

**LILIAN TINTORI, WIFE OF LEOPOLDO LÓPEZ, AND ANTONIETA MENDOZA,
MOTHER OF LÓPEZ, SUBJECTED TO VIOLATIVE, ABUSIVE SEARCH AT RAMO
VERDE MILITARY PRISON**

Action of Venezuelan Prison Authorities a Clear Violation of Venezuelan and International law

Caracas – This past weekend, Lilian Tintori, the wife of Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo López, and Antonieta Mendoza, mother of López, were subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment at Ramo Verde Military Prison, where López is currently imprisoned. Upon arriving at the prison for a routine familial visit, Tintori waited for two hours while other prisoners' relatives entered the prison for visitation with ease. She was then led to a room to undergo a full body search. While members of López's family are often subjected to humiliating body searches, the searches of this past weekend reached a new level of cruelty. Tintori was asked to undress completely and to repeatedly open and close her legs, while subjected to abusive comments from the prison guards, whose aggressive comments ranged from name calling to disparaging comments about her marriage. The guards further searched and then confiscated Tintori's sanitary napkin that she had been wearing. Arriving several hours later, Mendoza was forced to undress and comply with a similar search in front of her grandchildren, Manuela, age 6, and Leopoldo, age 3. During both abusive searches, the guards indicated to Tintori and Mendoza that they were acting on orders received by their superiors.

In light of this horrific experience, Tintori said, "They are trying to separate us as a family. They have psychologically tortured me and Leopoldo with their actions and now even my children are being exposed to their abuse."

López has been imprisoned in Ramo Verde Military Prison for almost two years. His imprisonment has been ruled arbitrary and in violation of international law by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Amnesty International has labeled him a prisoner of conscience and governments all around the world have called for his release. López's prison conditions vary depending on whether the prison authorities are trying to punish him, as they often do based on the actions undertaken by his wife to secure his liberty. As Tintori campaigns all over the country and the world for her husband's freedom, she has become the target of more and more attacks from the government, surviving an assassination attempt in November 2015. Prison authorities flagrantly violated Venezuela's obligations under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

These actions by the government have drawn harsh condemnation from the international community with many, including OAS Secretary-General Luis Almagro, labeling them as cowardly and a new level of political persecution. It should be noted that López received precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in April 2015 and his family, including Tintori and Mendoza, received precautionary measures as well from the IACHR in October 2015. These measures demand that the Venezuelan government do all that it can to ensure the life and physical integrity of those under its protection, which the government has clearly failed to do.

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