



STATEMENT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN VENEZUELA

We, the former heads of state and government who make up the Democratic Initiative of Spain and the Americas (IDEA Group), having been committed for over a decade to defending democracy and the rule of law wherever they have been lost; helping to strengthen them where they are weakened and safeguarding them in countries where they have taken root, were shocked to learn of the forced disappearance and the concealment of the death of political prisoner Víctor Hugo Quero Morales in Venezuela; a fact that only came to light following the persistent public appeals of his mother through social media.

Since the beginning of Nicolás Maduro's dictatorship and his government, some twenty-seven (27) political prisoners *have died in the custody* of the current Venezuelan regime, including, due to the high-profile nature of their cases, Councilman Fernando Albán and former Minister Nelson Martínez in 2018; Lieutenant Commander Rafael Acosta Arévalo in 2019; in 2021, General-in-Chief Raúl Isaías Baduel, Gabriel Medina Díaz, and Salvador Franco of the Pemón ethnic group; Leoner Azuaje in 2023; Jesús Manuel Martínez Medina and Edwin Santos in 2024; Reinaldo Araujo, former governor Alfredo Díaz Figueroa, and laborer Lindomar Amaro Bustamante in 2025; and this year, police officer Edison Torres Fernández and Councilman José Manuel García Sabino.

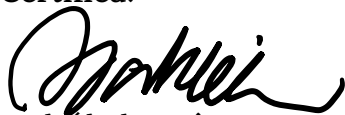
We believe that, beyond the crisis facing democratic institutions in the region, without which it is impossible to ensure the peace and well-being of our peoples, the forced disappearance of individuals and their deaths while in government custody constitute a dangerous breach of universal laws of humanity. Enforced disappearances, which have claimed more than 750 victims in Venezuela from 2018 to 2020, represent, as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has stated, a multiple, continuous, and grave violation of human rights that combines deprivation of liberty, torture, and frequently extrajudicial execution, constituting a crime against humanity for which there is no statute of limitations.

We conclude and warn that the stability hoped for in Venezuela, in a climate of respect for human dignity, will only be achieved through the immediate restoration of democracy, under the genuine guidance of the popular will of the Venezuelan people, who are the victims. This requires the removal from power of those identified as the alleged perpetrators of these systematic and widespread human rights violations, as documented in the reports of the United Nations Independent Mission.

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