

## 2 years of my unjust imprisonment

Today marks two years of unjust imprisonment. Two years ago, we raised our voice and encouraged Venezuelans to take charge in a peaceful, democratic and constitutional change. We were concerned about the situation in our country and beyond, and sure that this situation would worsen to the extent that our people would have to pay for the collapse and failure of this wrong model. A cost today that we all pay, except the ruling elite, the most corrupt and inefficient in our history, which has looted and stolen the wealth of all Venezuelans.

Those of us who undertook this task, were convinced that we had to react and wake up our consciences and knew that we had to start a fight that could take us a month, two months, a year or even two, but if we did not try and start it, this change would never come.

Today marks two years of my unjust imprisonment, two years physically in prison but free in mind and spirit. I know that soon I am going to go free and when I am, I will be stronger in body, mind, and soul. I will go out strengthened with no hard feelings; hatred and resentment are the reactions of those who have brought our country to this severe humanitarian crisis and have tried to make us, physically and spiritually, poorer and unhappier. I will go free and keep fighting for the same reasons that I have always fought, and I will continue to fight, for as long as I live, the same noble causes for which I was locked up: the well-being and prosperity of our people, the defense of democracy and the freedom of all Venezuelans.

Today marks two years of my unjust imprisonment, but I am deeply hopeful, because when I look at the opposition coalition, I see them more willing than ever before to concentrate on bringing about the change in 2016 that we so badly want and that many Venezuelans told me that has been worth it. And it matters little what the dictatorship tries to do because their days are numbered.

Today February 18, again I reaffirm to my colleagues of the opposition coalition my commitment to achieve, as soon as possible, the political change that the Venezuelan people are screaming for. We agree from this moment on a recall referendum, an amendment, a resignation, or a constitutional convention. However, whatever the mechanism that we select by consensus to achieve an exit from this disaster, today our most important debate should be centered on the construction of a great national agreement that prepares Venezuela for entry into the next 100 years.

Although time is something that I have learned to master and it no longer torments me, as I have become closer to God, I know that I am going to be free in order for us to move forward together in achieving our dream of a better Venezuela, a Venezuela of peace, well-being and progress. A Venezuela arising out of a great national agreement that ensures all rights for all Venezuelans.

There is where I want to invite our people to look now. To envision that Venezuela where we live with dignity and, in principle, have satisfied the most basic needs of a society. That we have a health system which cures the sick; an education system that educates; social security covering the vulnerable; Police officers, judges and prosecutors who protect; and an economy that produces food, employment and comfort.

This can be Venezuela, and to do this we must go beyond taking a few steps or formulating public policies that provide half measures to the problems. We must change a model that has failed us. We must rebuild a coexistence across ideologies only brought about through democracy, promote an economy and a society more fair, inclusive, secure and sovereign that will bring an end to the shortages, inflation and unemployment, and that will have as a priority the strengthening of domestic production and thus put Venezuela back in the place that it deserves in the world.

Yes, Venezuela can, yes, we can, and together we will succeed.

Strength and Faith

Leopoldo López

Military Prison of Ramo Verde