

LEOPOLDO LÓPEZ WIFE DEMANDS EVIDENCE OF HIS SAFETY

Reports he was rushed to hospital in critical condition; has not been seen in nearly a month

Lilian: "We will not calm down until I can verify with my own eyes that he is safe and healthy."

CARACAS – Lilian Tintori, wife of political prisoner Leopoldo López, held vigil throughout the night outside the gates of Ramo Verde Military prison, demanding access to her husband to verify his safety.

Last night, Leopoldo Castillo, a prominent Venezuelan journalist with over 2.17 million followers, had posted on his twitter account, @elcitizen, "Information. Leopoldo Lopez transferred from Ramo Verde to a Military Hospital with no vital signs. Government maintains hypothesis of poisoning." Tintori and López's mother, Antonieta López, immediately went to the hospital where Captain Rodriguez eventually informed her that López was not there.

López has not been seen or heard from for nearly a month; his family and his lawyers have been refused access and he has been held in isolation. Ruling party representative Diosdado Cabello last night published a video of López, allegedly as proof of life. In the video, López states that "I do not understand the reason why they want a proof of life at this moment," which alone raises serious questions about its authenticity as it should be unsurprising to a person that has been detained incommunicado for almost a month that there was pressure for a video providing proof of life.

With no means to confirm the authenticity of the video, Tintori has refused to accept this as proof of life saying "Enough of this isolation and torture. The Venezuelan Government, especially those at the top of the regime's chain of command, including Minister of Defense General Vladimir Padrino López, Vice Minister General Pedro Castro Rodriguez, the General Director of the Military Penitentiary Services General Rodolfo Joaquín Silva Díaz, and the Director of Ramo Verde Military Prison Captain José Ramón Boston Silva, are directly responsible for what happens to Leopoldo and we will not calm down until I can verify with my own eyes that he is safe and healthy. After Leopoldo has been isolated for almost 30 days, it is their responsibility to inform his family of his wellbeing."

These reports are incredibly disconcerting as López has now been incommunicado for almost a month. López was last seen on April 7th by a family member. Since that day no family member or lawyer has been able to see or speak to him. López's lawyers formally denounced this cruel and inhumane treatment before the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture last week, but the Government has refused to respect López's human rights and grant access to his family and lawyers.

We are currently calling for the international community to take urgent action and publicly demand the Venezuelan Government to allow López access to his family and lawyers. Earlier today, Secretary General of the OAS Luis Almagro tweeted the following, "I demand to visit @leopoldolopez based on the commitments that #Venezuela has with the Inter-American System of Human Rights @OAS_official."

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