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The case of Rocío San Miguel and General Hernández Da Costa, among other political prisoners in Venezuela

European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2024 on the case of Rocío San Miguel and General Hernández Da Costa, among other political prisoners in Venezuela (2024/2618(RSP))

(C/2024/6558)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rule 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas there are over 300 political prisoners in Venezuela;

B. whereas on 9 February 2024, Rocío San Miguel, a lawyer and human rights activist with Spanish nationality, was kidnapped by the Venezuelan regime, and sentenced on politically motivated grounds of suspected conspiracy against Nicolás Maduro and his regime; whereas she is currently being detained in El Helicoide prison, which is known for human rights abuses, including torture;

C. whereas the Maduro regime expelled the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) after accusing them of 'colonialist, abusive' behaviour and fomenting political opposition, following the UN commissioner's condemnation of San Miguel's arrest;

D. whereas General Hernández Da Costa has been a political prisoner since August 2018; whereas on 19 February 2024, he was forcibly transferred to El Rodeo 1 prison, designed to detain political prisoners; whereas an unknown number of prisoners, including some EU citizens, were also transferred; whereas the general suffers from medical ailments that require constant treatment, which he is being denied;

E. whereas four campaign coordinators working for the opposition to the regime's presidential candidate, María Corina Machado – Juan Freites, Luis Camacaro, Guillermo Lopez and Emil Brandt – have also been detained on political grounds and are incommunicado;

F. whereas in January 2024, the unrecognised National Assembly resumed its consideration of a law seeking to restrict, criminalise and shutter non-governmental organisations;

1. Strongly condemns the Maduro regime for imprisoning hundreds of political prisoners;

2. Deplores the fact that these prisoners are being held in conditions that contravene the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;

3. Demands the immediate unconditional release of all political prisoners and arbitrarily detained persons, and the full restoration of their rights; exhorts the regime to cease its policy of repression and attacks on civil society and the opposition;

4. Urges the Chilean authorities to fully investigate the murder of Ronald Ojeda, a former political prisoner who escaped the Maduro regime;

5. Calls on the VP/HR and the Council to increase sanctions on the regime, including high-level officials, members of the security forces and the regime's Supreme Tribunal of Justice, and Maduro himself;

6. Urges the International Criminal Court to include ongoing human rights violations and arbitrary detentions in its investigation into the Maduro regime's alleged crimes against humanity;

7. Calls on the international community to support a return to democracy in Venezuela, particularly in the light of the upcoming elections, in which the leader of the opposition to the regime, María Corina Machado, must be allowed to fully participate;

8. Urges the Venezuelan authorities to reinstate the OHCHR and guarantee its access to prisons, as well as guarantee unhindered access to the UN special procedure mandate-holders;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the VP/HR, the Member States, the EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Organization of American States, the UN Secretary-General and the Venezuelan regime.