



IAP

International Association of Prosecutors

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROSECUTORS EXPRESSES GREAT CONCERN AT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR OF VENEZUELA.

The International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) is the only world organization of prosecutors, prosecuting authorities and associations. It covers six continents and over 170 jurisdictions, and represents many thousands of prosecutors. The IAP is a non-political and non-governmental organization. It is committed to upholding the rights of prosecutors and their organizations, to ensuring that prosecutorial standards are upheld, and to promoting the rule of law, fairness and respect for human rights.

Ms Louisa Ortega Diaz is the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Venezuela. She was first appointed to office by the late President Hugo Chavez on 13 December 2007. During almost 10 years as General Prosecutor, Ms Ortega Diaz has faithfully discharged the duties of her office, without fear or favour. She is highly regarded for her prosecutorial integrity and independence, not only in Venezuela, but throughout the Americas, and beyond.

The IAP has learned with shock that, in recent months, Ms Ortega Diaz has, in consequence of the professional exercise of her legal duties, been subjected to a sustained campaign of vilification and interference. Whereas she has faced abuse by senior public figures, the operations of the public prosecutor's office have been arbitrarily curtailed, with some of its functions being transferred to the ombudsman's office, and her efforts to investigate human rights violations have been frustrated.

The IAP is appalled to discover that, following a complaint from a Member of Parliament, Ms Ortega Diaz is to face investigation by the Supreme Court of Venezuela. This appears to be the first step in a process designed to secure her removal from office. Ms Ortega Diaz, moreover, has now been barred from leaving the country, and her bank accounts have been frozen.

The IAP condemns unreservedly the arbitrary actions which have been launched against Ms Ortega Diaz, for legitimately exercising her professional responsibilities, and also against the public prosecutor's office. It demands that the rights and freedoms of Ms Ortega Diaz and her office be fully respected, and that all harassment and interference should cease forthwith. The IAP requests the Venezuelan authorities to restore forthwith all the functions of the public prosecutor's office, and to end all actions which have been brought against Ms Ortega Diaz individually.

The IAP, moreover, demands the Venezuelan authorities to take all necessary steps to ensure the personal safety of Ms Ortega Diaz.

The IAP is resolved that Ms Ortega Diaz should receive justice, and will now be liaising with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (Mr Diego Garcia Sayan), the International Association of Judges/Union Internationale des Magistrats (which protects the interests of both judges and prosecutors), the International Bar Association (Ms Ortega Diaz is a lawyer), and with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROSECUTORS

The Hague, The Netherlands, 3 July 2017