

Human Rights Council

41th period of sessions (from 24 June 2019 to 12 July 2019)

Item 2: Enhanced ID on Venezuela (5 July 2019)

Oral statement issued by the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) and COFAVIC

OMCT and COFAVIC welcome the report on the human rights situation in Venezuela, as well as the recent visit of the High Commissioner.

OMCT and COFAVIC express deep concern about the ongoing and ever-deteriorating human rights crisis of in Venezuela. Our organisations keep documenting a sustained increase in extrajudicial executions, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and arbitrary detentions in the country.

Security operations, in particular those led by the Special Actions Force (FAES) and the CICPC, in coordination with the armed forces, have resulted in a systematic pattern of extrajudicial executions in impoverished areas of the country, including also indigenous communities such as the Warao. COFAVIC has registered in the last two years (2017 and 2018) 3684 alleged extrajudicial executions nationwide, mostly men under 25.

Often these operations, which in most cases are carried out in neighborhoods where protests had taken place to demand the access to basic services, involve multiple victims. Entire communities are hit indiscriminately by the excessive use of force employed, including women, children and persons of advanced age. Victims consistently report having been obstructed to file complaints to the relevant authorities and fear of reprisals.

In this context, international oversight, in particular the intervention of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner, is at last a glimmer of hope for thousands of victims.

In solidarity with them we hope that the Council, following the recommendations of the High Commissioner's report, takes action to ensure that the perpetrators of gross human rights violations, including high ranking authorities, are held to account; that FAES is dismantled, and so are all the exceptional measures which continue restricting human rights and the space to exercise and promote them; and that access to all places of detention is guaranteed to the OHCHR presence in the country, while urging Venezuela to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.