



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, 15 July 2025

UIA-IROL denounces the disappearance and subsequent incommunicado detention of Mr. Eduardo Torres, a prominent human rights lawyer from Venezuela

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) has learnt with dismay about the disappearance and subsequent incommunicado detention of Mr. Eduardo Torres, a prominent human rights lawyer and a respected member of the legal team at PROVEA (Venezuelan Program for Education and Action on Human Rights), an NGO specialized in the defense and promotion of Economic, Social and Cultural Human Rights.

According to reliable sources, Mr. Torres was forcibly detained on 9 May 2025 and authorities failed to acknowledge his arrest for four days—until 13 May 2025. During this critical period, he was therefore denied any access to legal counsel, family, or independent medical care, in clear violation of both national and international legal standards.

On 13 May 2025, in response to a public statement made by PROVEA representatives, the Attorney General of Venezuela confirmed via Instagram that Mr. Torres was indeed under custody of State authorities but no further information was provided about his location or the judicial authorities in charge of the case. In this publication, it is also mentioned that his detention was supposedly linked to an alleged conspiracy to incite violence during the 25 May parliamentary and regional elections, and that Mr. Torres would have been accused of “conspiracy, terrorism, treason, and criminal association” despite that no formal notification of the charges had been made. On 18 May 2025, the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) reportedly confirmed that Eduardo Torres was being held in the prison *El Helicoide*. It is our understanding however, that, as of this statement, Mr. Torres remains without adequate legal representation, lacking of timely access to information for his family and the lawyers of his own choosing, a denial that directly undermines the lawyer’s right to due process and fair trial.

Due to earlier threats and harassment by police officials of the Venezuelan state, in the framework of his work as human rights defender, Mr. Eduardo Torres, like other members of PROVEA benefits from precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights¹.

UIA-IROL is deeply concerned that Mr. Torres appears to have been targeted solely for his legitimate work as a lawyer and the exercise of his freedom of expression defending human rights and the Rule of Law in Venezuela. The arbitrary nature of his detention, compounded by a deliberate effort to isolate

¹See “IACHR Follows Up on and Extends Precautionary Measures for Members of PROVEA in Venezuela”, 30 April 2024, available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2024/083.asp

him from legal safeguards, represents an additional serious attack on the independence of the legal profession and on the broader community of human rights lawyers and defenders.

The case of Mr. Torres occurs in a particularly worrisome context of increasing civic space restrictions in Venezuela, “including criminalization, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearances of persons deemed dissenting”, as recently highlighted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights².

UIA-IROL takes this opportunity to remind the Venezuelan authorities that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is obligated under Article 44 its Constitution to respect the right to personal liberty and security, a right also protected by Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 7 of the American Convention on Human Rights. Moreover, Article 45 of the Venezuelan Constitution specifically forbids practicing, allowing or tolerating enforced disappearances.

UIA-IROL also recalls that Principle 16 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers clearly recognises that governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions freely and independently without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and that they shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

UIA-IROL urgently calls upon the Venezuelan authorities to:

- 1) immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Eduardo Torres, as urged by High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk³;
- 2) adequately guarantee Mr. Torres’s right to legal representation, as required under Venezuelan and international law;
- 3) ensure his immediate and unrestricted access to a legal counsel of his own choosing, family members, and medical professionals;
- 4) end the harassment of lawyers and defenders working to uphold fundamental rights.

UIA-IROL reminds all authorities that the targeting of lawyers for their professional activities or their legitimate activities in defense of human rights not only violates their individual rights but also seriously undermines the Rule of Law.

We stand in full solidarity with Mr. Torres, PROVEA, and all legal professionals who bravely advocate for justice, dignity, and accountability under increasingly repressive conditions.

² See, A/HRC/59/58: Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Advance unedited version), parr. 33, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session59/advance-version/a-hrc-59-58-advance-united-version.pdf> (access: 10 July 2025).

³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/hc-turk-updates-council-human-rights-situation-venezuela>

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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