

[HRC45 | Evidence of crimes against humanity in Venezuela, conclude UN experts](#)

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In a devastating report, a group of independent UN experts on Venezuela outline evidence of crimes against humanity carried out in the country at the direction of high-level State authorities, with the active participation of President Maduro and Ministers of the Interior and of Defence. What will the Human Rights Council now do to ensure accountability for such crimes and justice for victims?



Update: The UN fact-finding mission on Venezuela delivered its report on 23 September and engaged in an interactive dialogue with States and civil society. The mission outlined how Venezuela had failed to respond to any of the requests made to meet or provide information, but this in no way undermined the rigorous nature of the methodology underpinning the report. The vast majority of States intervening supported the work of the mission and many spoke to the need for the mission's work to continue.

ISHR was pleased to deliver a statement along with Venezuela NGO Alfaviv (watch the statement at the end of this page).

The UN fact-finding mission on Venezuela, provided with a year-long mandate by the Human Rights Council last year to assess a range of alleged human rights violations since 2014, could not have provided more damning findings at a time of interconnected and worsening human rights and humanitarian crises in the country.

The mission of independent experts have made public their report and shared their [findings](#), which include:

- Evidence of crimes against humanity planned and executed by Venezuelan authorities and security forces since 2014.
- That these crimes against humanity are made evident in patterns of violations and crimes that are in highly coordinated in line with State policies and part of a widespread and systematic course of conduct. This is not ad hoc activity but coordinated.
- That President Maduro and the Ministers of the Interior and of Defence 'gave orders, coordinated activities and supplied resources' to promote the policies and programmes under which the crimes - crimes against humanity and others - were committed.
- That the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) targeted political dissidents and human rights activists, and others considered to be against the Government.
- That the vast majority of unlawful killings by security forces have not led to prosecutions, and 'at no stage have officials with command responsibility been brought to justice'.

Several of the findings of human rights violations and the context of an erosion of democratic institutions, the rule of law and judicial independence chime with those of other parts of the UN, including Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Notably, the findings of crimes against humanity are also not new. NGOs, such as [Amnesty International](#) have already shared similar conclusions. In 2018 a [panel of independent experts](#) of the Organisation of American States concluded something similar. In addition, Venezuela has been [referred](#) to the International Criminal Court.

'This report is unflinching. It does something very important - bear out what victims and civil society have been telling the world for many years,' said ISHR's Eleanor Openshaw.

'It is now for the Human Rights Council to keep the investigation going. This report should be the start of deep reform in Venezuela to respect the rights of its people,' she added.

The fact-finding mission will present its report to and hold a dialogue with the Human Rights Council on the 23rd September. Follow at: UN web tv.

Watch the statement here (in Spanish):

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Photo: ISHR

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