



Venezuela: Political Prisoners Should be Released Immediately

Press Statement

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President Trump called on Venezuela on February 15 to release opposition leader and political prisoner Leopoldo Lopez. Lopez was sentenced last year to nearly 14 years in prison on the specious charges of inciting anti-government protests in 2014. The Venezuelan Supreme Court denied his appeals on February 16.

The Venezuelan government continues to arrest and imprison citizens from across Venezuelan society for their political beliefs. Currently, more than 100 such individuals are in prison. These include: Leopoldo Lopez, who will complete his third year in prison on February 18; Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma, who will complete his second year under house arrest as of February 19; former Mayor Daniel Ceballos; and many other students, activists, journalists, and peaceful protestors.

The United States reiterates its dismay and concern about these arrests, and other actions taken by the Venezuelan government to criminalize dissent and deny its citizens the benefits of democracy. We call for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience, respect for the rule of law, the freedom of the press, the separation of constitutional powers within the government, and the restoration of a democratic process that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.