



# POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN VENEZUELA

From March 31st to  
July 30th, 2017

SUMMARY OF THE FACTS



**Henrique Capriles,**  
Governor of Miranda state leading  
a violent demonstration

## SUMMARY

---

This report is the result of the documentation process of the violent actions and human rights violations committed during the demonstrations and protests promoted by the Venezuelan opposition between the months of April and July of 2017. The drafting of this report was under the responsibility of the Executive Secretariat of the National Council of Human Rights (CNDH, Spanish acronym), acting in its capacity as national observer for the human rights situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, pursuant to Decree No. 873 of April 3, 2014, published in Official Gazette No. 40,386.

For this document, we used the analysis of the information provided by the Prosecutor General's Office, the People's Attorney's Office and the People's Power Ministry for Interior Relations, Justice and Peace. Other sources included in this report are the direct testimonies by relatives of the victims, injured people, as well as by non-governmental human rights organizations.

Between April and July 2017, Venezuela was the scene of a new escalation of political violence promoted by sectors of the opposition against the Government of the constitutional President, Nicolas Maduro Moros. On this occasion, the pretext was the controversy over two sentences issued by the Supreme Court of Justice, which, within the framework of their powers, were subsequently repealed.

Due to these sentences, the opposition leadership decided to convened its sympathizers to "take to the streets" indefinitely, using very deadly means and resources. State institutions such as the Prosecutor General's Office and the National Assembly sponsored and encouraged the development of these acts. The direct result of these four months of violent actions was 121 fatalities and 1958 people injured.

The responsibility for the deaths and injured persons in the violent acts was attributed by national and international public opinion to the disproportionate use of

force to repress “peaceful demonstrators” who exercised their right to protest due to political dissent from the national government. However, all the information collected leads to be attributed to violent anti-government groups - supported by some political party leaders, mayors and governors of the opposition - the responsibility for the excessive violence which some sectors of the country unleashed.

During these public demonstrations, anti-government groups systematically resorted to the use of firearms, barricades and deadly traps, use of homemade weapons, use of bearings or metal spheres as ammunition, and use of mortar like explosives, setting a pattern of harm to civilians and law enforcement officers and in violation of the principles of peaceful social demonstration enshrined in the Constitution and in international treaties.

Of the people killed during these violent acts, 42% are directly attributable to anti-government groups, resulting from shots fired by violent demonstrators that guarded the barricades against people who tried to overcome these obstructions, attacks to institutions for the guarantee of human rights, attacks to law enforcement agencies, execution of hate crimes; that is, violent actions provoked by groups of the Venezuelan opposition during public manifestations.



**Freddy Guevara, First Deputy President of the Bolivarian National Assembly leading a violent anti-governmental demonstration.**



## Lilian Tintori participating in violent anti-governmental demonstrations

Only 13% of the deceased are allegedly attributed to disproportionate or improper use of force from police and military officers, in their work of public order. In these latter cases, the application of justice evidences an individualization of responsibility which does not, under any circumstances, constitute a systematic pattern of repression or violation of human rights by the Venezuelan State. Additionally, 42% of the 1958 people wounded were officers of the State law enforcement agencies, who were attacked by violent demonstrators while exercising functions of public order.

As the testimonies documented by the National Council of Human Rights refer, violent opposition groups led systematic actions against officers of law enforcement agencies, government institutions and any other person identified as “Chavista”. Social networks were a channel for the expression of hatred and the promotion of violence in the country.

This violence, with the passage of the days, increased their levels of aggressiveness. Likewise, the cases presented in this report illustrate patterns of violent demonstrators, which include attacks on hospitals, schools, food collection and distribution centers, residential, private businesses, basic services facilities, military, police and NGOs headquarters, among others.

# POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN VENEZUELA

**121**  
Fatalities

**60%** of the victims  
**did not participate in**  
the opposition's  
**demonstrations**

**68%** of the deaths were  
**young people under**  
**the age of 30**

## Alleged perpetrators

Deaths attributed  
to violent anti-  
governmental sectors

**42%**



Deaths during lootings  
and other illegal acts

**15%**

Disproportionate use  
of public force

**13%**



There is  
not enough  
information  
to determine  
accountability

in **28%**  
of the cases

**2%** of the  
deaths were  
caused by  
inhalation of tear  
gas

**88%**

of the demonst  
by opposition se  
in viol

Between April  
anti-government  
**5,045** public



Between April and July 2017, opposition sectors promoted violent actions with a very high level of lethality, which caused 121 deaths. Most of these casualties were outside of political conflict.

# 8%

onstrations called  
n sectors ended up  
violence

April and July 2017,  
mental groups made  
public demonstrations

Opposition sectors performed their political violence in **43 of 335 municipalities** of the country, i.e. **13% of the national territory**

# 1,958

Injured



**1,129**  
Civilians



**829**  
Officers of the  
State security  
corps

**23** persons were attacked when were regarded as 'Chivistas'

### Officers attacked with

- 690** Blunt instruments
- 73** Weapons
- 43** Homemade weapons
- 10** Molotov bombs
- 9** Personal assaults
- 4** Crashes against barricades

### Vandalism

- 917** Attacks to shops and bank offices
- 913** Attacks to institutions that guarantee enjoyment of human rights (schools, health centres, public services, food centres, governmental offices, voting centres, police and military facilities, among others)



**Young man burnt during  
a “peaceful” demonstration**



In addition, two unprecedented practices were developed in the recent history of our country: the first, burning alive people designated as affiliated to the Government. The second, using children and adolescents to prepare incendiary bombs, guard barricades and assault officers of the law enforcement agencies, all of which violate the national and international standards of the right to peaceful demonstration.

Of the 5045 demonstrations, registered between April and July 2017, promoted by parties, organizations and political militants of the opposition to the government of the President Nicolás Maduro Moros, 88% turned out to be violent. In these events, it was possible to identify a common pattern: the use of terror strategies in the development of public demonstrations.

On its part, the national government maintained its commitment to guarantee human rights of all persons under its jurisdiction, as evidenced in this document. The institutions of the State were directed to take all necessary measures to guarantee the right to life and personal integrity, health, education, free transit and movement,



**Violent demonstrations on Libertador Avenue in Caracas**



**General Francisco de Miranda  
Military Airbase.**



## Violent manifestation

protection of children and adolescents during the demonstrations, which was widely violated by the opposition sectors that promoted a climate of chaos in various sectors of the country.

While some excesses were documented in the performance of officers in compliance with the powers of public order control, the investigation shows that from the highest level of the State, including the President of the Republic, provided a clear direction of action to all the agencies involved: public order with absolute respect for human rights.

The actions of violence recorded in this report are part of the development of an international offensive aimed at promoting foreign intervention in Venezuela and disregarding the sovereign will of the Venezuelan people expressed in the presidential elections of April 2013. Once again, the issue of human rights was intended to be used with political ends, as it has happened on several occasions in Venezuela and the world.



Gobierno  
**Bolivariano**  
de Venezuela