625-amenazas-por-asistir-a-jornadas-de-protesta-por-sus-ddhh/>

17 FundaRedes. [@fundaredes]. (March 21st, 2021). Twitter. [https://twitter.com/FundaREDES\\_/status/1373776423748562944](https://twitter.com/FundaREDES_/status/1373776423748562944)

18 FundaRedes. [@fundaredes]. (March 21st, 2021). Twitter. [https://twitter.com/FundaREDES\\_/status/1373791879855235077](https://twitter.com/FundaREDES_/status/1373791879855235077)

19 FundaRedes. [@fundaredes]. (March 24th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/javiertarazona/status/1374749655985176577>

20 Provea. [@fundaredes]. (March 24th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/Provea/status/1374711363562577928>

21 Infobae. (March 26th, 2021). *Denuncian asesinatos, abusos y detenciones arbitrarias tras la llegada de las FAES a la zona de conflicto en la frontera de Colombia y Venezuela.* [Reports of murders, abuses, and arbitrary detentions following the arrival of the FAES in the conflict zone on the Colombian-Venezuelan border.] <https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2021/03/26/denuncian-asesinatos-abusos-y-detenciones-arbitrarias-tras-la-llegada-de-las-faes-a-la-zona-de-conflicto-en-la-frontera-de-colombia-y-venezuela/>

22 Junior Parra. [@juniorparra19]. (March 26th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/JuniorParra19/status/1375290682634555392>

23 Tal Cual. (April 14th, 2021). *Colombia informó a la ONU que más de 5.000 personas fueron desplazadas desde Venezuela.* [Colombia informed the UN that more than 5,000 people were displaced from Venezuela.] <https://talcualdigital.com/colombia-informo-a-la-onu-que-mas-de-5-000-personas-fueron-desplazadas-desde-venezuela/>

rado, detained for 24 hours while trying to cover the armed conflict in Apure state.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the reports, allegations, and investigative work from *FundaRedes*, activists of the organization were victims of threats and arbitrary detentions. On April 8th, 2021, Javier Tarazona denounced that the organization was again an “object of harassment and criminalization” by Diosdado Cabello.<sup>25</sup> More than two months later, on July 3rd, SEBIN officials detained Javier Tarazona, Rafael Tarazona and Omar de Dios García, activists of *FundaRedes*.

The activists went to the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Falcón state to denounce the harassment they were victims of as State security officers were showing up at the hotel where they were staying. After being received at the Superior Prosecutor’s Office, they were informed of an arrest warrant against Javier Tarazona and taken to the SEBIN headquarters in Punto Fijo.

On July 3rd, the activists were presented, arrested, charged with “treason, terrorism, and incitement to hatred,”<sup>26</sup> and transferred to the SEBIN headquarters in El Helicoide, Caracas. On October 26th, 117 days after the arbitrary detention, Omar García and Rafael Tarazona were released with a precautionary measure of presentation every eight days. On December 31st, 2021, Javier Tarazona completed 182 days of arbitrary arrest in El Helicoide.<sup>27</sup>

## CLASHES BETWEEN CRIMINAL GANGS AND STATE SECURITY FORCES

Popular areas in Venezuela are controlled by the presence of criminal gangs that keep their inhabitants in fear. The clashes that began on July 7th between Special Action Forces and the criminal band led by Carlos Luis Revete, alias “El Koki”; Carlos Calderón Martínez, alias “El Vampi”; and Galvis Ochoa Ruíz, alias “El Galvis,” figure as an example. These confrontations kept businesses closed for days, paralyzed public transportation in the affected areas, mainly Cota 905, and caused the forced displacement of citizens in this sector.

According to *Diario Tal Cual*, these clashes began when members of the gang of alias “El Koki” shot at El Helicoide and wounded at least two officers as a response from the criminals after one of their members (“Loco Leo”) ended up injured in a shootout with the police.<sup>28</sup>

On July 10th, Carmen Meléndez, Minister of Interior, Justice, and Peace of the Venezuelan regime, offered a balance of the operation by state security officials: “22 criminals were killed during the operation.”<sup>29</sup> Meléndez assured that only 12 were identified. However, the *Monitor de Víctimas* initiative reported on July 13th that of the deaths announced by representatives of the regime, “only 4 were presumed members of the Koki gang” and assured that “other 15 victims had no relation with the mega-gang and died in extrajudicial executions or when hit by stray bullets.”<sup>30</sup>

24 Tal Cual. (April 1st, 2021). *Liberados periodistas y activistas de FundaRedes tras más de 24 horas detenidos* en Apure. [FundaRedes journalists and activists released after more than 24 hours of detention in Apure.] <https://talcualdigital.com/denuncian-desaparicion-de-periodistas-detenedos-mientras-cubrian-conflicto-en-apure/>

25 Javier Tarazona. [@javiertarazona]. (April 8th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/javiertarazona/status/1380025233684496384>

26 Acceso a la Justicia. (July 2nd, 2021). *Cronología del caso de la ONG Fundaredes*. [Chronology of the Fundaredes NGO case.] <https://accesoalajusticia.org/cronologia-del-caso-de-la-ong-fundaredes/>

27 Provea. [@\_provea]. (December 31st, 2021). Twitter. [https://twitter.com/\\_Provea/status/1476999109185875973](https://twitter.com/_Provea/status/1476999109185875973)

28 Amaya, V. (July 15th, 2021). *Diez preguntas aún sin respuesta oficial sobre el operativo en la Cota 905*. [Ten questions still unanswered about the operation at Cota 905.] <https://talcualdigital.com/diez-preguntas-aun-sin-respuesta-oficial-sobre-el-operativo-en-la-cota-905/>

29 Runrunes. (July 10th, 2021). *Gobierno ofreció balance del operativo policial en la Cota 905*. [Government offered balance of the police operation at Cota 905.] <https://runrun.es/noticias/448349/gobierno-ofrecio-balance-del-operativo-policial-en-la-cota-905/>

30 Runrunes. (July 13th, 2021). *#MonitorDeVictimas | 23 muertos en tiroteos de la Cota 905 han sido identificados*. [#MonitorDeVictimas | 23 killed in Cota 905 shootings have been identified.] <https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/448602/monitordevictimas-23-muertos-en-tiroteos-de-la-cota-905-han-sido-identificados/>



On July 13th, Jorge Rodríguez, president of the National Assembly of Nicolás Maduro's regime, criminalized and accused the news media *Efecto Cocuyo* and *Alberto News* of being part of a "communication plan" promoted by opposition leaders Freddy Guevara and Gilber Caro, to "quickly activate the thugs"<sup>31</sup> in reference to the clashes that took place in the Cota 905 and other popular areas in Caracas. Furthermore, journalist Román Camacho reported that a group of journalists was approached by antisocials carrying assault rifles and mentioned that they were looking for him and David Glock to "chop them up."<sup>32</sup>

## NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN MEXICO: OPPOSITION AND THE RULING PARTY

On August 13th, 2021, Mexico welcomed the delegations of the regime of Nicolás Maduro and the Unitary Platform for the inaugural act of the negotiation process, which was to be mediated by Norway. That same day, both parties signed a document on the points of the negotiation agenda, which included political rights, electoral guarantees, lifting of sanctions, and restoration of active rights.<sup>33</sup> After that, the following meetings were held between the ruling party and the opposition:

**1. August 14th and 15th:** After the opening ceremony, according to the Norwegian representation, both parties held "constructive meetings." On August 15th, Norway issued a joint statement on the negotiation process.<sup>34</sup>

**2. September 3rd to 6th:** The first round of negotiations. The participation of Freddy Guevara, after the departure of Carlos Vecchio from the negotiating table, at the request of the regime of Nicolás Maduro, is noteworthy. On September 6th, Norway published the joint statement on this first round of negotiations.<sup>35</sup>

**3. September 24th to 27th:** The second round of negotiations between the regime of Nicolás Maduro and the Unitary Platform had to begin on September 24th; however, representatives of the ruling party did not attend.<sup>36</sup> That same day, Delcy Rodríguez accused the U.S. ambassador, James Story, of giving "orders to the colonized and puppet opposition of Venezuela on what to do at the Dialogue Table."<sup>37</sup>

On September 25th, the second round of negotiations began, with the incorporation of Nicolás Maduro Guerra. The delegation of Nicolás Maduro arrived in Mexico, displaying posters of Alex Saab.<sup>38</sup> Journalist Osmar Hernández reported that the statements from the Prime Minister of Norway in the framework of the United Nations "caused discomfort in the delegation of @Nicolas-Maduro" for which reason they concluded the round. Norway published the joint statement on this round of negotiations.<sup>39</sup>

**4. October 17th to 20th:** Although the Norwegian representation indicated that the new round of negotiations between the regime and the opposition would take place between October 17th and 20th, it did not take place after Jorge Rodríguez announced that the regime's delegation would not participate in the dialogue pro-

31 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (July 13th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1415048109428670464>

32 Román Camacho. [@rcamachovzla]. (July 13th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/RCamachoVzla/status/1415822669841375235>

33 Hurtado, J. (August 14th, 2021). *El Gobierno de Venezuela y la oposición inician un nuevo diálogo en México.* [The Venezuelan government and the opposition begin a new dialogue in Mexico.] <https://www.france24.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina/20210814-venezuela-nicolas-maduro-oposicion-inician-dialogos-mexico>

34 Norway MFA. [@norwaymfa]. (August 15th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NorwayMFA/status/1427012164087390214>

35 Norway MFA. [@norwaymfa]. (September 6th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NorwayMFA/status/1435070875003465732>

36 Osmar Hernández. [@osmarycnn]. (September 24th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/osmarycnn/status/1441582826516742146>

37 Delcy Rodríguez. [@delcyrodriguezv]. (September 24th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/delcyrodriguezv/status/1441537871622639616>

38 Osmar Hernández. [@osmarycnn]. (September 25th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/osmarycnn/status/1441822022485565440>

39 Embajada de Noruega [@noruegamexca]. (September 27th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NoruegaMexCA/status/1442638480367104005>

cess as a form of protest against the extradition of Alex Saab to the United States.<sup>40</sup>

## REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

On Sunday, November 21st, regional elections were held in Venezuela to renew the executive and legislative positions of the country's 23 states and 335 municipalities. This day was marked not only by the low turnout of citizens but also by the restrictions placed on press workers while they were documenting the electoral process at polling stations throughout the country.

*IPYS Venezuela* reported a total of 48 violations of freedom of the press during election day, which translated into arbitrary detentions, restrictions on access to information, and intimidation of at least 86 press workers and two human rights defenders in 19 states of the country, with Portuguesa, Monagas, and Lara being the states where most cases. Moreover, *Espacio Público* counted a total of 28 cases that resulted in 54 infringements of freedom of expression in the states of Aragua, Lara, Táchira, Mérida, Nueva Esparta, Sucre, Guárico, Portuguesa, Carabobo, Falcón, Bolívar, Caracas, Trujillo, Monagas, and Cojedes; with intimidation, harassment and aggression being “the most repeated acts against media workers” carried out mainly by officials of the Plan República and the DGCIM.

Among the arbitrary actions that press workers had to face during the regional and municipal elections was the refusal by the CNE to grant credentials to journalists of the media outlet *El Pitazo*, as denounced by its director César Batiz: “until yesterday afternoon, we were waiting for the CNE credentials for

journalists of @elpitazotv. Once again, they did not [sic] deny them. It has been like this since the 2017 constituent. Even so, we continue to say what others keep silent.”<sup>41</sup>

As denounced by the NGOs *IPYS Venezuela* and *Espacio Público*, electoral documentation by press workers was significantly restricted. For example, in the polling station Granja Oscar Villanueva school, in Portuguesa state, officials of Plan República prevented journalists from documenting the moment when candidate Antonia Muñoz was exercising her right to vote.<sup>42</sup> The same happened in Carabobo state, where Plan República officials prevented the press from having access to document the moment the candidate for governor of this state, Javier Bertucci, was exercising his right to vote.<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, in Anzoátegui state, journalists of the media Primicias Uno, Megavisión, El Tigrense, Reporte Informativo and other digital portals were prevented from entering the José Gil Fortoul voting center.<sup>44</sup> In Caracas, journalist Luis Gonzalo Pérez denounced that officials of the DGCIM forced journalists and citizens who were at the voting center of the Andrés Bello Municipal School, in Chacao, to delete material from their equipment under threats of taking “the necessary actions” if they did not do so.<sup>45</sup>

## EUROPEAN UNION ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION IN VENEZUELA

Since October 28th, a delegation of 44 members of the European Union spread across the 23 states to observe the electoral process in the regional and municipal elections. On No-

40 Osmary Hernández. [@osmarycnn]. (October 16th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/osmarycnn/status/1449516673434857479>

41 César Batiz. [@cbatiz]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CBatiz/status/1462445328112787461>

42 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462478998747983876>

43 Heberlizeth González. [@heberlizeth]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/Heberlizeth/status/1462478379601571841>

44 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462543409449734153>

45 Luis Gonzalo Pérez. [@luisgonzalopr]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/luisgonzalopr/status/1462524001700429826>

vember 23rd, the delegation issued a preliminary statement highlighting the follow:<sup>46</sup>

- The electoral process showed the persistence of structural deficiencies, although electoral conditions improved compared to the three previous national elections.
- Among the deficiencies are widely criticized judicial decisions that have affected the elections' fairness by replacing some parties' executive committees and handing over their electoral cards to internal factions that used them to run in the polls.
- There was the arbitrary political disqualification of opposition candidates, the widespread use of state resources in the campaign, and unequal access to the media.
- The restricted access to fuel, the extensive use of State resources, and the delivery of goods such as food packages and gas or water canisters affected the level playing field in the electoral campaign.
- The PSUV showed a dominant and disproportionately favorable coverage on state television and significant coverage on monitored private radio and television stations.
- The constant presence of the PSUV vice-president in the state media, in which he directed fiery attacks against political opponents and even against the highest authorities of the CNE.
- Election day was marred by significant delays in opening and closing polling stations and voter coercion accusations. EU observers witnessed the installation of PSUV

voter control devices (“*puntos rojos*”) in all 23 states and the capital district, despite the CNE’s explicit prohibition.

On November 24th, after news media *Monitoreamos* published an article in which they reviewed how Diosdado Cabello lashed out against the head of the European Union Electoral Observation Mission, Isabel Santos.<sup>47</sup> Cabello called them “defamers” in his program *Con El Mazo Dando*, broadcasted by the state channel VTV. “That is the headline they put. Look, here is a thing called *Monitoreamos*. ‘Diosdado Cabello lashed out against Isabel Santos’; how subtle these people from *Monitoreamos*, right? They defame everyone who comes to them, attacking the government, but then they say I’m lashing out. No, I’m telling the truth. And with the truth, I neither offend nor fear.”<sup>48</sup>

## RADIO STATIONS AND SHOWS CENSORED IN BARINAS STATE

After the victory of the opposition candidate for governor of Barinas state, Freddy Superlano, a series of arbitrary measures against radio stations in the state resulted in the closure of media and radio shows. On November 25th, because of coercion by the Mayor’s Office of Sabaneta, the programs *Magazine Play* and *Sabaneta Noticias* were removed from the programming schedule of *Play 101.1 FM* radio station<sup>49</sup> after the director of the station and host of both programs, Roger Castellanos, announced that the winner of the elections in the state was Freddy Superlano.

46 Misión de Observación Electoral de la Unión Europea - República Bolivariana de Venezuela. (November 23rd, 2021). *DECLARACIÓN PRELIMINAR: Un retorno a la mesa electoral de la mayoría de las fuerzas políticas con mejoras en las condiciones electorales, aunque con persistentes deficiencias estructurales*. [PRELIMINARY STATEMENT: A return to the electoral field of most political forces with improvements in electoral conditions, although with persistent structural deficiencies.] [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/declaracion\\_preliminar\\_venezuela\\_2021\\_final\\_es.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/declaracion_preliminar_venezuela_2021_final_es.pdf)

47 *Monitoreamos*. (November 24th, 2021). *Diosdado Cabello arremetió contra Isabel Santos y rechazó que la UE regrese en enero*. [Diosdado Cabello lashed out at Isabel Santos and rejected the EU’s return in January.] <https://monitoreamos.com/destacado/diosdado-cabello-arremetio-contra-isabel-santos-y-rechazo-que-la-ue-regrese-en-enero>

48 Espacio Público. (November 26th, 2021). *Diosdado Cabello acusó de difamadores al portal web Monitoreamos*. [Diosdado Cabello accused the web portal *Monitoreamos* of defamation.] <https://espaciopublico.org/diosdado-cabello-acuso-de-difamadores-al-portal-web-monitoreamos/>

49 Espacio Público. (November 29th, 2021). *Por presión de la alcaldía cierran dos programas de radio en Barinas*. [Because of pressure from the Mayor’s Office, two radio programs were closed in Barinas.] <https://espaciopublico.org/por-presion-de-la-alcaldia-cierran-dos-programas-de-radio-en-barinas/>

On November 27th, CONATEL officials arbitrarily shut down *Monumental 94.1 FM* radio station,<sup>50</sup> owned by Nelson García Mora, mayor-elect of the entity, in the November 21st elections. Subsequently, on December 2nd, the NGO Espacio Público reported that three radio programs, *La Barinas Que Queremos*, *Noticiero Impacto* and *Impacto Electoral*, were taken off the air after CONATEL officials threatened to close *Impacto 107.1 FM* in Barinas “if they did not tone down their programming.”<sup>51</sup>

It becomes essential to mention that the TSJ of Nicolás Maduro’s regime disqualified the winning candidate Freddy Superlano and set January 9th, 2022, as the new date for citizens to elect a new governor in the entity.<sup>52</sup>

## ATTACKS ON MEDIA OUTLETS

### VPI TV

The media outlet *VPI TV* reported in a press release on January 8th, 2021, that an operation of CONATEL and SENIAT officials showed up at its headquarters located in La Alta Florida and Los Dos Caminos, in Caracas, to inspect the facilities, interrogate its staff and request operational and administrative information. “They even requested passwords for the transmission processes and also reviewed emails (...),”<sup>53</sup> the press release stated. Since the officials seized valuable and fundamental equipment for the media and its journalistic work, they announced they had to cease operations in Venezuela momentarily.

### DIARIO EL PANORAMA

On January 8th, 2021, the SENIAT closed for five days the headquarters of the newspaper *Panorama* in Maracaibo, Zulia state, under the argument of “non-compliance with formal duties of the tax laws.” In a press release, the newspaper denounced that this action “does not include the exercise of the right and duty to inform, which is a fundamental right protected by the National Constitution (CRBV).”<sup>54</sup>

### EFECTO COCUYO

On February 10th, 2021, Diosdado Cabello, in his TV show *Con El Mazo Dando*, suggested to the Public Prosecutor’s Office to open an investigation against the news media *Efecto Cocuyo*,<sup>55</sup> because of a tweet in which they quoted a report on “the alleged presence of former leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) with military clothing and weapons in Venezuelan territory.”<sup>56</sup>

### EL NACIONAL

In 2015, Diosdado Cabello filed a lawsuit against the media outlets *El Nacional*, *Diario Tal Cual*, and *La Patilla* after they published an ABC article in which Cabello was accused of being linked to drug trafficking. Subsequently, in 2018, the regime’s TSJ forced *El Nacional* to pay the amount of 1,000 million bolivars as compensation, issuing a final judgment and declaring the claim for “moral damage” issued by the vice-president of the PSUV to be admissible.

50 Linares, W. (November 28th, 2021). *Conatel cierra de Monumental 94.1 FM en Santa Bárbara de Barinas*. [Conatel closes Monumental 94.1 FM in Santa Barbara de Barinas.] <https://efectococuyo.com/politica/conatel-cierra-de-monumental-94-1-fm-en-santa-barbara-de-barinas/>

51 Espacio Público. (December 2nd, 2021). *Tres programas fuera del aire en Barinas por presión de Conatel*. [Three programs off the air in Barinas due to pressure from Conatel.] <https://espaciopublico.org/tres-programas-fuera-del-aire-en-barinas-por-presion-de-conatel/>

52 BBC News Mundo. (November 30th, 2021). *Barinas: el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia de Venezuela ordena la repetición de las elecciones en el estado natal de Hugo Chávez*. [Barinas: Venezuelan Supreme Court of Justice orders the repetition of elections in Hugo Chavez’ home state.] <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-59472044>

53 VPI TV. [@vpitv]. (January 8th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/VPIV/status/1347667989026529281>

54 Espacio Público. (January 8th, 2021). *SENIAT clausuró por cinco días las sede del diario Panorama*. [SENIAT closed the offices of the newspaper *Panorama* for five days.] <https://espaciopublico.org/seniata-clausuro-por-cinco-dias-las-sede-del-diario-panorama/>

55 *Con El Mazo Dando*. (January 9th, 2021). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae2DnQWxi7Y>

56 *Efecto Cocuyo*. (February 11th, 2021). *Diosdado Cabello sugiere al Ministerio Público abrir averiguación contra Efecto Cocuyo*. [Diosdado Cabello suggests the Public Prosecutor’s Office to open an investigation against *Efecto Cocuyo*.] <https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/diosdado-cabello-sugiere-al-ministerio-publico-abrir-averiguacion-contra-efecto-cocuyo/>

However, it was not until April 16th, 2021, that the TSJ ordered the judicial indexation of the amount established in 2018, for which *El Nacional* had to pay more than US\$13 million to Diosdado Cabello.<sup>57</sup> Given this situation, Cabello threatened the news media with foreclosure of their assets if they did not pay in cash. “If you do not pay in cash, we have to foreclose the assets to compensate the damages because I do have morals,”<sup>58</sup> he said in his show *Con El Mazo Dando*. On May 14th, the headquarters of *El Nacional* was seized.

### MIAMI HERALD, REVISTA SEMANA, NEW YORK TIMES AND NTN24

In March 2021, Nicolás Maduro called the international media *Miami Herald*, *Revista Semana*, and *New York Times* “garbage” and “sewer,” due to their publications on health issues in Venezuela. In his statements, he assured that “whoever messes with Venezuela would have to deal with the consequences.”<sup>59</sup>

Subsequently, in November, Maduro called the news media *NTN24* a “sewer” after they published an article on the position adopted by the United States regarding the regional and municipal elections of November 21st. Maduro expressed that “NTN24 is the sewer of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, and normally launches attacks, lies and #fakenews against progressive governments.”<sup>60</sup>

### DIARIO EL TIEMPO, AGENCIA COJEDEÑA DE INVESTIGACIÓN, COJEDES NOTICIAS AND REPORTEYA

Mario Silva, host of the show *La Hojilla*, broadcasted on the state channel VTV, subjected media outlets *Diario El Tiempo*, *Agencia Cojedeña de Investigación*, *Cojedes es Noticias* and *ReporteYA* to public scorn, mentioning them as to how “journalism cannot be done”. Likewise, he called the media *Diario El Tiempo* “shameless” and “bums.”<sup>61</sup>

## ATTACKS ON NGOS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

In April 2021, Official Gazette No. 42,098 was published, which established that the National Office against Organized Crime and Financing of Terrorism<sup>62</sup> would be the governing body in charge of “designing, planning, structuring, formulating and executing the public policies and strategies of the State against organized crime and financing of terrorism (...).”

According to the NGO *Acceso a la Justicia*, NGOs would be obliged to register in the Integrated System of Non-Governmental Organizations, and only those registered “would be recognized as legal by the National Government,”<sup>63</sup> so they could receive international donations, according to the conditions set by Nicolás Maduro’s regime. Likewise, *Acceso a la Justicia* expressed that this new

57 *El Nacional*. (April 16th, 2021). *El régimen ordena a El Nacional pago de aproximadamente 13 millones de dólares por indemnización a Diosdado Cabello por daño moral*. [The regime orders *El Nacional* to pay approximately US\$13 million in compensation to Diosdado Cabello for moral damages.] <https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/el-regimen-ordena-a-el-nacional-pago-de-aproximadamente-13-millones-de-dolares-por-indemnizacion-a-diosdado-cabello-por-dano-moral/>

58 *Infobae*. (April 22nd, 2021). *Diosdado Cabello amenazó con ejecutar los bienes del diario El Nacional si no le paga la millonaria indemnización impuesta por la justicia chavista*. [Diosdado Cabello threatened to foreclose on the assets of the newspaper *El Nacional* if it does not pay the million-dollar indemnity imposed by the Chavista justice system.] <https://www.infobae.com/americas/venezuela/2021/04/22/diosdado-cabello-amenazo-con-ejecutar-los-bienes-del-diario-el-nacional-si-no-le-paga-la-millonaria-indemnizacion-impuesta-por-la-justicia-chavista/>

59 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (March 16th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1371983327402586113>

60 *NTN24*. (November 16th, 2021). *Maduro cargó contra NTN24 por publicar posiciones de Estados Unidos sobre elecciones regionales*. [Maduro charged against *NTN24* for publishing U.S. positions on regional elections.] <https://www.ntn24.com/americas-latina/venezuela/maduro-cargo-contra-ntn24-por-publicar-posiciones-de-estados-unidos-388032>

61 IPYS Venezuela. (August 23rd, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Cuatro medios atacados por Mario Silva por abordaje informativo de primarias del PSUV*. [Alerta IPYSve | Four media outlets attacked by Mario Silva for their informative approach to the PSUV primary elections] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-cuatro-medios-atacados-por-mario-silva-por-abordaje-informativo-de-primarias-del-psuv/>

62 *Gaceta Oficial* N° 42.098. (March 30th, 2021). <https://www.ojd.com.ve/archivos/gacetas/2021-04/42098.pdf>

63 *Acceso a la Justicia*. (May 6th, 2021). *Siete preguntas sobre el proyecto de Ley de Cooperación Internacional*. [Seven questions about the International Cooperation Bill.] <https://accesoalajusticia.org/siete-preguntas-sobre-proyecto-ley-de-cooperacion-internacional/>



maneuver from the regime “seeks to control the sources of financing received by NGOs from abroad, with the possible intention of hindering (...) international assistance and other activities carried out by these associative entities in Venezuela”.

### RAFAEL UZCÁTEGUI

On January 13th, 2021, Diosdado Cabello, vice-president of the PSUV, expressed in his show *Con El Mazo Dando* that an investigation should be opened against the coordinator of the NGO Provea, Rafael Uzcátegui. “I ask Ameliach that this gentleman demonstrates in court that the PSUV has received a penny from these people (...) So that a complaint is opened, and this gentleman demonstrates that we received that money,” he expressed. This threat comes after Uzcátegui highlighted in a tweet that the PSUV benefited from funds from the British government.<sup>64</sup>

### AZUL POSITIVO

On January 12th, 2021, officers of the DG-CIM showed up at the headquarters of the organization *Azul Positivo*, in Zulia state, claiming that they were carrying out “an administrative investigation,” which, after six hours, resulted in the confiscation of work equipment and the arbitrary detention of five of its members, without being allowed to speak to their lawyers or family members.<sup>65</sup> On January 14th, the 4th Control Court of Zulia State ordered the imprisonment of the NGO workers and charged them with “crimes of fraudulent handling of analogous instruments, criminal association, and money laundering.”<sup>66</sup> After almost 30 days of arbitrary detention, they

were released under a precautionary measure of presentation in court every 30 days.

### CNP SUCRE SECTION

On November 29th, the National College of Journalists (CNP) headquarters, Sucre section, was arbitrarily occupied by PNB officers,<sup>67</sup> who also denied access to the journalists once they were in the place. Mónica Salazar, general secretary of the CNP, informed that on November 30th, they denounced this fact before the Public Prosecutor’s Office in the city of Cumaná; however, they were only given a certificate that they had gone to the Public Prosecutor’s Office, denying them a copy of the claim. On Monday, November 29th, at night, the façade was painted with the PNB’s Directorate Against Organized Crime logo.

## IACHR SPECIAL RAPPOREUR CONDEMNS ATTACKS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and its Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression condemned the attacks against journalists, media, and human rights defenders. They called on the State to “foster an environment free of hostilities and respect for fundamental freedoms.” Among the points recorded by the IACHR, the following stand out:<sup>68</sup>

64 Rafael Uzcátegui. [@fanzinero]. (January 9th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/fanzinero/status/1347904223544016896>

65 Acceso a la Justicia. (January 14th, 2021). *Cronología del caso de la ONG Azul Positivo. [Timeline of the Azul Positivo NGO case.]* <https://accesoalajusticia.org/cronologia-del-caso-de-la-ong-azul-positivo/>

66 Espacio Público. [@espaciopublico]. (January 14th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/espaciopublico/status/1349883055108972544>

67 IPYS Venezuela. (December 3rd, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Cuerpos de seguridad del Estado toman sede del CNP en Sucre. [Alerta IPYSve | State security forces take over the CNP headquarters in Sucre.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-cuerpos-de-seguridad-del-estado-toman-sede-del-cnp-en-sucre/>

68 OEA. (February 5th, 2021). *La CIDH y su RELE condenan ataques contra personas defensoras de derechos humanos y periodistas, y advierten sobre cierre de los espacios democráticos en Venezuela. [The IACHR and its SR condemn attacks against human rights defenders and journalists, and warn about the closure of democratic spaces in Venezuela.]* <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2021/025.asp>

- Raids on the headquarters of several media outlets, human rights and humanitarian action organizations, including the raid on the head office of the NGO *Azul Positivo* and the arbitrary detention of five of its members, the searches on the two headquarters of the media outlet *VPI TV* in Caracas, which resulted in the temporary cessation of its operations in the country, and the closure of the news outlet *Diario Panorama*.
- The increase in stigmatizing speeches and allegations against human rights defenders in Venezuela by high-level State authorities. In this regard, on January 13th, during a television program broadcast, a congressman described human rights organizations as “instruments to destabilize the people.”
- An escalation of stigmatization from some pages and official accounts in social media aimed at delegitimizing the work of the media for receiving international cooperation resources.
- The constant statements insinuating that journalists are “enemies of the State” or “internal enemies” because of their foreign funding.
- There was Concern for the announcement made by the Minister of Interior and Justice, Carmen Meléndez, on December 14th, 2020, regarding the shipwreck that occurred in the strait located between Venezuela and the island of Trinidad in the same month, known as the “Shipwreck of Güiria” where 33 people died. The Minister said: “we opened an investigation against the media that spread extremist information, which curiously and strangely preceded the investigation results.”

## THE IAPA OPPOSES SYSTEMATIC VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS

In April 2021, the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) denounced the systematic violence by the regime of Nicolás Maduro towards journalism in Venezuela, considering that abuses and judicial harassment against press workers have intensified. In the report issued by the IAPA, the following aspects stand out:<sup>69</sup>

- Most of the media that spread critical information have migrated to the Internet. However, through telecommunication companies, the government blocks the pages according to what they consider harmful news for the Revolution. These are discretionary, punctual, and temporary blockings.
- On the street, intimidation of journalists is a permanent constant. There are countless cases of threats, equipment theft, kidnappings, and physical aggression by the different repressive organs of the State, “colectivos”, and armed paramilitary groups protected and employed by the government.
- The National Assembly, fraudulently elected on January 5th by the regime, announced that it would draft a law to regulate social networks and establish a penal definition of treason.

69 Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa. (April 28th, 2021). *La SIP denuncia violencia sistemática contra el periodismo en Venezuela. [IAPA denuncia systematic violence against journalism in Venezuela.]* <https://www.sipiapa.org/notas/1214540-la-sip-denuncia-violencia-sistemica-contra-el-periodismo-venezuela>

## CASES IN WHICH JOURNALISTIC WORK IS VIOLATED AND RESTRICTED

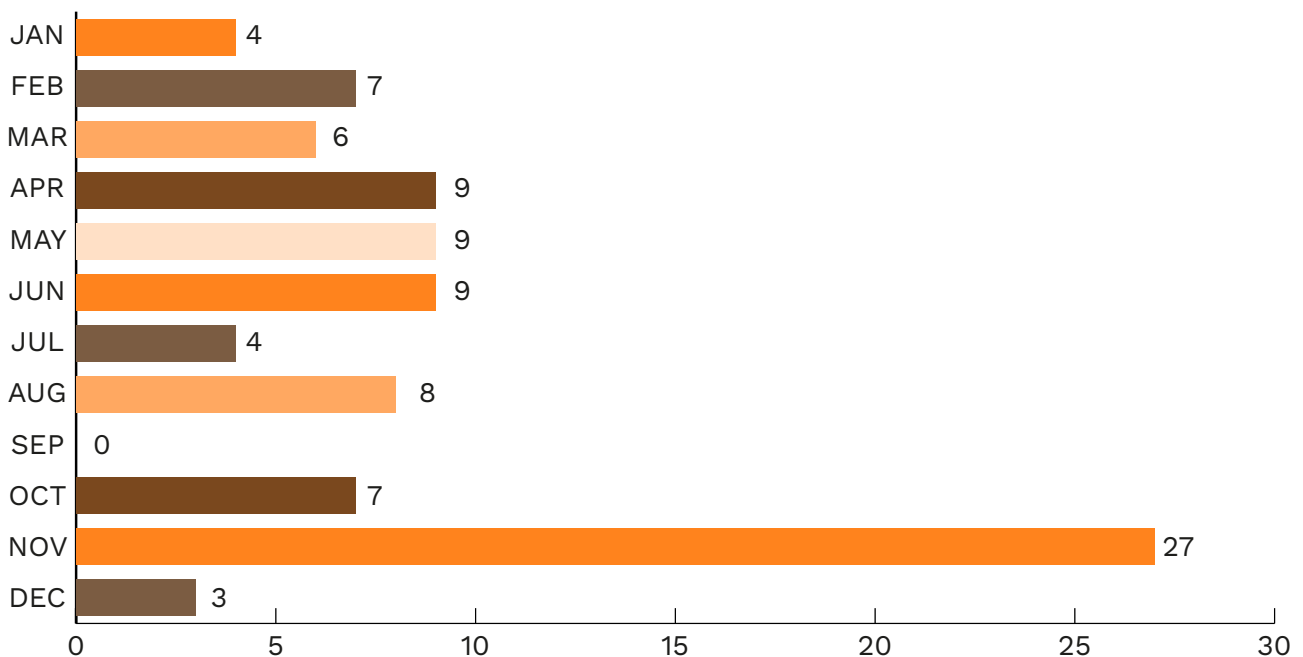
The informative labors of press workers are increasingly facing violent and arbitrary actions that jeopardize rights such as freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and access to information, including restrictions on fundamental rights and liberties such as the right to free transit, access to essential public services and even the right to due process.

A total of 93 cases were documented during the year 2021, in which at least 113 press workers faced violent actions such as arbitrary detentions, threats, harassment, physical and verbal aggression, attacks perpetrated by officials of state security forces, workers

of state companies, civilians belonging to irregular armed groups, also known as “colectivos,” and public officials, who, protected by the Venezuelan regime, aimed at hindering the informative work of press workers, as a way of further reinforcing censorship.

PERPETRATORS 2021	
State security forces	50
Workers of State-owned companies	20
Armed civilians belonging to irregular armed groups (colectivos)	3
Unidentified	12
Public officials	8

## CASES



TOTAL CASES **93** TOTAL JOURNALISTS AFFECTED **113**



## JANUARY

### LIDEL DONAIRE - FAMOSA 90.3 FM (Monday 4th):

Officers of the National Bolivarian Police prevented the transit of journalist Lidel Donaire<sup>70</sup> when he was on his way to work at the radio station *Famosa 90.3 FM*, even though he had accreditation. The incident occurred at a police checkpoint on the Intercomunal San Fernando-Biruaca avenue in Apure state.

### RICARDO TARAZONA - QUÉ PASA EN VENEZUELA (Friday 15th):

Ricardo Tarazona, a journalist for the news media *Qué Pasa En Venezuela*, was intimidated by officers of the PNB when he was covering a peaceful protest of the education workers in Venezuela in San Felipe, Yaracuy state. One of the officers photographed him, while a female officer approached him to threaten him while trying to take statements from the demonstrators.

### DANIEL BLANCO - ABC NEWS (Friday 28th):

The audiovisual producer of ABC News, Daniel Blanco, denounced that a worker of the car dealership Makinas Auto Sales forbade him to record the facade of the dealership, located on Tamanaco Avenue, in Caracas. In addition, the worker asked him to delete all the graphic material of the place recorded up to that moment. Upon the producer's refusal, the man assured him that he was a SEBIN officer and threatened to take him to El Helicoide<sup>71</sup> because the dealership belonged to this State security force and was "untouchable for journal-

ists;" therefore, Blanco decided to delete all the material.<sup>72</sup>

### ALEJANDRO HERNÁNDEZ - LA GRAN ALDEA (Friday 28th):

The deputy to the National Assembly of Nicolás Maduro's regime, José Brito, stated that he opened an investigation process against the journalist and director of the media outlet *La Gran Aldea*, Alejandro Hernández,<sup>73</sup> accusing him of being "the alleged figurehead" of Primero Justicia's coordinator Julio Borges.

## FEBRUARY

### RICARDO TARAZONA - QUÉ PASA EN VENEZUELA (Monday 1st):

Journalist Ricardo Tarazona, of news media *Qué Pasa En Venezuela*, was verbally attacked by members of the community kitchen *Casa de Alimentación* of the Menca de Leoni urbanization, in Yaracuy state. Tarazona was at the place requesting information regarding complaints by the sector's residents, who claimed they were receiving spoiled and expired food. However, the journalist was threatened by one of the people at the place, who told him, "we are calling the police and the Community Council; we know who you are so that you don't come over here anymore."<sup>74</sup>

### JADES DELGADO - CARAOTA DIGITAL (Tuesday 2nd):

The journalist of the *Caraota Digital* media, Jades Delgado, was forced by unidentified alleged security personnel to delete the news

70 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (January 4th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1346077273225617408>

71 Daniel Blanco. [@danielblancopaz]. (January 28th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/DanielBlancoPaz/status/1354835940037042178>

72 IPYS Venezuela. (February 5th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Productor audiovisual de ABC News fue amenazado con ser detenido en El Helicoide. [Alerta IPYSve | ABC News audiovisual producer was threatened with being incarcerated in El Helicoide.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-productor-audiovisual-de-abc-news-fue-amenazado-con-ser-detenido-en-el-helicoide/>

73 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (January 28th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1354834791917563907>

74 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (February 1st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1356379402645467142>

material he had recorded on his cell phone<sup>75</sup> while doing a news report on the COVID-19 pandemic outside the Instituto Autónomo Hospital Universitario de Los Andes (IAHU-LA). They also threatened to confiscate the vehicle in which he was traveling.

**LUIS GONZALO PÉREZ - NTN24 (Tuesday 2nd):**

The National College of Journalists (CNP) denounced that subjects on motorcycles escorting a vehicle on the Francisco Fajardo highway in Caracas pointed firearms at several drivers and bystanders, among them, the journalist of NTN24 media Luis Gonzalo Pérez.<sup>76</sup>

**KEVIN ARTEAGA - EL CARABOBEÑO (Thursday 4th):**

On January 19th, a commission of the CICPC arrived at the headquarters of the *El Carabobeño* media outlet requesting the personal data of journalist Kevin Arteaga at the request of the Public Prosecutor's Office.<sup>77</sup> Subsequently, on January 29th, officers of the FAES and PNB arrived at the headquarters of the media outlet to deliver a summons to the journalist in which they asked him to attend the Public Prosecutor's Office on Thursday, February 4th, to testify "as an investigated person." On Wednesday, February 3rd, Arteaga warned about this procedure: "We do not know the motives, and it could be an intimidation attack for my work in @el\_carabobeno and other media," he said on his Twitter account.<sup>78</sup>

On February 4th, Arteaga went to the Carabobo state Public Prosecutor's Office along with his lawyer, Luis Armando Betancourt, a member of the NGO *Foro Penal*. Betancourt explained that the process was a "judicial assistance requested by the First Court of Carabobo" due to a report published by the journalist in *El Carabobeño*,<sup>79</sup> in which he documented a series of statements and complaints from a community. Arteaga is currently in exile.

**ROBERTO DENIZ - ARMANDOINFO (Tuesday 23rd):**

The deputy for the National Assembly of Nicolás Maduro's regime, José Brito, called the journalist of the investigative media *ArmandoInfo*, Roberto Deniz, a "hitman."<sup>80</sup> According to *IPYS Venezuela*, this is not the first time Brito has attacked the journalist. Previously, on Monday, February 8th, he had expressed that the journalist was "Leopoldo López's puppet."

**BLEIMA MÁRQUEZ - LA NACIÓN WEB (Tuesday 23rd):**

A GNB officer tried to block the transit of Bleima Márquez, a journalist of the news journal *La Nación Web*, on Rotaira Avenue in San Cristóbal, Táchira state.<sup>81</sup> With a hostile and threatening attitude, the guard told her, "you won't go through," while handling his weapon.

75 IPYS Venezuela. (June 6th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Periodistas siguieron siendo atacados y limitados en mayo en medio de coberturas informativas.* [Alerta IPYSve | Journalists continued to be attacked and limited in May while covering news events.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-periodistas-siguieron-siendo-atacados-y-limitados-en-mayo-en-medio-de-coberturas-informativas/>

76 CNP Caracas. [@cnp-caracas]. (February 2nd, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CNPCaracas/status/1356801389255655424>

77 Blanco, D. (February 3rd, 2021). *Citan a periodista de El Carabobeño a Fiscalía en «calidad de investigado».* [El Carabobeño journalist is summoned to the Prosecutor's Office as «person under investigation.»] <https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/citan-a-periodista-de-el-carabobeno-a-fiscalia-en-calidad-de-investigado/>

78 Kevin Arteaga. [@kevinarteaga]. (February 3rd 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/KevinArteaga/status/1357094843131060226>

79 Blanco, D. (February 4th, 2021). *Investigación en contra de redactor de El Carabobeño es por la cobertura de una protesta.* [Investigation against the editor of El Carabobeño is due to the coverage of a protest.] *El Carabobeño*. [https://www.el-carabobeno.com/investigacion-redactor-de-el-carabobeno-protesta/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](https://www.el-carabobeno.com/investigacion-redactor-de-el-carabobeno-protesta/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

80 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (February 23rd, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/136438812226790400>

81 SNTP Venezuela. [@sntpvenezuela]. (February 22nd, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/sntpvenezuela/status/1363986462694326273>

### JESÚS GAZZANEO - ÚLTIMAS NOTICIAS EN VARGAS (Sunday 28th):

Yhojana D'Auria, head of the press office of the Governor's Office of La Guaira state (formerly Vargas state), evicted Jesús Gazzaneo, journalist of *Últimas Noticias*, as he was in the press area covering military and civic parade in honor of José María España. D'Auria forced the journalist to leave, arguing that the site "was for official media only."<sup>82</sup>

## MARCH

### LUIS LÓPEZ - LA VERDAD DE VARGAS (Monday 8th):

The journalist of La Verdad Vargas media outlet, Luis López, was arbitrarily detained by officers of the GNB after López refused to delete the audiovisual material he had recorded about a demonstration for Women's Day<sup>83</sup> that was taking place in front of the headquarters of the state security forces. A struggle ensued between the journalist, the demonstrators, and one of the officers. The latter was responsible for snatching López's telephone and forcibly detaining him. López was handcuffed for more than four hours in the Urban Security Detachment in Maiquetía, La Guaira state (formerly Vargas state), together with ordinary prisoners. Upon his release, the GNB officers returned his phone with water damage and unusable.<sup>84</sup>

### JHONATTAN PETIT - SÚPER STEREO 94.5 FM (Friday 12th):

The bodyguards of the mayor of Miranda municipality, in Falcón state, Pablo Segundo Acosta, harassed and prevented journalist Jhonat-

tan Petit from entering *Súper Stereo 94.5 FM*,<sup>85</sup> even though Petit was on his way to his job at the radio station. The guards accused him of having a false ID card. According to SNTP Venezuela, Pablo Acosta later contacted the journalist to apologize for the situation.

### ROSIBEL GONZÁLEZ (Tuesday 16th):

The independent journalist dedicated to covering crime incidents, Rosibel González, denounced via Twitter account that she received death threats from the Bello Monte Morgue head of security,<sup>86</sup> formally known as the National Headquarters of Medicine and Forensic Science, Richard La Rosa. González denounced that, at first, he threatened to beat her while she was taking statements from the relatives of some of the deceased at the site; last, the officer told her that "next time, you will not tell the story."

### JOSÉ RICARDO HERNÁNDEZ - DIARIO LA CALLE (Wednesday 17th):

A CICPC officer harassed journalist José Ricardo Hernández, of *Diario La Calle* news media, while he was covering a shootout in the sector El Puente del Ahorcado, in Valencia, Carabobo state. The officer approached Hernández to cover the camera with his hand while trying to snatch the phone away from him, asking the journalist what he was doing in the area.<sup>87</sup>

### KEVIN ARTEAGA - EL CARABOBEÑO (Tuesday 30th):

Kevin Arteaga, a journalist of the media *El Carabobeño*, was intimidated by officers of the PNB when he was doing journalistic work

82 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (March 1st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1366384860546408448>

83 Impacto Venezuela. [@impactove]. (February 8th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ImpactoVE/status/1368950575895830529>

84 IPYS Venezuela. (March 11th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Reportero de La Verdad de Vargas fue detenido mientras cubría protesta por el Día de la Mujer. [Alerta IPYSve | Reporter from La Verdad de Vargas was detained while covering a Women's Day protest.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-reportero-de-la-verdad-de-vargas-fue-detenido-mientras-cubria-protesta-por-el-dia-de-la-mujer/>

85 SNTP Venezuela. [@sntpvenezuela]. (March 12th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/sntpvenezuela/status/1370469525578264576>

86 Rosibel González. [@rosibelcgv]. (March 16th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/RosibelCGV/status/1371834179982405636>

87 Espacio Público. (March 18th, 2021). *Funcionario del Cicpc intimidó a periodista del diario La Calle. [Officer of the Cicpc intimidated journalist of the newspaper La Calle.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-del-cicpc-intimido-a-periodista-del-diario-la-calle/>

at the Santa Ana service station on Universidad avenue in Naguanagua, Carabobo state. The officers aggressively asked him to get out of the vehicle and photographed his identity card. They also demanded that the journalist had to delete the material he had recorded; however, Arteaga refused. “I showed them that I took several statements and that none of the shots showed police officers, and, although they did not ask me for my phone number anymore, they insisted on asking me what I was doing at the gas station and what I was going to report,” he expressed to IPYS Venezuela.<sup>88</sup>

### LUIS GONZALO PÉREZ AND RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ - NTN24 (Wednesday 31st):

The journalists of NTN24 media, Luis Gonzalo Pérez and Rafael Hernández were arbitrarily detained by officers of the GNB in La Victoria, Apure state.<sup>89</sup> The reporters were with two activists of the NGO *FundaRedes* to document the armed conflict between the Venezuelan army and dissidents of the FARC, which has forced more than 5,700 Venezuelans to move to Arauquita, Colombia, since the beginning of these clashes on March 21st, 2021.

The media outlet NTN24 denounced on the night of March 31st that the GNB detained both journalists and warned that at around 4:00 p.m., they lost communication with them.<sup>90</sup> On Thursday, April 1st, several organizations and media denounced the disappearance of Luis Gonzalo Pérez and Rafael Hernández, along with activists Diógenes Tirado and Juan Carlos Salazar. That same day, after more than 20 hours in detention, the media outlet announced on Twitter that the

four were released. On Saturday, April 3rd, the journalists recounted what happened in a video broadcast by NTN24,<sup>91</sup> in which they assured that they were detained when they went to the GNB command to obtain authorization to gather information in the area. Furthermore, they stated that the officers did not give back their work equipment, including cameras and cell phones.

On the other hand, after what happened with the journalists, Diosdado Cabello threatened in his television show *Con El Mazo Dando*, the journalists who documented the conflict in Apure state, assuring that “whoever goes in there to play the enemy’s game must be considered an enemy. It is not true that they are going to cover the news; no, they are going to sow hatred (...) and discord against the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, against the Bolivarian Government, and make the world believe that the Colombian Government is the one that is helping Venezuelans.”<sup>92</sup>

## APRIL

### JOSÉ RAFAEL RAMÍREZ (Monday 5th):

Journalist José Rafael Ramírez and his daughter were arbitrarily detained for at least one hour at the Hospital Brigade of the Aragua State Police at the Central Hospital of Maracay<sup>93</sup> after Ramírez took photographs of the facade of the health center for his daughter’s university work on the COVID-19 pandemic. An officer informed them that they were under arrest because it was forbidden to take photographs of the hospital and that this was an order of the state’s governor.

88 Blanco, D. (April 31st, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Equipo de prensa de El Carabobeño fue intimidado por funcionarios de la PNB.* [Alerta IPYSve | El Carabobeño press team was intimidated by officers of the PNB.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-equipo-de-prensa-de-el-carabobe-no-fue-intimidado-por-funcionarios-de-la-pnb/>

89 IPYS Venezuela. (April 1st, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Liberados los dos periodistas y los dos activistas que fueron detenidos y desaparecidos por la GNB en Apure.* [Alerta IPYSve | Release of the two journalists and two activists who were detained and disappeared by the GNB in Apure.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-liberados-los-dos-periodistas-y-los-dos-activistas-que-fueron-detenidos-y-desaparecidos-por-la-gnb-en-apure/>

90 NTN24. [@ntn24ve]. (March 31st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NTN24ve/status/1377454219029057538>

91 NTN24. [@ntn24ve]. (April 3rd, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NTN24/status/1378502366979354624>

92 Espacio Público. (April 8th, 2021). *Diosdado Cabello amenazó a periodistas que cubran conflicto en Apure.* [Diosdado Cabello threatened journalists covering the conflict in Apure.] <https://espaciopublico.org/diosdado-cabello-amenazo-a-periodistas-que-cubran-conflicto-en-apure/>

93 IPYS Venezuela [@ipysvenezuela]. (April 5th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1379122194001891328>

**MARIANGELA GARCÍA - DIARIO NOTIFALCÓN (Tuesday 6th):**

Officers of the GNB prevented journalist Mariangela García, of the news media *NotiFalcón*, from recording and taking photographs of a hit-and-run<sup>94</sup> that occurred at the Texaco service station, Carirubana municipality, in the city of Punto Fijo, Falcón state. In addition, they took her credentials and tried to take photographs of her.

**CARLOS ANDRÉS MONSALVE - PUNTO DE CORTE (Sunday 11th):**

Journalist Carlos Andrés Monsalve, of the media *Punto de Corte*, denounced that bodyguards of the mayor of the municipality of Piar, in Bolívar state, detained him and took him to a warehouse where they inspected him.<sup>95</sup> The incident occurred when Monsalve was about to bring breakfast to his sister at Dr. Gervasio Vera Custodio Hospital because she was in a severe condition due to COVID-19.

Once they let him out of the warehouse, they returned his journalist card and identity card, and he entered the health center where his sister was. However, as he was leaving, the bodyguards and one of the hospital doctors told him that his presence was “disturbing the place.” Subsequently, he received two calls from alleged medical center workers to inform him that an arrest warrant had been issued against him and that he should take precautions.

**DAYRÍ BLANCO, KEVIN ARTEAGA AND CÉSAR HEREDIA - CARAOTA DIGITAL AND EL CARABOBEÑO (Monday 12th):**

Two unidentified men harassed journalists Kevin Arteaga of *El Carabobeño*; Dayrí Blanco of *Caraota Digital*, and César Heredia, while they were doing journalistic coverage<sup>96</sup> in the vicinity of a company that refills oxygen cylinders located in Valencia, Carabobo state, where the relatives of COVID-19 patients were standing for hours in line to be able to replenish oxygen. The journalists denounced that the men took photographs of the vehicle in which they were traveling, and also, before leaving the place, one of the unknown men made a call and said, “warning, three in a group.”

**MAGNO BARROS (Friday 16th):**

A man who identified himself as a member of the ELN threatened broadcaster Magno Barros in a telephone call he made during Barros’ radio program *Waka Noticias*, broadcast on *Marawaka 103.1 FM*, in Puerto Ayacucho, Amazonas state. In the conversation, the subject threatened to harm his family, saying: “If you want to do things your way, I’m going to send my staff to your house to bring you to our camp, and [then] we will talk personally (...) We are talking about your family, and if you are not interested in your family, then block the fucking communication, and we will leave it at that, and let the blood incidents speak, understand?”<sup>97</sup>

94 SNTV Venezuela. [@sntpvenezuela]. (April 7th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/sntpvenezuela/status/1379971591149383681>

95 Carlos Andrés Monsalve. [@candresmonsalve]. (April 11th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CandresMonsalve/status/1381397126719156225>

96 IPYS Venezuela. (April 13th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Periodistas de Carabobo fueron intimidados por hombres desconocidos. [Alerta IPYSve | Journalists of Carabobo were intimidated by unidentified men.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-periodistas-de-carabobo-fueron-intimidados-por-hombres-desconocidos/>

97 Azavache, C. (May 1st, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Locutor de Amazonas recibió amenazas de presuntos miembros del ELN. [Alerta IPYSve | Amazonas broadcaster received threats from alleged ELN members.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-locutor-de-amazonas-recibio-amenazas-de-presuntos-miembros-del-eln/>



**LEOPOLDO CASTILLO, EDUARDO SAPENE AND LARISSA PATIÑO (Saturday 24th):**

The central television station of Nicolás Maduro's regime, *Venezolana de Televisión* (VTV), informed that the Public Prosecutor's Office issued an arrest warrant, blocking of accounts, and preventive seizure of properties against journalists<sup>98</sup> Leopoldo Castillo, Eduardo Sapene, and Larissa Patiño, as well as politicians Roberto Marrero and Carlos Méndez, who were also accused of "usurpation of functions."<sup>99</sup> The incident occurred after Juan Guaidó, recognized by more than 50 countries as Venezuela's interim president, appointed the journalists to head a commission that sought to restructure the multi-state channel *Telesur Libre*.

**LENIN DANIERI AND EDWIN PRIETO - TELEVEN, TODOS AHORA AND IMPACTO MUNDO (Monday 27th):**

Journalists Lenin Danieri of *Telegen*, and Edwin Prieto, of *Todos Ahora* and *Impacto Mundo* media outlets were arbitrarily detained, stripped naked, and dispossessed of their work equipment by officers of the GNB when they were documenting how the officers were blocking the way of a group of Yukpas from the Sierra de Perijá. The Yukpa demonstrators were on their way to the residence of the governor of Zulia state, Omar Prieto, in Maracaibo,<sup>100</sup> as a form of protest against "unfulfilled promises."

Journalist Edwin Prieto told *IPYS Venezuela* that the officers made them get out of the car in which they were traveling and took them

to an area where they searched all their belongings and then made them undress. "(...) there was a military officer to whom I told that what they were doing was unconstitutional because we are journalists and I knew that what they were doing was for retaliation (...)."<sup>101</sup> The officers erased all the journalistic material they had in their equipment and were detained for at least 40 minutes at the GNB detachment 114 on the road between Machiques and Rosario de Perijá.

**VÍCTOR AMAYA AND CÉSAR BATIZ - TAL CUAL AND EL PITAZO (Thursday 29th):**

On Thursday, April 29th, the Public Prosecutor's Office, through the Attorney General appointed by the regime, Tarek William Saab, issued a criminal investigation against journalists Víctor Amaya, of news media *Tal Cual*, and César Batiz, director of news media *El Pitazo*, "for public denunciations of women victims of PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE and SEXUAL HARASSMENT,"<sup>102</sup> an arbitrary decision executed without testimonies or evidence against the journalists.

The Attorney General issued this order after an account on Twitter (@Reportera15) published a series of tweets accusing Víctor Amaya and César Batiz of "being abusers." However, according to *IPYS Venezuela*, "none of the publications tell any story of harassment."<sup>103</sup> The tweets also mentioned several journalists who are part of *El Pitazo's* staff and accused them of being "accomplices" for not denouncing the "events or crimes." However, the team of workers of the news media issued a statement rejecting the anonymous accusation "without specific details of the

98 VTV. (April 27th, 2021). *Policía Anticorrupción de Venezuela investiga a funcionarios de la Banda Guaidó designados para «tomar control» de Telesur.* [Venezuelan Anti-Corruption Police investigates officers of the Guaidó Gang appointed to «take control» of Telesur.] <https://www.vtv.gob.ve/policia-anticorrupcion-venezuela-investiga-funcionarios-banda-guaido-designados-telesur/>

99 IPYS Venezuela. (May 5th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | MP dictó orden de captura contra miembros de la comisión opositora de reestructuración de Telesur.* [Alerta IPYSve | MP issued arrest warrant against members of the opposition commission for the restructuring of Telesur.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-mp-dicto-orden-de-captura-contra-miembros-de-la-comision-opositora-de-reestructuracion-de-telesur/>

100 Carlos Andrés Monsalve. [@candresmonsalve]. (April 11th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/LDanieri/status/1387411423479975940>

101 Pernia, J. (April 29th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Amedrentan, desnudan y borran material periodístico a dos periodistas en el Zulia.* [Alerta IPYSve | Two journalists in Zulia are threatened, stripped naked and have their journalistic material deleted.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-amedrentan-desnudan-y-borran-material-periodistico-a-dos-periodistas-en-el-zulia/>

102 Tarek William Saab. [@tarekwiliamsaab]. (April 29th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/TarekWilliamSaab/status/138794592192994099>

103 IPYS Venezuela. (May 4th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Ministerio Público inició investigación contra Director de El Pitazo sin testimonios ni pruebas.* [Alerta IPYSve | Public Prosecutor's Office initiated investigation against the Director of El Pitazo without testimonies or evidence.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-ministerio-publico-inicio-investigacion-contra-director-de-el-pitazo-sin-testimonios-ni-pruebas/>

complaint (...) against our colleague, journalist César Batiz, director of *El Pitazo*.”<sup>104</sup>

In turn, Batiz demanded that the authorities should investigate the facts reported against him following the rule of law: “(...) Prosecutor 64 of the Metropolitan Area has this case, but we do not know what the file contains because we do not know who is filing the accusation, nor what type of accusation is being made or what specific charges are being made against me,” said the journalist in a press conference.<sup>105</sup>

#### ARGELYS TORRES - TELEVISORA ANDINA DE MÉRIDA (Saturday 30th):

The National Union of Press Workers (SNTP) denounced that persons identified as followers of Nicolás Maduro’s regime recorded the journalist of *Televisora Andina de Mérida*, Argelys Torres,<sup>106</sup> when she was documenting a protest by users of the Trolleybus at the Tromerca Terminal, in the Campo Elías Municipality, in Mérida state.

## MAY

#### DAVID RODRÍGUEZ - CARAOTA DIGITAL (Monday 3rd):

A group of individuals identified as civilians belonging to irregular armed groups known as “colectivos” tried to rob and intimidate journalist David Rodríguez<sup>107</sup> of the *Caraota Digital* media when he was trying to report on a protest over fuel shortages in Caricuao, Caracas. A group of men on four motorcy-

cles approached Rodríguez and attempted to steal his work equipment and the vehicle he was traveling in. They also took photographs of the journalist, his identity card, and his motorcycle license plate, and partially destroyed some of his work equipment.

#### RO HERNÁNDEZ (Friday 7th):

Independent journalist Ro Hernández denounced on her Twitter account that, after covering a chavista demonstration at the Colombian Consulate in Venezuela,<sup>108</sup> a group of people approached her to ask her where the material collected by the journalist would go out and stole her identity documents, credentials, cash and papers for her motorcycle without her noticing.<sup>109</sup>

#### GABRIELA SUNIAGA - EL CARABOBEÑO (Tuesday 11th):

The Secretary of Government of Carabobo state, Jesús París, abruptly interrupted journalist Gabriela Suniaga of the news media *El Carabobeño* while she was interviewing Professor Luis Guillermo Padrón,<sup>110</sup> president of the Transitory Union Board of the Venezuelan Federation of Teachers in Carabobo. The latter was demonstrating with a group of teachers in front of the Capitol in Valencia.

#### EDWIN PRIETO AND MADELYN PALMAR - TODOS AHORA AND UNIÓN RADIO (Monday 24th):

A GNB officer harassed journalists Edwin Prieto of the news media *Todos Ahora* and Madelyn Palmar of *Unión Radio* while covering a student

104 El Pitazo. (April 30th, 2021). *Comunicado: Los trabajadores de El Pitazo rechazamos los señalamientos contra César Batiz*. [Press release: The workers of El Pitazo reject the accusations against César Batiz.] <https://elpitazo.net/gran-caracas/comunicado-los-trabajadores-de-el-pitazo-rechazamos-las-acusaciones-contra-cesar-batiz/>

105 Carpio, G. (May 3rd, 2021). *César Batiz pide que se haga una investigación apegada al Estado de derecho*. [César Batiz calls for an investigation in accordance with the rule of law.] <https://elpitazo.net/politica/cesar-batiz-exige-este-3may-una-investigacion-que-cumpla-con-las-normas-correspondientes/>

106 SNTP Venezuela. [@sntpvenezuela]. (May 5th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/sntpvenezuela/status/1390095296911364100>

107 IPYS Venezuela. (May 5th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Equipo de prensa de Caraota Digital fue amedrentado por colectivos en Caracas*. [Alerta IPYSve | Caraota Digital press team was intimidated by colectivos in Caracas.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-equipo-de-prensa-de-carao-ta-digital-fue-amedrentado-por-colectivos-en-caracas/>

108 Ro Hernández. [@rohernandezm\_]. (May 7th, 2021). Twitter. [https://twitter.com/rohernandezm\\_/status/1390688271722766337](https://twitter.com/rohernandezm_/status/1390688271722766337)

109 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (May 7th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1390751228817256452>

110 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (May 11th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1392151714304872453>

protest demanding vaccinations for the entire population of Zulia state due to the increase in COVID-19 cases. The officer prevented both journalists from documenting the protest and threatened to take away their equipment if they continued reporting. “Do you want me to withhold your equipment? I am telling you to stop recording because you are creating a disturbance,” said the officer.<sup>111</sup>

### JOSÉ MARVAL (Thursday, 27th):

Columnist José Marval and news media *100% Noticias* were sued for aggravated defamation in continuous action and libel, as well as incitement of hatred, for a column published in this media entitled “*De Buena Fuente* [From a good source],” in which Marval denounced the planning of a party while the national quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic was taking place. According to his lawyer, Gilberto Chacín, the person who made the allegation was the former president of Fundadeporte, Richard Navarro, pointed as one of the partners of a nightclub in which the party took place during Easter Week in Carabobo state.<sup>112</sup>

### MARTÍ HURTADO (Thursday 27th):

Unidentified PNB officers took journalist Martí Hurtado and his wife Nely Pulgar from their home and arbitrarily detained them in Punto Fijo, Falcón state.<sup>113</sup> After 12 hours without knowing the whereabouts of Hurtado and Pulgar, their relatives found out that they were being held at the headquarters of the Anti-Theft and Vehicle Theft Division of the PNB.

The couple’s defense attorney informed on Friday, May 28th, that there was no warrant to

execute a search or arrest. He also declared that the PNB carried out this procedure because they allegedly received information about the presumed theft of medicines in the journalist’s apartment.

However, the lawyer pointed out that they had consigned documents attesting that the medicines they had were part of a health program, since Nely Pulgar was a worker for the Caritas Venezuela organization and the Social Security. Therefore, journalist Martí Hurtado and his wife were released on Saturday, May 29th, once they appeared before the Third Control Court of Punto Fijo.

### EUSEGLIMAR GONZÁLEZ AND ARTEMIO SEQUERA - LA PRENSA LARA (Sunday 30th):

CICPC officers harassed journalist Euseglimar González and photojournalist Artemio Sequera, of the news media *La Prensa Lara*, while they were documenting the testimonies of the relatives of a homicide victim on Circunvalación avenue, between the sectors La Tomatera and Piedra Negra, Barquisimeto, Lara state. When Sequera was about to take photographs, the officers approached him and forbade him to keep documenting. Journalist González told *Espacio Público* that although they managed to do the work, they were “always under their gaze (...) they did not want the journalistic work to take place.”<sup>114</sup>

### DANIEL SOSA - EL INFORMADOR (Monday 31st):

A man in civilian clothes who claimed to be a FAES officer threatened to arrest and take away the work equipment of photo-

111 Espacio Público. (May 30th, 2021). *Funcionario de la GNB intimidó a reporteros en el estado Zulia.* [GNB officer intimidated reporters in Zulia state.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-de-la-gnb-intimido-a-reporteros-en-el-estado-zulia/>

112 Blanco, D. (May 28th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Columnista y medio de comunicación de Carabobo demandados por difamación e injuria.* [Alerta IPYSve | Columnist and Carabobo media sued for defamation and slander.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-columnista-y-medio-de-comunicacion-de-carabobo-demandados-por-difamacion-e-injuria/>

113 IPYS Venezuela. (June 2nd, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Tribunal libera a periodista y su esposa luego de sufrir detención arbitraria y desaparición forzada en Falcón.* [Alerta IPYSve | Court frees journalist and his wife after suffering arbitrary detention and forced disappearance in Falcón.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-tribunal-libera-a-periodista-y-su-esposa-luego-de-sufrir-detencion-arbitraria-y-desaparicion-forzada-en-falcon/>

114 Espacio Público. (May 30th, 2021). *Funcionarios del Cicpc intentaron impedir la cobertura a La Prensa de Lara.* [Officers of the Cicpc attempted to prevent coverage of La Prensa de Lara.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionarios-del-cicpc-intentaron-impedir-cobertura-a-la-prensa-de-lara/>



journalist Daniel Sosa of media outlet *El Informador* while he was trying to cover a protest that ensued due to a lack of fuel at the San Luis gas station, Barquisimeto, Lara state. Furthermore, the officer forced the reporter to delete all the material he had recorded and threatened him with arrest if he did not do so. “He told me that he was from the FAES; at no time did the man show me his identification (...) and told me that he was going to put me in jail if I did not erase the material (...)” expressed Sosa to *Espacio Público*, who had to erase all the photos and videos.<sup>115</sup>

#### ORLANDO MONTLOUIS - EL LIBERAL POST AND EL TEQUEÑO (Monday 31st):

Officers of PoliCarrizal approached journalist Orlando Montlouis of the media *El Liberal Post* and *El Tequeño* when he was taking statements from the councilman of Carrizal municipality, Yender Alcalá.<sup>116</sup> The latter announced that the vaccines had run out at the ambulatory María Isabel Rodríguez in Carrizal, Miranda state. Montlouis got evicted from the place under the argument that recording in the health center was forbidden.

## JUNE

#### RAFAEL PARRA (Tuesday 1st):

Officers of the GNB approached independent photojournalist, Rafael Parra, to prohibit him from documenting a day of registration in the Electoral Registry at the CNE headquarters in Barquisimeto, Lara state. Parra reported to

*Espacio Público* that when he was recording a video, the officers approached him to tell him “that he could not record and that he was not allowed to do anything of this kind of thing, that he had to stay calm (...)”<sup>117</sup>

#### KARLA ÁVILA, JESSICA LEÓN AND RUTH MEYEROWITZ - GUAYANA 360, TODOS AHORA AND NUEVA PRENSA GUAYANA (Wednesday 2nd):

A police officer harassed journalists Karla Avila of *Guayana 360*, Jessica Leon of *Todos Ahora*, and Ruth Meyerowitz of *Nueva Prensa Guayana* when they were covering a peaceful protest in Bolivar state, where workers of essential companies attached to *Corporación Venezolana de Guayana* were demanding the reinstatement of four thousand workers unjustly terminated. Ávila indicated that the police officer took photographs of them, “and we could see that he was writing to someone sending him this information,” she told *Espacio Público*.<sup>118</sup>

#### ÁLVARO ALGARRA AND OLIVER FERNÁNDEZ - VOZ DE AMÉRICA AND NTN24 (Friday 4th):

On alleged orders from the GNB, two people in civilian clothing harassed journalists Álvaro Algarrá of *Voz de América* and Oliver Fernández of *NTN24*,<sup>119</sup> while documenting a vaccination campaign at the Bolivarian University in Caracas (UBV). These people approached the journalists to tell them they could not record and cover the lenses of their cameras; the people on the university campus intervened to prevent them from being removed from the place.

115 *Espacio Público*. (May 31st, 2021). *Presunto funcionario de las FAES amenaza e intimida a reportero gráfico*. [Alleged FAES officer threatens and intimidates photojournalist.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-de-las-faes-amenaza-a-reportero-grafico-de-el-informador-venezuela/>

116 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (May 31st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1399410789048635393>

117 *Espacio Público*. (June 2nd, 2021). *GNB prohíbe a reportero gráfico cubrir jornada del RE en el estado Lara*. [GNB prohibits photojournalist from covering RE campaign in Lara state.] <https://espaciopublico.org/gnb-prohibe-a-reportero-grafico-cubrir-jornada-del-re-en-el-estado-lara/>

118 *Espacio Público*. (June 3rd, 2021). *Policía intimida a periodistas en protesta sindical en Guayana*. [Police intimidate journalists at a union protest in Guayana.] <https://espaciopublico.org/policia-intimida-a-periodistas-en-protesta-sindical-en-guayana/>

119 *Espacio Público*. (June 4th, 2021). *Civiles intentan prohibir cobertura en jornada de vacunación en Caracas*. [Civilians try to prohibit coverage of vaccination campaign in Caracas.] <https://espaciopublico.org/civiles-intentan-prohibir-cobertura-en-jornada-de-vacunacion-en-caracas/>

**ANDRÉS BRICEÑO AND  
MARCOS VILLEGAS - PALPITAR  
TRUJILLANO (Tuesday 8th):**

A group of security guards of the Dr. Pedro Emilio Carrillo Hospital and members of the Trujillo Police Department harassed journalist Andrés Briceño and photographer Marcos Villegas of the media outlet *Palpitar Trujillano* when they were taking statements from people who were at this health center to be vaccinated, and subsequently informed that the vaccination session got suspended. While documenting the situation, two guards interrupted the recording to order them to stop and leave the place immediately. When the journalists refused, five other guards approached them, and one of them tried to snatch Villegas' phone. They also called the police, who removed them from the place amid pushing and threats.<sup>120</sup>

**GÉNESIS CARRERO - EL  
PITAZO (Tuesday 8th):**

A GNB officer harassed journalist Génesis Carrero of the news media *El Pitazo* when she was documenting citizen complaints outside the main SAIME headquarters. The officer took photographs of her and threatened her, saying he would use her image to accuse her of coordinating a human trafficking network, then demanded her credential and tried to confiscate her phone.<sup>121</sup>

**MARIANA SOUQUETT - EFECTO  
COCUYO (Wednesday 9th):**

Officers of the GNB forced journalist Mariana Souquett of the news media *Efecto Cocuyo* to erase the photographic material in her work equipment<sup>122</sup> while covering a vac-

nation campaign against COVID-19 that took place at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV). Although the reporter identified herself with her journalist credentials, the officers told her that she had to request “an authorization from the military officer in charge of the campaign” to be able to carry out her journalistic work there.

**ANONYMOUS JOURNALIST - CORREO  
DEL CARONÍ (Thursday 16th):**

A journalist of news media *Correo del Caroní*, who decided to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals, denounced that a group of guards arbitrarily evicted her from the inauguration of the state-owned company Ferrominera Orinoco, located in San Félix, Bolívar state. One of the guards approached her and told her that because she represented the news media *Correo del Caroní*, she could not be in the place due to “orders from above.”<sup>123</sup>

**JOSÉ CAMACHO (Sunday, 20th):**

Officers of the Sucre Police Department seized the telephone of journalist José Camacho and forced him to delete several videos he had of the COVID-19 vaccination center, located in the Millenium shopping mall, in Caracas.<sup>124</sup> The journalist began to record due to the number of complaints from citizens who could not be vaccinated after the police informed that there was only capacity for 20 more people.

**MIGUEL DA SILVA - CARAOTA  
DIGITAL (Monday 28th):**

The director of the Pérez de León Hospital, Zayra Medina, harassed journalist Miguel Da

120 Espacio Público. (June 10th, 2021). *Funcionarios impiden y agreden a periodistas de Palpitar Trujillano en jornada de vacunación. [Officers prevent and assault journalists from Palpitar Trujillo during vaccination day.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionarios-impiden-y-agreden-a-periodistas-de-palpitar-trujillano-en-jornada-de-vacunacion/>

121 IPYS Venezuela. (June 30th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Coberturas informativas continúan siendo impedidas a los trabajadores de la prensa. [IPYSve Alert | News coverage continues to be prevented to press workers.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-coberturas-informativas-continuan-siendo-impedidas-a-los-trabajadores-de-la-prensa/>

122 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (June 9th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1402737350514561025>

123 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (June 17th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/140555220042719241>

124 José Camacho. [@joserckeller]. (June 20th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/joserckeller/status/1406600010708525057>

Silva of *Caraota Digital* when talking to the relatives of one of the victims of a hit-and-run that occurred in Catia, Caracas, by a former officer of the CICPC. Medina interrupted him and, in a hostile manner, expressed that he had “violated the security of a State institution” and was doing journalism “through hate.” The journalist reported that the health center director prohibited the relatives from giving statements because “it interferes with the criminal investigation.”<sup>125</sup>

## JULY

### RICARDO TARAZONA - QUÉ PASA EN VENEZUELA (Monday 5th):

An officer of PoliYaracuy tried to prevent journalist Ricardo Tarazona, of the news media *Qué Pasa En Venezuela*, from documenting a demonstration that was taking place in Yaracuy state to commemorate the Independence Day. The journalist stated that the officer told him to delete the material he had already documented. “I was collecting the testimonies when an officer approached me, asking me to delete the recording. She explained to me that this was not allowed. However, I refused to stop recording and continued to do so. It didn’t go any further,”<sup>126</sup> Tarazona told *Espacio Público*.

### JOAN CAMARGO - TODOS AHORA (Friday 9th):

A GNB officer, identified as Malaguera Hernández, arbitrarily detained journalist Joan Camargo of the digital media *Todos*

*Ahora*<sup>127</sup> while documenting the confrontations between criminal gangs and state security forces that began in Cota 905 and affected areas such as Quinta Crespo, Caracas. Subsequently, GNB officers inspected all his documentation and told him that he had to go to a unit to hand over all his work equipment. Nevertheless, the GNB released the journalist that same day.

### MILDRED MANRIQUE - IMPACTO VENEZUELA (Tuesday 13th):

The journalist of *Impacto Venezuela* news media, Mildred Manrique, denounced that a group of at least ten FAES officers carrying long firearms<sup>128</sup> were outside her building in Caracas, and one of them went to the entrance of her apartment ordering that she open the door; however, Manrique refused and demanded a search warrant. Minutes later, the officers left the place without informing her why they were at the journalist’s residence.<sup>129</sup>

### DANIEL QUINTERO, ROMÁN CAMACHO AND DAVID GLOCK (Thursday 15th):

Reporter Daniel Quintero denounced on his Twitter account that alleged felons, part of the criminal gangs that held a confrontation in the 905 and various areas of western Caracas with officers of the State security forces, went to look for him at his residence. The subjects also asked for journalists Román Camacho and David Glock and threatened that their search was to “chop them up.”<sup>130</sup>

Journalist Román Camacho reported on his Twitter account that he had not received any

125 IPYS Venezuela. (June 30th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Coberturas informativas continúan siendo impedidas a los trabajadores de la prensa.* [IPYSve Alert | News coverage continues to be prevented to press workers.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-coberturas-informativas-continuan-siendo-impedidas-a-los-trabajadores-de-la-prensa/>

126 Espacio Público. (July 5th, 2021). *Funcionaria de PoliYaracuy exigió borrar material al reportero Ricardo Tarazona.* [PoliYaracuy officer demanded the deletion of material from reporter Ricardo Tarazona.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionaria-de-poliyaracuy-exigio-borrar-material-al-reportero-ricardo-tarazona/>

127 Espacio Público. (July 9th, 2021). *GNB detiene a periodista mientras cubría el conflicto del oeste de Caracas.* [GNB arrests journalist while covering the conflict in western Caracas.] <https://espaciopublico.org/gnb-detiene-a-periodista-mientras-cubria-el-conflicto-del-oeste-de-caracas/>

128 Mildred Manrique. [@milmanrique]. (July 13th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/milmanrique/status/1415099901378236417>

129 IPYS Venezuela. (July 19th, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Periodista de Impacto Venezuela intimidada en su vivienda.* [Alerta IPYSve | Journalist of Impacto Venezuela is intimidated in her home.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-periodista-de-impacto-venezuela-intimidada-en-su-vivienda/>

130 Daniel Quintero. [@dqinterotv10]. (July 15th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/dqinterotv10/status/1415819995892826118>

direct threats for his reporting work during the confrontations. However, days before Quintero’s denunciation, a group of journalists were approached by people carrying assault rifles and mentioned that they were looking for him and David Glock to “chop them up.”<sup>131</sup>

## AUGUST

### REGINA FREITES - QUÉ PASA EN VENEZUELA (Wednesday 4th):

Jhony La Rosa, an officer of the Sucre state government, tried to snatch the telephone of journalist Regina Freites of the news media *Qué Pasa en Venezuela* while she was recording a citizen’s complaint to the governor, Edwin Rojas, due to the precariousness of the potable water supply service in the Bermudez municipality. Faced with Freites’ refusal to hand over his work equipment, La Rosa called two of the governor’s security officers. However, demonstrators, bystanders, and a colleague defended the journalist and “intervened so that the officers would not act.”<sup>132</sup>

### JHOALYS SIVERIO AND CARLOS SUNIAGA - CORREO DEL CARONÍ AND EL PITAZO (Sunday 8th):

Renny Franco, an officer of the Bolívar state government, intimidated the journalist of *Correo del Caroní* and *Crónica Uno*, Jhoalys Rivero, and the reporter of *El Pitazo*, Carlos Suniaga,<sup>133</sup> while they were documenting the internal elections of the PSUV party at the polling station Manuel Jara Colmenares

School. The journalists were taking complaints from voters about the slow process since there was only one machine in the polling station when the officer approached them to force them to erase the material they had collected.

### MANUEL CARDOZO - ECOS DEL TORBES (Sunday 8th):

An officer of Plan República harassed *Ecos del Torbes* journalist Manuel Cardozo<sup>134</sup> while he was documenting the electoral process of the PSUV primaries in Táchira state. The officer told Cardozo that he could not record because he had to comply with the order that no one should do so and subsequently tried to erase the material collected by the journalist, who had to leave the place.

### MARIANGEL MORO (Sunday 8th):

A GNB officer prohibited *El Pitazo* journalist Mariangel Moro from documenting the PSUV primary elections<sup>135</sup> primary elections at the polling station Eduardo Chollet Boada in Acarigua, Portuguesa state. Given the situation, Moro decided to withdraw from the place before the officer forced her to delete the material she had collected. “I withdrew to protect my physical integrity or to prevent the situation from escalating, such as an arrest as has happened with other colleagues,” declared Moro.

### DAYRÍ BLANCO - EL CARABOBEÑO (Sunday 8th):

Rafael Lacava, governor of Carabobo state, refused to give statements on the PSUV pri-

131 Román Camacho. [@rcamachovzla]. (July 13th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/RCamachoVzla/status/1415822669841375235>

132 Espacio Público. (August 5th, 2021). *Funcionario intimida a periodista de Qué Pasa en Venezuela*. [Officer intimidates journalist of *Qué Pasa en Venezuela*.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-intimida-a-periodista-de-que-pasa-en-venezuela/>

133 Espacio Público. (August 8th, 2021). *Funcionario de la Gobernación del estado Bolívar intimidó a periodistas*. [An officer of the Bolívar state governor’s office intimidated journalists.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-de-la-gobernacion-del-estado-bolivar-intimido-a-periodistas/>

134 Espacio Público. (August 9th, 2021). *Militar intentó borrar material a periodista en Táchira*. [A military officer tried to erase material from a journalist in Táchira.] <https://espaciopublico.org/militar-intento-borrar-material-a-periodista-en-tachira/>

135 Espacio Público. (August 8th, 2021). *Guardia Nacional intimida a corresponsal de El Pitazo*. [National Guard intimidates *El Pitazo* correspondent.] <https://espaciopublico.org/guardia-nacional-intimida-a-corresponsal-de-el-pitazo/>

maries to journalist Dayr Blanco<sup>136</sup> when he realized that she was covering for news media *El Carabobeo*. “He got out of the truck, and I approached him to ask him for an assessment of the election day. I insisted several times, but when he saw the insignia of *El Carabobeo*, he picked it up to read it well, pushed it, and refused to give statements,” Blanco expressed to *Espacio Pblico*.

#### WALTER OBREGN (Monday 16th):

After publishing an article on the web page of *El Universal* in which he denounced the precarious conditions of the Len Fortoul Saavedra ambulatory in Barinas, the director of this health center, Gustavo Sandoval, threatened journalist Walter Obregn with calling CICPC officers.<sup>137</sup> The NGO *Espacio Pblico* reported that Yanny Gonzlez, head nurse of the ambulatory, was the one who informed the journalist about this threat: “the doctor just called me because of the information published and told me that he was going to call the Scientific, Criminal and Criminalistic Investigations Corps (CICPC) so that they would look for him” after making this information public.

#### JOS ROJAS AND MARA FERNANDA RODRGUEZ - VPI TV AND EL PITAZO (Friday 27th):

GNB officers prevented the transit of *VPI TV* photographer Jos Rojas and *El Pitazo* journalist Mara Fernanda Rodrguez when they were heading to the towns of Tovar and Santa Cruz de Mora, in Valle del Mocotes,<sup>138</sup> to cover the consequences of the heavy rains in this region of the Mrida state. A man in

civilian clothes recorded and photographed the journalists when officers stopped them at a checkpoint, where a protest was taking place, because they were not allowing other people to pass who were carrying humanitarian aid to the affected area. *IPYS Venezuela* later identified the man as part of the team of the governor of Mrida state, Jehyson Guzmn.

#### ELAS LPEZ AND JAIR PINEDA - EL MUNDO ES UN BALN AND LAS NOTICIAS EXPRESS (Monday 30th):

Workers of the Marriott and Renaissance hotels prevented reporters Elas Lpez of the radio program *El Mundo es un Baln*, and Jair Pineda, of *Las Noticias Express*, from carrying out their reporting duties<sup>139</sup> while they were outside the hotels waiting for the arrival of the players of the Venezuelan and Argentinian national football teams, allegedly on orders from the Venezuelan Football Federation (FVF).

## OCTOBER

#### RONALD PEA - EL PITAZO

Photojournalist Rayner Pea denounced that subjects dressed in Bolivarian National Police uniforms stole the motorcycle of his brother, Ronald Pea, photographer of *El Pitazo*.<sup>140</sup> The incident occurred in front of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) on Baralt avenue, Caracas. The subjects shot him three times to make him hand over all his belongings.

136 Espacio Pblico. (August 9th, 2021). *Rafael Lacava se neg a declararle a reportera de El Carabobeo*. [Rafael Lacava refused to give a statement to a reporter of *El Carabobeo*.] <https://espaciopublico.org/rafael-lacava-se-nego-a-declararle-a-reportera-de-el-carabobeno/>

137 Espacio Pblico. (August 17th, 2021). *Amenaza a periodista por denunciar las precarias condiciones de un centro de salud en Barinas*. [Journalist threatened for denouncing the precarious conditions of a health center in Barinas.] <https://espaciopublico.org/amenazan-a-periodista-por-denunciar-las-precarias-condiciones-de-un-centro-de-salud-en-barinas/>

138 IPYS Venezuela. (September 2nd, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Periodistas en Mrida limitados en medio de la tragedia del Valle del Mocotes*. [Alerta IPYSve | Journalists in Mrida limited in the midst of the Valle de Mocotes tragedy.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-periodistas-en-merida-limitados-en-medio-de-la-tragedia-del-valle-del-mocoties/>

139 IPYS Venezuela. (August 31st, 2021). *Alerta IPYSve | Reporteros de la fuente deportiva fueron limitados a las afueras de dos hoteles en Caracas*. [Alerta IPYSve | Sports reporters were restricted outside two hotels in Caracas.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/alerta-ipysve-reporteros-de-la-fuente-deportiva-fueron-limitados-a-las-afueras-de-dos-hoteles-en-caracas/>

140 Rayner Pea. [@raynerpenar]. (October 3rd, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/RaynerPenaR/status/1444824503893254149>



**NAYARI GONZÁLEZ - PORTUGUESA ES NOTICIA (Sunday 10th):**

Officers of the Plan República limited the informative work of Nayari González, journalist for the media *Portuguesa es Noticia* when she was documenting the electoral simulation in two polling stations in Portuguesa state.<sup>141</sup> González went to the electoral center Trina de Moreno School, where an officer prevented her from contacting the center's coordinator to obtain information on the process of installation and participation of the tables. "The officer told me that he could not let me pass, that he was not going to allow it because other media had entered earlier," she told *Espacio Público*. Subsequently, the journalist went to the electoral center General Paez School, where she could enter and record part of the process. However, a Plan República officer told her that she could not continue documenting and asked her to delete the material she had recorded.

**PEDRO LEAL (Sunday 10th):**

Journalist Pedro Leal denounced on his Twitter account that a member of the FANB called him "toxic" after telling him that he should watch over the right to information<sup>142</sup> since he was trying to prevent the journalist from documenting the electoral simulation at the voting center Alejo Fortique High School, Baruta municipality, Miranda state. Furthermore, Leal said that CNE personnel also tried to prevent the documentation of the electoral process.

**ROBERTO DENIZ (Friday 15th):**

Lawyer Zair Mundaray informed his Twitter account that an arrest warrant was issued

against journalist Roberto Deniz, who has been outside Venezuela since 2018, "for reporting on official corruption." In addition, he was charged for the "supposed commission of the crime of Instigation to Hate."<sup>143</sup>

That same day, Friday, October 15th, Deniz reported on his social networks that unidentified officers showed up at his parents' house in Caracas, where his brother, sister-in-law, and two nieces were also present. "I alert and hold the Venezuelan authorities responsible for anything that may happen to them,"<sup>144</sup> said the journalist.

Hours after informing about the raid, Deniz expressed that "all today's actions against my family, as well as this new judicial file, are preceded by a campaign of harassment in networks by people whom the government allows to act from impunity (...)"<sup>145</sup>

**VÍCTOR UGAS (Thursday 21st):**

Journalist Víctor Ugas denounced that officials of the Caracas mayor's office intimidated him and tried to force him out of the Quinta Crespo market in Caracas while doing a journalistic report. Ugas explained to *Espacio Público* that the workers asked him for authorization to record and, subsequently, an officer asked him for his credential stating that he could not record. Afterward, a struggle ensued because the officers wanted to take away his work equipment arbitrarily. "They wanted to take away my phone, we struggled, and they ordered me to delete the material (...). Then the officers began to call a National Guard station that was near there. As I was on a motorcycle, I could slip away,"<sup>146</sup> explained the journalist.

141 Espacio Público. (October 11th, 2021). *Funcionario militar hostiga verbalmente a periodista en cobertura del simulacro electoral. [Military officer verbally harasses journalist during coverage of the electoral simulation.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionario-militar-hostiga-verbalmente-a-periodista-en-cobertura-del-simulacro-electoral/>

142 Pedro Eduardo Leal. [@untalpedroleal]. (October 10th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/UnTalPedroLeal/status/1447201345354838022>

143 Zair Mundaray. [@mundarayzair]. (October 15th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/MundarayZair/status/1449076345233944578>

144 Roberto Deniz. [@robertodeniz]. (October 15th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/robertodeniz/status/1449091410246963204>

145 Roberto Deniz. [@robertodeniz]. (October 15th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/robertodeniz/status/1449146324193062914>

146 Espacio Público. (October 21st, 2021). *Periodista Víctor Ugas es hostigado en el mercado de Quinta Crespo. [Journalist Víctor Ugas is harassed at Quinta Crespo market.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/periodista-victor-ugas-es-hostigado-en-el-mercado-de-quinta-crespo/>

### JOSÉ GREGORIO LÓPEZ - CONTRA LA CORRIENTE (Friday 22nd):

The host of the radio program *Contra la Corriente*, José Gregorio López, was harassed by the governor of Falcón state, Víctor Clark, who referred to López as a “nitwit” for the journalist’s coverage of the opposition’s electoral campaign in this state.<sup>147</sup> López stated that the governor’s actions resulted from an administrative process against his program by CONATEL. “It is not a crime to be in a campaign of any candidate, and his assertion that I should abide by the consequences worries me because we know what these people with power can do when they make these threats,” the journalist expressed for *Espacio Público*.

### DANIEL SOSA - EL INFORMADOR VENEZUELA (Thursday 28th):

The photojournalist for *El Informador Venezuela*, Daniel Sosa, reported that a militant of Acción Democrática political party tried to prevent him from recording an altercation between militants of this party and Un Nuevo Tiempo while they were starting the electoral campaign in Lara state.<sup>148</sup>

## NOVEMBER

### RAYBER ALVARADO - CARAOTA DIGITAL (Wednesday 10th):

*Caraota Digital* journalist, Rayber Alvarado, denounced that two officers of the PNB intimidated him while he was doing a journalistic investigation on the application of the Abdala vaccination candidate<sup>149</sup> at the Gran

Colombia School in Caracas. Alvarado expressed that, despite telling the officers that he was a journalist, they checked his belongings and forced him to empty his pockets. “The worst part of the situation is that they checked my bag, they pushed me against the wall as if I were a criminal, even when I told them that I was working and that I was a journalist. Will the aggression against press workers continue?” said the journalist.<sup>150</sup>

### ANDREÍNA RAMOS - VPI TV (Wednesday 10th):

A security guard at the Agustín Zubillaga Pediatric Hospital in Barquisimeto, Lara state, prevented the journalist of *VPI TV*, Andreína Ramos, from taking photographs at the health center as support material for a journalistic report. Ramos and her team were headed to the hospital when the officer told her that by “orders of the board of directors, no journalist had permission to access the hospital.”<sup>151</sup>

### CARLOS GERMÁN DEBIAIS GARCÍA (Friday 12th):

Officers of the Bolivarian National Guard arrested photojournalist Carlos Debiais after he flew over a drone that allegedly circled the facilities of the Amuay Refinery, located in Los Taques municipality, Falcón state, Venezuela.

According to *Espacio Público*, Debiais was missing from 3:00 p.m. on Friday, November 12th, until 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 13th, the day on which Remigio Ceballos, Minister of Popular Power for Interior Relations, Justice and Peace of the regime of Nicolás Maduro, confirmed the arrest of

147 Espacio Público. (October 25th, 2021). *Gobernador del estado Falcón ataca a periodista en su programa de radio. [Governor of Falcón state attacks journalist on his radio program.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/gobernador-del-estado-falcon-ataca-a-periodista-en-su-programa-de-radio/>

148 Daniel Sosa. [@iamdanisosa]. (October 28th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/iamDaniSosa/status/1453875147807600677>

149 Espacio Público. (November 13th, 2021). *PNB intimida a reportero de Caraota Digital. [PNB intimidates Caraota Digital reporter.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/pnb-intimida-a-reportero-de-caraota-digital/>

150 Rayber Alvarado. [@rayberdl18]. (November 10th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/rayberdl18/status/1458565959875190793>

151 Espacio Público. (November 10th, 2021). *Impiden acceso a la prensa en el Hospital Pediátrico Agustín Zubillaga de Barquisimeto. [Access to the press is denied at the Agustín Zubillaga Pediatric Hospital in Barquisimeto.]* <https://espaciopublico.org/impiden-acceso-a-la-prensa-en-el-hospital-pediatico-agustin-zubillaga-de-barquisimeto/>

the photographer in a press conference. “The GNB achieved his apprehension, and we are in a full investigation,” assured Ceballos.

In these statements, he also reported the “dismantling of a gang that tried to burn material of the National Electoral Council (CNE)” to prevent the November 21st regional elections.

In statements to *Espacio Público*, Gabriela Galicia, Carlos Debiais’ cousin, informed that after the arrest, “4 Dgcim vans arrived, with approximately 20 officers. They entered the house and took computers, flash drives, tools, and my cousin’s cell phone; they took so many things that we did not have time to realize what they were taking.”<sup>152</sup>

On Sunday, November 14th, family members reported that the DGCIM transferred Debiais to Caracas during the night of the preceding day. “My family and I are very scared about what might happen to him,”<sup>153</sup> said a photojournalist’s relative through her Instagram account.

On Monday, November 15th, Carlos Debiais was brought before the Third Control Court with jurisdiction over terrorism under the authority of Judge Luisa Garrido and indicted for “the alleged crimes of terrorism, criminal association, and violation of airspace.”<sup>154</sup> He was imprisoned at the DGCIM headquarters in Caracas and will be under investigation for 45 days.<sup>155</sup>

#### WUILMER BARRERO - NUEVA PRENSA GUAYANA (Thursday 18th):

The SNTP denounced that the photojournalist of the newspaper *Nueva Prensa Guayana*, Wuilmer Barrero, was ambushed and robbed by a group of people that he identified as

chavismo supporters<sup>156</sup> during the closing of the PSUV campaign in Bolivar state.

#### DEISY MARTÍNEZ AND LISETH GONZÁLEZ - EFECTO COCUYO (Saturday 20th):

A Plan República officer labeled *Efecto Cocuyo* journalists, Deysi Martínez, and Liseth González, as “terrorists”<sup>157</sup> when they were taking photographs at the Fermín Toro High School electoral center, in Caracas, during a journalistic coverage of the installation of the polling stations.

#### LIZ GASCÓN, RAMÓN VELIZ, GUSTAVO GIMÉNEZ AND YELITZA FIGUEROA - EL PITAZO, TELEVEN, TVV NOTICIAS AND CRÓNICA UNO (Sunday 21st):

During the regional elections of November 21st, 2021, the coordinator of the Federico Carmona polling station in Barquisimeto, Lara state, prevented correspondents Liz Gascón of *El Pitazo*, Ramón Veliz of *Televen* channel, Gustavo Giménez of *TvVenezuela Noticias*, and Yelitza Figueroa, of *Crónica Uno*, from covering the elections. After showing their credentials, the journalists could take shots from outside the polling station.<sup>158</sup>

#### CARMEN ELISA PECORELLI, CARLA CARRERA, REINALDO CAMPINS, GLEN REQUENA AND JANINE OJEDA - UNIÓN RADIO AND EL PERIODIQUITO (Sunday 21st):

Plan República officers prevented journalists Carmen Elisa Pecorelli, Carla Carrera and Re-

152 Espacio Público. (November 14th, 2021). *Por volar un dron detienen a fotógrafo en el estado Falcón.* [Photographer arrested for flying a drone in Falcón state.] <https://espaciopublico.org/por-volar-un-dron-detienen-a-fotografo-en-el-estado-falcon/>

153 Nathali Debiais. [@debyais]. (November 14th, 2021). Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CWQihm7FOjK/>

154 Tal Cual Digital. (November 17th, 2021). *Acusan de presunto terrorismo y otros dos delitos a fotógrafo detenido en Amuay.* [Photographer arrested in Amuay is charged with alleged terrorism and two other crimes.] <https://talcualdigital.com/acusan-de-presunto-terrorismo-y-otros-dos-delitos-a-fotografo-detenido-en-amuay/>

155 Revilla, I. (November 15th, 2021). *Esposa del fotógrafo detenido por volar un dron: serán tiempos difíciles.* [Wife of photographer arrested for flying a drone: difficult times ahead] *El Pitazo.* <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/esposa-del-fotografo-detenido-por-volar-un-dron-seran-tiempos-dificiles/>

156 SNTP Venezuela. [@sntpvenezuela]. (November 19th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/sntpvenezuela/status/1461885395004755969>

157 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 20th, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462208520993050624>

158 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462422422984998916>



inaldo Campins of *Unión Radio*, Glen Requena of the MUD campaign team, and Janine Ojeda of *El Periodiquito*, from documenting the electoral process at the voting center Fundacomun in Maracay, Aragua state. The restriction occurred even though the journalists had the approval of the center's coordinator to enter and cover the vote of the candidate for the Democratic Unity Table (MUD), Henry Rosales.<sup>159</sup>

**MAURY ARANDA, MARÍA PARIS, ENRIQUE RIVERA AND LEYDY BLANCO (Sunday 21st):**

In Mérida state, at least four journalists denounced that officers of the Plan República prevented them from entering the voting centers,<sup>160</sup> which they attended to cover the electoral process. Maury Aranda, correspondent of *Televisora Andina de Mérida*, was prevented from entering the Fe y Alegría School in the Tovar municipality. Journalist María París was denied access to the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho School in Campo Elías municipality, and journalists Enrique Rivera and Leydy Blanco were prevented from entering the voting center 1º de Mayo School in El Vigía.

**ANDREÍNA RAMOS - VPI TV (Sunday 21st):**

A Plan República officer threatened the journalist of *VPI TV*, Andreína Ramos, with taking away her work equipment<sup>161</sup> when she was at the electoral center Antonio Ramírez School Canteen in Santa Rosa, Lara state.

**LUIS GONZALO PÉREZ, GABRIELA GONZÁLEZ AND JULIO URRIBARRI - NTN24 AND W RADIO COLOMBIA (Sunday 21st):**

Journalists Luis Gonzalo Pérez of the news media *NTN24* and Gabriel González of *W Radio Colombia* denounced that DGCIM officers forced journalists at the electoral center Andrés Bello Municipal School in Chacao, Caracas, to erase the material they had in their work equipment.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, one of the officers threatened journalist Gabriela González with taking “the necessary actions” if she did not erase the material. Meanwhile, cameraman Julio Urribarri had his camera inspected while he was documenting the electoral process.

**JOSÉ LUIS GONZÁLEZ - LA PATILLA (Sunday 21st):**

An unidentified individual took photographs of *La Patilla* journalist José Luis González<sup>163</sup> while he was covering the elections at the Gladys Briceño Méndez School in Cabudare, Lara state.

**MARÍA EUGENIA DÍAZ - INSTITUTO DE PRENSA AND SOCIEDAD VENEZUELA (Sunday 21st):**

The coordinator of the voting center at the Arnaldo Reina School in San Fernando de Apure refused to give information about the electoral process<sup>164</sup> and the number of voters at this institution to journalist Eugenia Díaz of *IPYS Venezuela*.

159 IPYS Venezuela. (November 24th, 2021). *Balance #21Nov | Prensa sin acceso durante los comicios regionales y municipales 2021.* [Balance #21Nov | Press without access during the 2021 regional and municipal elections.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/balance-21nov-prensa-sin-acceso-durante-los-comicios-regionales-y-municipales-2021/>

160 IPYS Venezuela. (November 24th, 2021). *Balance #21Nov | Prensa sin acceso durante los comicios regionales y municipales 2021.* [Balance #21Nov | Press without access during the 2021 regional and municipal elections.] <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/balance-21nov-prensa-sin-acceso-durante-los-comicios-regionales-y-municipales-2021/>

161 Espacio Público. (November 21st, 2021). *21N: Plan República niega el acceso a los medios.* [21N: Plan República denies access to the media.] <https://espaciopublico.org/21n-plan-republica-niega-el-acceso-a-los-medios/>

162 Luis Gonzalo Pérez. [@luisgonzalopr]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/luisgonzalopr/status/1462524001700429826>

163 Espacio Público. (November 21st, 2021). *21N: Plan República niega el acceso a los medios.* [21N: Plan República denies access to the media.] <https://espaciopublico.org/21n-plan-republica-niega-el-acceso-a-los-medios/>

164 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462451391922941954>

**GÉNESIS VELÁSQUEZ - ALIANZA DEMOCRÁTICA** (Sunday 21st):

Plan República officers forbade journalist Génesis Velásquez to take photographs at the polling station Villa Rosa School,<sup>165</sup> in Nueva Esparta state. In addition, they deleted part of the material that Velásquez had documented in her work equipment.

**JESÚS QUINTERO - LA PATILLA** (Sunday 21st):

Officers of Plan República prevented *La Patilla* journalist Jesús Quintero from taking photographs<sup>166</sup> when opposition candidates were casting their ballots at the polling station Rómulo Betancourt High School, Mérida state.

**JOSÉ MUÑOZ - CALIDAD 89.9** (Sunday 21st):

At the polling station Julieta Carballo school in Apure state, the *Calidad 89.9 FM* radio station journalist, José Muñoz, was denied access despite having CNE accreditation.<sup>167</sup>

**FRED SALAZAR** (Sunday 21st):

A person identified as a PSUV sympathizer physically assaulted cameraman Fred Salazar and tried to prevent him<sup>168</sup> from recording a citizens' protest at the Pedro Máximo Campos polling station in Monagas state. The incident happened because citizens were prohibited from entering polling stations after 7:00 p.m.

**JOSANA MORALES - QUÉ PASA EN VENEZUELA** (Sunday 21st):

Plan República officers prevented the journalist of *Qué Pasa En Venezuela*, Josana Morales, from entering the voting center Federación Venezolana de Maestros High School<sup>169</sup> in Guárico state. The officers told her that recording inside the polling station was forbidden.

**DAYRÍ BLANCO - EL CARABOBEÑO AND IPYS VENEZUELA** (Sunday 21st):

IPYS Venezuela reported that journalist DayrÍ Blanco denounced that she was denied from accessing voting centers,<sup>170</sup> which she had attended on a journalistic tour through Carabobo state. She also indicated that she had been prohibited from taking photographs.

**PILAR GUERRA - MANGO NOTICIAS** (Sunday 21st):

An officer of Plan República demanded that the journalist of *Mango Noticias*, Pilar Guerra, delete a video<sup>171</sup> in which she denounced the presence of red checkpoints located around the voting center Creación High School in San Carlos, Cojedes state. Red checkpoints are political control centers where followers of the regime of Nicolás Maduro “carry out various activities, such as distribution of benefits, control of the mobilization strategy of the government party or the implementation of technology to scan the QR code of the Carnet de la Patria.”<sup>172</sup>

165 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462453613373141004>

166 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462464035820122116>

167 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462491462893981707>

168 Espacio Público. (November 21st, 2021). 21N: *Plan República niega el acceso a los medios.* [21N: *Plan República denies access to the media.*] <https://espaciopublico.org/21n-plan-republica-niega-el-acceso-a-los-medios/>

169 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462493528127324161>

170 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462493847259422729>

171 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462494140843925505>

172 Alcalde, C. (November 26th, 2021). “Premio o castigo”: ¿qué son los puntos rojos del chavismo? [“Prize or punishment:” what are chavismo’s red checkpoints?] *Voz de América.* <https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/premio-o-castigo-que-son-los-puntos-rojos-del-chavismo/6328970.html>

**ORLANDO MONTLOUIS - EL LIBERAL POST AND EL TEQUEÑO (Sunday 21st):**

A GNB officer arbitrarily detained Orlando Montlouis, a journalist for *El Liberal Post* and *El Tequeño*, when he was covering the elections at the polling station N.S. Del Carmen School in Los Teques, Miranda state.<sup>173</sup> Del Carmen polling station in Los Teques, Miranda state. The official pointed his gun at the journalist, followed him to his vehicle, and forced him to get out of it and enter a room in the polling station. The officer told him that it was forbidden to take photographs and forced Montlouis to erase the material he had recorded on his phone. After 40 minutes, the journalist was released.

**MÓNICA SALAZAR AND WILLIAM SALAZAR (Sunday 21st):**

The bodyguard of candidate Gilberto Pinto prevented journalist Mónica Salazar from documenting Pinto's casting of his ballot<sup>174</sup> at the polling station Fe y Alegría "Madre Alberta" School in Cumaná, Sucre state.

**ESTRELLA VELANDIA - MONAGAS VISIÓN (Sunday 21st):**

Officials of Plan República prevented the journalist and director of the media outlet *Monagas Visión*, Estrella Velandia, from documenting the voting of the gubernatorial candidate, Johel Orta.<sup>175</sup> The incident occurred at the polling station Teresa Sosa School in Santa Elena de Las Piñas, Monagas state.

**ELVIS RIVAS (Sunday 21st):**

A Plan República officer harassed journalist Elvis Rivas at the polling station Libertador High School in Libertador municipality, Merida state. "He annoyed me until he got bored. He even covered my camera, insisting that I could not record even from outside the voting stations," denounced Rivas.<sup>176</sup>

**ELÍAS RIVAS - NUEVA PRENSA DE GUAYANA (Sunday 21st):**

Officials of the Plan República prevented journalist Elías Rivas, of the *Nueva Prensa de Guayana* news media, from entering the polling station Fe y Alegría La Consolación, in Unare county, Bolívar state.<sup>177</sup>

**ORANYELIS VARGAS, ROMINA UZCÁTEGUI, MARTHA MORENO AND JOSÉ BARRUETA (Sunday 21st):**

A Plan República officer prevented journalists Oranyelis Vargas, Romina Uzcátegui, Martha Moreno and José Barrueta from having access to the polling station Ignacio Carrasquero Bolivarian High School in Trujillo state.<sup>178</sup> Likewise, he prevented them from filming in the vicinity of the voting center, assuring that he had to follow the orders of GNB authorities.

**ANA MUÑOZ - ESTÉREO 92.9 FM (Sunday 21st):**

The press team of the PSUV contender for re-election to the Apure state governorship, Miguel Rodríguez, denied an interview with the candidate to the journalist of *Estéreo 92.9 FM*, Ana Muñoz<sup>179</sup> after he voted in the electoral center Félix Solano School. Subse-

173 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462518631858847744>

174 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462518772263264265>

175 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462549965046108168>

176 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462568209874366466>

177 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462583210819342337>

178 IPYS Venezuela. [@ipysvenezuela]. (November 21st, 2021). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/ipysvenezuela/status/1462586109980991494>

179 IPYS Venezuela. (November 24th, 2021). *Balance #21Nov | Prensa sin acceso durante los comicios regionales y municipales 2021. [Balance #21Nov | Press without access during the 2021 regional and municipal elections.]* <https://ipysvenezuela.org/alerta/balance-21nov-prensa-sin-acceso-durante-los-comicios-regionales-y-municipales-2021>

quently, Rodríguez agreed to the interview with Muñoz.

### JAVIER CUBEROS - MOCOTÍES 104.9 FM (Wednesday 24th):

CNE officials prevented the journalist and broadcaster of the radio station *Mocotíes 104.9 FM*, Javier Cuberos, from reporting on the proclamation of the elected mayor in the municipality of Tovar, Mérida state. Cuberos expressed to *Espacio Público* that, despite identifying himself and showing his journalist credentials, he was not allowed to enter the place because those were the orders. “A person approached me and told me that I could not enter. I identified myself and showed him my journalist credentials, but he insisted that he had orders not to let me in. Then, when the event was over, I was able to pass, and according to testimonies of third parties, I was not allowed to pass because of an accusation of incitement to hatred,” Cuberos told *Espacio Público*.<sup>180</sup>

## DECEMBER

### RAYBER ALVARADO - CARAOTA DIGITAL (Monday 6th):

Rayber Alvarado, a journalist of *Caraota Digital*, reported that a man identified as a presumed “colectivo” member harassed him and told him that he could not film and needed a permit to be there while he was reporting on the Christmas combos at the Guaicaipuro Market in the city of Caracas. Subsequently,

he forcibly removed him from the establishment and threatened him, saying he would harm him if he returned.<sup>181</sup>

### RAYBER ALVARADO - CARAOTA DIGITAL (Friday 10th):

Caracas police officers arbitrarily detained Rayber Alvarado, journalist of *Caraota Digital*, for one hour while reporting on the price of a Christmas dish in the street. The incident occurred in Plaza Venezuela, in the city of Caracas. “(...) PoliCaracas officers approached me and said that I could not record because it was illegal. I told them that I was a journalist and that I was doing my job. They insisted anyway that it was illegal and that I had to have a permit to do my job.”<sup>182</sup>

### VÍCTOR UGAS (Wednesday 22nd):

Police officers without identification showed up at the residence of journalist Víctor Ugas, who warned on his Twitter account that they were looking for him and held the regime of Nicolás Maduro responsible for his physical integrity, adding that his family was at his home.<sup>183</sup> In an interview for *Espacio Público*, the journalist said that he received a call from the surveillance area telling him that there were three vehicles without identification asking where the journalist lived. The officers asked them to open the entrance gate with an aggressive attitude, went to the parking lot, where they stayed for 20 minutes, and left the residence.<sup>184</sup> Ugas added that he did not know why the officers were after him or if they were there by mistake.

180 Espacio Público. (November 29th, 2021). *Impiden al periodista Javier Cuberos cubrir la proclamación del alcalde de Tovar.* [Journalist Javier Cuberos is prevented from covering the proclamation of the mayor of Tovar.] <https://espaciopublico.org/impiden-a-javier-cuberos-cubrir-la-proclamacion-del-alcalde-de-tovar/>

181 Espacio Público. (December 6th, 2021). *Miembro de un colectivo amedrenta a reportero de Caraota Digital.* [Member of a colectivo intimidates Caraota Digital reporter.] <https://espaciopublico.org/miembro-de-un-colectivo-amedrenta-a-reportero-de-caraota-digital/>

182 Espacio Público. (December 13th, 2021). *PoliCaracas detiene por una hora a reportero de Caraota Digital.* [PoliCaracas detains Caraota Digital reporter for one hour] <https://espaciopublico.org/policaracas-detiene-por-una-hora-a-reportero-de-caraota-digital/>

183 Víctor Ugas. [@victorugas\_]. (December 22nd, 2021). Twitter. [https://twitter.com/VictorUgas\\_/status/1473831039755857920](https://twitter.com/VictorUgas_/status/1473831039755857920)

184 Espacio Público. (December 23rd, 2021). *Funcionarios sin identificación intimidan al periodista Víctor Ugas.* [Unidentified officers intimidate journalist Víctor Ugas.] <https://espaciopublico.org/funcionarios-sin-identificacion-intimidan-al-periodista-victor-ugas/>

# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**





In 2021, the regime of Nicolás Maduro continued criminalizing, harassing, and limiting the informative work in Venezuela, which is essential to keep citizens informed, especially in situations of public interest where access to accurate and timely information is crucial. This approach promotes censorship and disinformation and further reduces the critical content towards its management in the country, positioning the practice of journalism as a risky job that threatens the integrity of press workers in Venezuela.

Venezuela is immersed in a repressive scenario characterized by human rights violations, censorship, disinformation, and opacity, making journalistic work essential. However, every year, cases continue to be reported demonstrating the violence, aggression, and restrictions journalists face in the country. In 2021, RedesAyuda documented a total of 93 new cases of limitations to the informative work of press workers, who faced violent and arbitrary actions for going out to the streets to document and bring information on events of interest to Venezuelans.

Under the protection of the Venezuelan regime, State security officials, workers of State-owned companies, civilians belonging to irregular armed groups known as “colectivos,” and public officials violated fundamental rights such as freedom of the press, the right to due process, free transit and access to public services through harassment, threats, physical and verbal aggression, and arbitrary detentions.

During news coverage of protests over the deteriorating conditions of public services, the limited access to gasoline, allegations of corruption at gas stations, the demands of health care workers over the condition of public and private health care centers, and the lack of access to vaccines, press workers were forced to leave the scene of the events, to erase documented material under threat. In addition, they were arbitrarily detained for carrying out their reporting duties.

An important fact to mention is that Sunday, November 21st, was the day on which

more cases of restrictions to the press were recorded during the regional and municipal elections in the country. Officials of the Plan República prevented access to independent media journalists to the voting centers to cover the elections, even when candidates were exercising their right to vote. Likewise, correspondents and graphic reporters were threatened and verbally assaulted if they did not delete the material they had collected from election day in their work equipment. On that day, the arbitrary detention of a journalist was also reported.

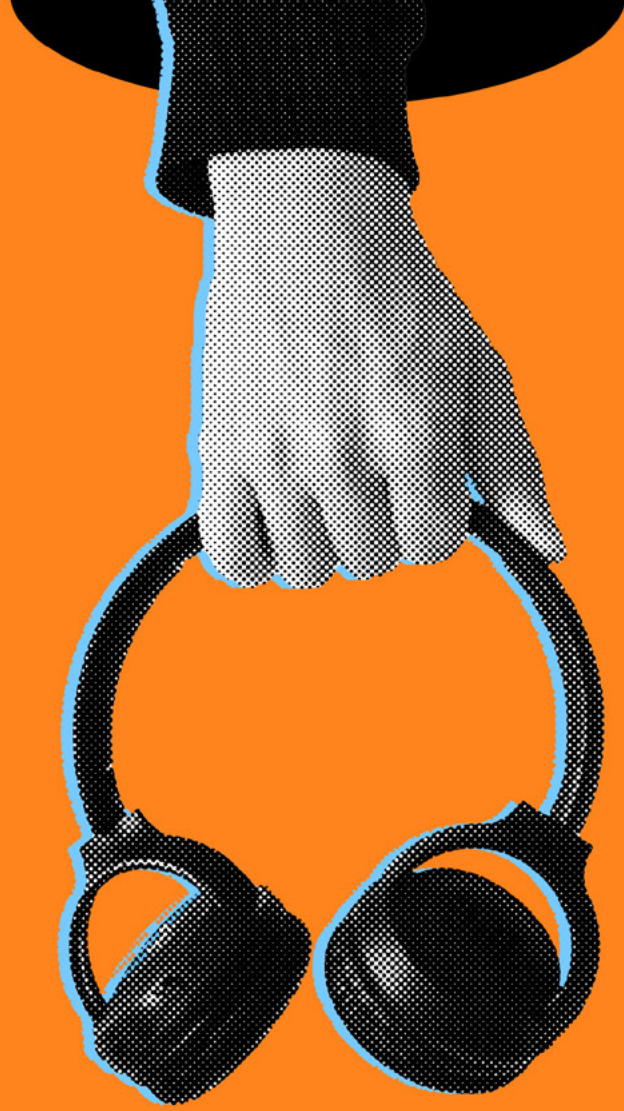
At least 113 press workers faced this type of violation in 2021, which made visible how the informative work in Venezuela is exposed to violent actions that threaten the life, freedom, and integrity of press workers in the country.

As a response to the violations of journalists’ rights, which affected the free exercise of freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and access to information, RedesAyuda makes the following recommendations, demands, and suggestions:

1. To demand guarantees and conditions so that press workers do not continue to be victims of arbitrary detentions, harassment, physical and verbal aggression, or any violation that limits the execution of reports, investigations, and, above all, the documentation of issues of public interest.
2. To demand the creation of public policies to improve essential public services so that they no longer represent a limitation for the exercise of the informative work of press workers.
3. To continue strengthening alliances between civil society and the media, to demand the guarantee of the rights to freedom of the press, freedom of expression, access to information, and promotion of the reconstruction of democracy in the country.

4. To reject the campaigns and speeches by public officials that stigmatize press workers, who take advantage of their air time in television programs broadcasted by the State-owned VTV to insult, point fingers and discredit the informative work of the media and press workers.
5. To reject the use of agencies such as CO-NATEL to censor and further reduce independent information spaces (radio stations, television programs, and channels) as an arbitrary response to the dissemination of critical content in the country.





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