

The Honourable Fatou Bensouda
Chief Prosecutor
Office of the Prosecutor
International Criminal Court

Dear Prosecutor Bensouda,

In light of the complaints filed before the International Criminal Court regarding gross human violations in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in particular those introduced by the Centro de Estudios para America Latina (CASLA Institute) case number OTP-CR-210/16 presented on 27 July 2016, we would like to express our faith in these testimonies and support the call to open investigations into these very serious allegations.

The case, which reports the crimes against humanity and in particular systematic torture on behalf of senior officials of the Venezuelan government dating back since 2002, is extremely alarming and disturbing. Over the past three years, the Human Rights Observatory of the CASLA Institute recorded a sharp increase in tortures, observing the continuity and systematization of specific methods used on victims, in particular targeting anti-government protestors.

Due to the new incidents that occurred during protests between April and July 2017, the CASLA Institute has introduced further complaints to the case. The increase in violence is further supported by a report published in August 2017 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights¹ which “documented extensive violations of human rights by national authorities” and “found that security forces systematically used excessive force and arbitrarily detained protesters.” This report furthermore recorded “patterns of ill-treatment, in some cases amounting to torture, and serious violations of due process rights of persons detained in connection with the protests”. It concluded, among other things, that the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should conduct independent investigations into these cases, which have not been done.

As Members of the European Parliament, we are following the situation in Venezuela closely with deep concern at the deteriorating situation. The European Parliament has passed four resolutions specifically regarding the human rights violations in Venezuela alone since December 2014, and even more addressing the situation in more general resolutions. The situation has sadly only worsened.

Following the European Parliament’s latest call in the resolution on “EU political relations with Latin America” adopted on 13 September 2017, to “fully support the ICC investigations into the extensive crimes and acts of repression perpetrated by the Venezuelan regime”, we would like to reiterate this support to you, Honourable Prosecutor, to open investigations into the allegations and bring justice to any crimes found to be true. Venezuelans have been suffering for far too long. It is time to bring justice in order to begin a process of much-needed reconciliation, in the strong hopes of achieving peace in the country.

Yours sincerely,

Dita Charanzová

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Human rights violations and abuses in the context of protests in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from 1 April to 31 July 2017”, Geneva, August 2017, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/VE/HCREportVenezuela_1April-31July2017_EN.pdf