



OVERALL SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE STATE OF ZULIA JULY 2020 SUMMARY

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JULY 2020 SUMMARY

Commission for Human Rights of the state of Zulia (Codhez)

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

The *July 2020 Summary* on the overall human rights situation in Zulia focuses on the documentation of acts of violence that involve Venezuelan state security officials, causing the death of 377 people from January to June of this year.

These data, which resulted from monitoring media of the region, show that both police violence and the potentially illicit deaths associated with it tend to increase. This would suppose the nonobservance of the Venezuelan State regarding the basic principles of respect for the rights to life and personal integrity, and the breach of two of the higher values of its legal system and actions, such as life and the preeminence of human rights, as provided for in article 2 of the Constitution.

In the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights¹, published on July 3rd, it is stated that the national government reported 41 deaths of officials during security operations, noting that it did not provide data on violent deaths in the framework of these operations, classified by the State as “*failure to obey a police order*”². However, according to sources from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the first five months of 2020, 1,324 violent deaths occurred in security operations nationally, such deaths include 9 women. According to this report, the security bodies to which the greatest number of deaths are attributed are the Special Actions Force of the Bolivarian National Police (FAES), responsible for 432 deaths; the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Corps (CICPC) responsible for 366 deaths; the Bolivarian National Guard responsible for 136 deaths; and, in the specific case of the state of Zulia, the regional police forces would be responsible for 124 deaths. The vast majority of cases are young men not older than 30 years of age, inhabitants of low-income sectors with a high crime rate³.

According to our *2019 Annual Report on the general situation of human rights in Zulia*⁴, throughout that year, 497 violent incidents and 657 deaths caused by police violence took place in the region. Specifically, for the first half of 2019, the number of violent events reached 187 cases. Meanwhile, in the first half of 2020, 262 violent events were verified, which translates into an increase in cases of 40.10%. Regarding the number of deaths caused by state security forces, 250 were registered in the first half of last year, while during this same period in 2020, 377 deaths were reported, increasing, then, by 50.80%.

On the other hand, as it has been highlighted in our reports since March, this Summary monitors the functional crisis of the national public health system amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, failures in infrastructure, supplies and sanitary implements persist, thus, evidencing the repeated omission of the Venezuelan State in complying with its obligation to guarantee the right to health and quality access to healthcare services in the region.

1. ACTS OF POLICE VIOLENCE

The violence carried out by the State security forces constitutes one of the most obvious examples of violation of human rights, in particular, the rights to life, physical integrity and liberty. Specifically, the right to life is an insurmountable human right, internationally recognized in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁵, whose text provides that “*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and freedom security of person*”.

The Minnesota Protocol⁶ establishes the parameters that States must apply in cases of the so-called potentially unlawful deaths, which are grouped into deaths that are consequences of acts or omissions of State security forces, provided for in three cases⁷: a) a death that “*may have been caused by acts or omissions of the State, its organs or agents, or it may be attributable to the State, in violation of its obligation to respect the right to life*”⁸; b) a death that “*occurred when the person was arrested, or was in the custody of the State, its organs or agents*”⁹; and c) a death that “*could be the result of the State's failure to comply with its obligation to protect life*”¹⁰.

This summary focuses on investigating situations related to the first assumption, that is, deaths attributable to the violent behavior of State, national, regional or municipal security officials, who fail to comply with the constitutional obligation to respect the right to life, such as it is established in article 43 of the Constitution, which states that: “*The right to life is inviolable. No law may establish death penalty, nor any authority can apply it. The State shall protect the life of people who are deprived of their liberty, rendering military or civil service, or subject to its authority in any other way*”.

In this sense, we highlight the complaints about the “*severe harms on the life, personal integrity, private property and the right to due process of Venezuelans*”, which were exposed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)¹¹, as a consequence of the militarization of the citizen security in the country, for which “*extrajudicial executions and operations characterized by the excessive and lethal use of force continue to be recorded, as well as raids without a court order and attacks on houses*”¹². Thus, the IACHR “*recalls that the fundamental rights to life and personal integrity, provided for respectively in Articles 4 and 5 of the American Convention on Human Rights, not only include the negative obligation of the State not to deprive life or inflict suffering on people who are under their jurisdiction, but also demands to protect and preserve such rights*”¹³.

Considerations regarding the right to life

The right to life must be understood as a fundamental human right that, according to the Venezuelan legal system, does not admit any limitation or restriction. The right to life is a universal and mandatory right, as it is necessary for all human beings to exercise the rest of their rights. This right remains intact even under circumstances where states of exception are decreed¹⁴. In this scenario, according to the Venezuelan constitutional text, the guarantees enshrined in this Constitution may be “*temporarily restricted, except those referring to the rights to life, the prohibition of the use of solitary confinement or torture, the right to due process, the right to information and other intangible human rights*” (Article 337).

In case of violations of the right to life, the Venezuelan State is obliged to determine the criminal, civil and administrative responsibility of the officials who have incurred in the violation of this right “*without superior orders serving as an excuse*” (Article 25 of the Constitution). For this reason, the State must “*investigate and legally punish crimes against human rights committed by its authorities*” (Article 29 of the Constitution). The Public Ministry is the bearer of the prosecutorial discretion, which, when exercised, allows the determination of the civil, labor, military, criminal, administrative or disciplinary responsibility of the security organs in exercise of their functions (Article 285 of the Constitution). In any case, the protection of the right to life supposes, on one hand, the exhaustive regulation of provisions that guarantee its safeguarding and prevention against eventual excessive actions by State officials, and, on the other, the application of sanctioning measures and proportional punishments in cases of arbitrary deprivation of life.

For its part, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹⁵ demands that life cannot be arbitrarily deprived, since it is an inherent right of the human person, therefore the legal system must protect it (Article 6). Also, despite the fact that the Venezuelan state denounced¹⁶ the American Convention on Human Rights¹⁷, it regulates in similar terms the respect that States should have for the right to life, by establishing that *“This right will be protected by the law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one can be arbitrarily deprived of life”* (Article 4).

As it was mentioned, article 43 of the Constitution prohibits the death penalty¹⁸, and no authority can apply it, by virtue of the principle progressive realization of Human Rights¹⁹. Hence, according to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights²⁰, aimed at abolishing the death penalty, *“No person subject to the jurisdiction of a State Party to this Protocol shall be executed”* (Article 1).

Likewise, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates, as part of the dignity of the human person, that no one may be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 7). The American Convention on Human Rights recognizes the right to respect for the physical, mental, and moral integrity of individuals. In this regard, the Constitution stipulates that *“Every person has the right to have her physical, mental and moral integrity respected, consequently: 1. No person may be subjected to punishment, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Every victim of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment practiced or tolerated by State agents has the right to rehabilitation”* (Article 46). There is no doubt that the right to personal integrity is closely related to the right to life.

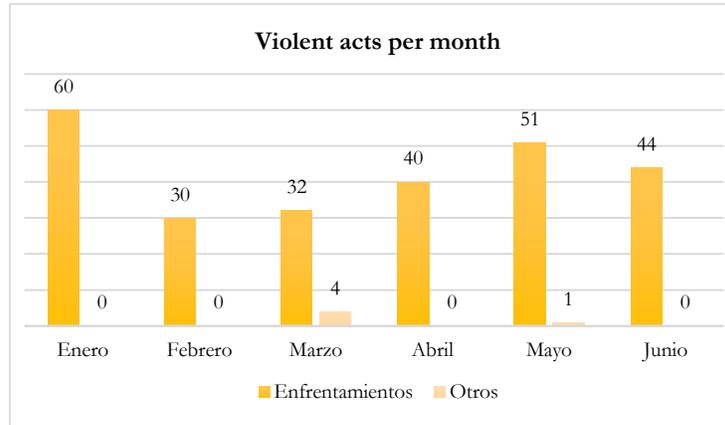
Death penalty is prohibited as stated by the Venezuelan Constitution, in accordance with the international obligations assumed by the Republic. The regulation established in Venezuela in the event of the commission of a crime, regardless of its seriousness, is the application of a penalty that would limit the right to personal liberty for a specific period of time²¹ whose main requirements are a declaration of guilt in a definitively firm sentence issued by the natural judge and the fulfillment of all the guarantees and principles of the right to due process.

Therefore, the State does not have the power to ignore the right to life, under any circumstances and by any authority. On the contrary, the main task of the Venezuelan State must be to protect and safeguard the rights of the people, in accordance with the provisions of article 19 of the Constitution whose text provides that *“The State shall guarantee to all persons, without any discrimination, in accordance with the principle of progressive realization of Human Rights, the fulfillment and the inalienable, indivisible and interdependent exercise of human rights. Their respect and guarantee are mandatory for the organs of the Public Power in accordance with this Constitution, with the human rights treaties signed and ratified by the Republic and with the laws that amplify them”*.

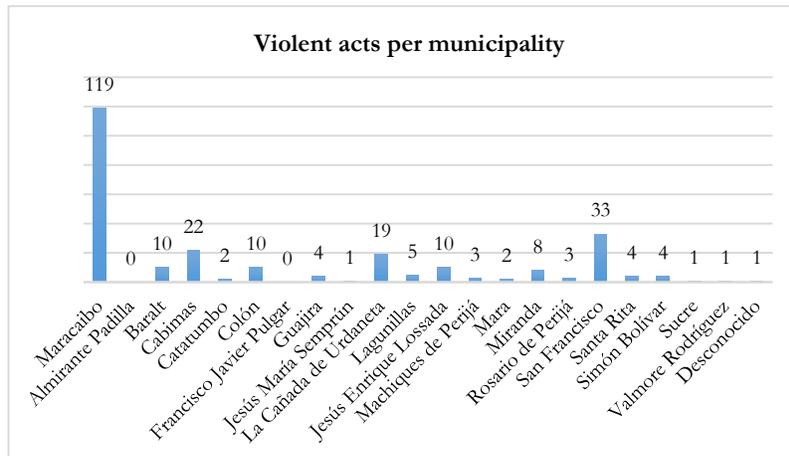
Given these considerations, the data on violations of the right to life by officials of the Venezuelan State, whose actions during the first half of 2020 generated 377 deaths, are alarming. These are deaths that took place in alleged confrontations, although more details about the investigations that have been initiated have not been disclosed.

These deaths were the result of 262 violent events in which a State security body participated. This figure, as already noted, represents an increase of 40.10% compared to the number of violent events that occurred a year ago; according to our *2019 Annual Report*²², 187 violent events took place between January and June 2019.

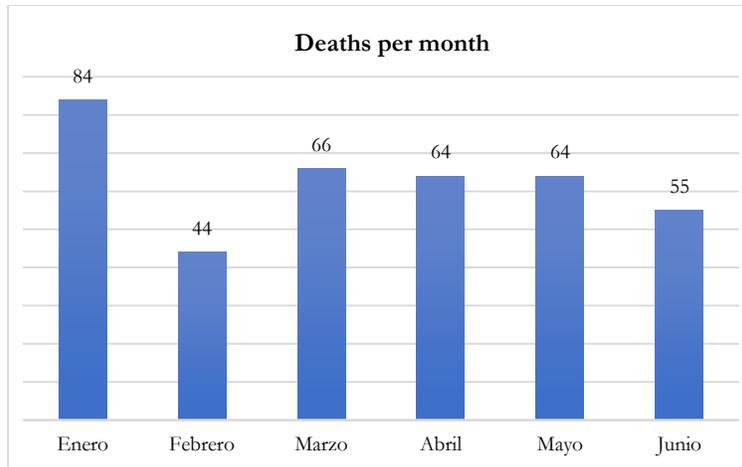
Of these 262 violent incidents, 257 were classified by the authorities as confrontations between the police forces and alleged criminals, while the rest occurred under unspecified circumstances.



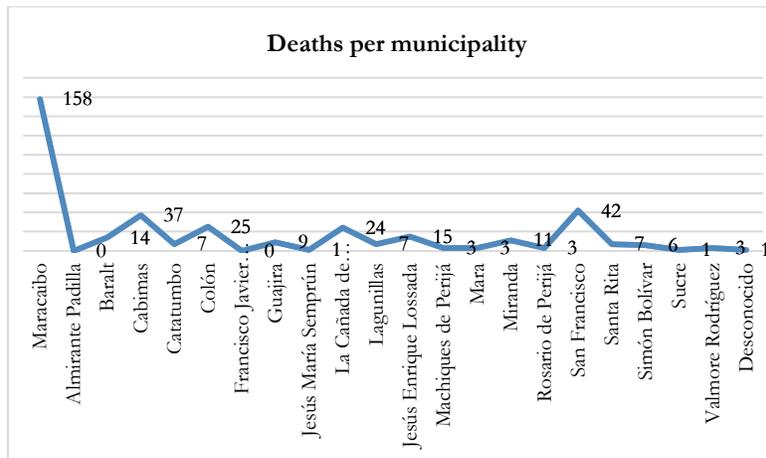
Regarding the distribution of violent events per municipality, it is noted that Maracaibo, San Francisco, Cabimas and La Cañada de Urdaneta evidenced the highest numbers of police violence. Thus, 119 violent events took place in Maracaibo (45.59%), 33 in San Francisco (12.64%), 22 in Cabimas (8.43%) and 19 in La Cañada de Urdaneta (7.28%). For their part, between January and June 2020, in Baralt, Colón and Jesús Enrique Lossada, 10 violent events occurred in each.



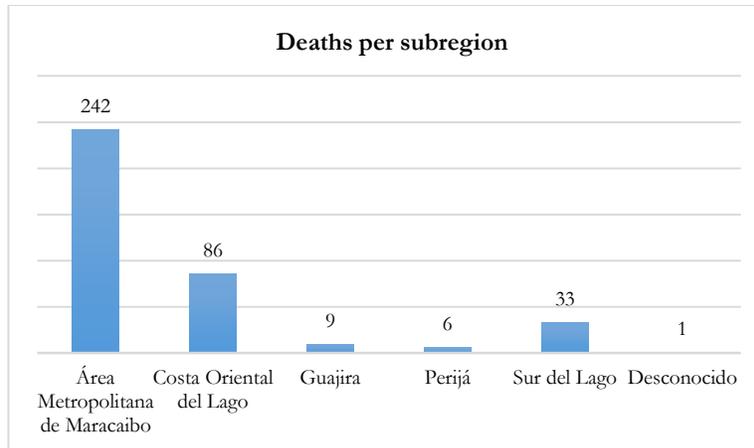
In the aforementioned violent events, 377 deceased people were classified as alleged criminals by the authorities. Compared with the data found in our 2019 Annual Report²³, when 250 people died, the figures for the first half of 2020 represent an increase of 50.80%. January presented the highest number of people killed as a result of police violence: 84 people were killed, that is, 22.88% of the total cases in the first half of 2020. In February the number of people killed fell to 44 (11, 67%). In March, there was a new increase in deaths from police violence with 66 (17.51%). April and May coincide in the number of deaths, 64 (16.98% each month). In June the death toll was 55 (14.59%).



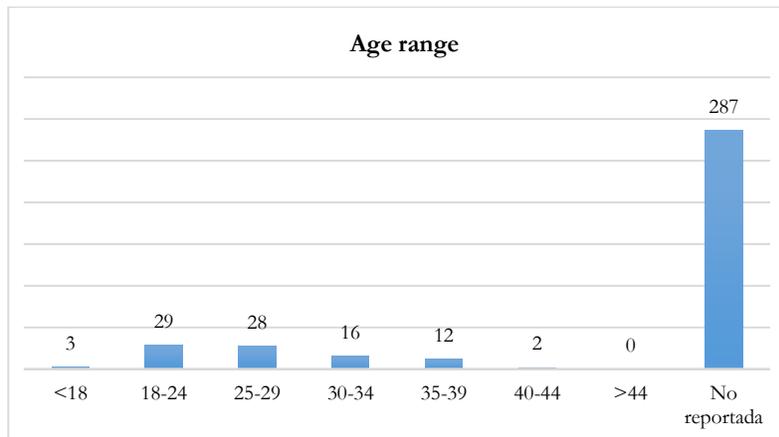
Specifically, 8 of the 21 municipalities of the state of Zulia exceeded the barrier of 10 deaths due to police violence in the first semester of 2020, with Maracaibo being the one that verified the highest number of deaths: 158 (41.91%). There were 42 deaths in San Francisco (11.14%); 37 in Cabimas (9.81%); 25 in Colón (6.63%); 24 in La Cañada de Urdaneta (6.37%); 15 in Jesús Enrique Lossada (3.98%); 14 in Baralt (3.71%); and 11 in Miranda (2.92%). It should be noted that the only two municipalities that did not evidenced deaths from police violence during the recorded period were Almirante Padilla and Francisco Javier Pulgar.



In view of the number of deaths due to police violence distributed by subregion, the highest number was concentrated in the Maracaibo metropolitan area (Maracaibo, San Francisco, La Cañada de Urdaneta, Mara and Jesús Enrique Lossada), adding up to a total of 242 (64, 19%). It is followed by the Eastern Coast of the Lake (Miranda, Cabimas, Lagunillas, Valmore Rodríguez, Baralt, Simón Bolívar, Santa Rita and Sucre) with 86 (22.81%), and in third place, the South of Lake Maracaibo (Colón, Catatumbo, Jesús María Semprún and Francisco Javier Pulgar) with 33 (8.75%).



Of the total 377 deaths caused by the State security forces, the ages of 287 people were not identified (76.13% of the cases). The failure to report this basic information indicated that the authorities lacked the diligence to fully investigate the real circumstances and motives that led to these deaths. The few cases identified in terms of their ages allow us to affirm that the majority were young adults: 29 between 18 and 24 years old (7.69%); 28 between 25 and 29 years old (7.43%); 16 between 30 and 34 years old (4.24%); 12 between 35 and 39 years old (3.18%); and 2 between 40 and 44 years (0.53%). Likewise, there are 3 adolescents (0.80%) among the cases with reported ages.



The deceased people whose ages were identified, are young people of productive ages, both from a labor and educational point of view. These young people, classified as alleged criminals, are usually inhabitants of impoverished areas that do not meet the minimum conditions to access education. In this regard, the IACHR has expressed its concern about the rights of Venezuelan youth, considering that *“the Venezuelan youth faces enormous challenges to adequately cope with their stage of development and enhance their competencies... in several states of the country there are high rates of desertion and school dropouts in middle school, high school, higher and technical education centers. This would be attributable to the interruption of public services such as the supply of water, electricity and transportation, as well as the suspension of school feeding programs”*²⁴.

Of the total of these deaths, only 2 women were registered, one in January and another in May. The rest of the 375 cases were men.

Considerations on the excessive use of public force

As it has been mentioned, one of the basic obligations of the Venezuelan State is to respect the right to life. Consequently, when the State is aware of cases in which the lives of people are threatened, and there are irregular patterns carried out by its security organs, it must intensify its actions regarding the respect and guarantee of such right, determine precisely the limit in the use of public force. That is, the State has the obligation to act with due diligence to prevent the excessive use of force by its officials, and for this it must adopt reasonable measures in the short, medium and long term that allow it to face the conditions of danger to which people may be exposed.

These measures must begin with a training program on human rights²⁵ for its agents, as well as the design of strategies that allow to grow ethics²⁶ and respect for life. It is essential to set limits to the exercise of public force, to differentiate to what extent it is necessary and follows the constitutional and conventional provisions, and when it is executed excessively and becomes a violation of human rights. Thus, when public force is used excessively, one of its results is the so-called extra-legal, extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions²⁷. Precisely, to avoid this situation, the use of force by officials can only be done exceptionally, when it is necessary, reasonable, proportional and justified.

In this sense, two of the general principles established in the Organic Law of the Police Service and the National Police Corps²⁸ are the respect for human rights and proportionality. The first is referred to the actions of the police forces with strict adherence and respect for the human rights established in the Constitution and in international instruments (article 12). And the second is that the actions of the police forces must be proportional to the seriousness of the situation and the legitimate objective that is pursued (Article 15).

On the other hand, there are Basic Principles on the use of force and firearms by the officials in charge of law enforcement²⁹, which must be immersed in both the normative regulations and their effective application. These principles stipulate that the use of force proceeds only when it is strictly necessary, when it is required in the exercise of the functions of State agents, and in permanent conciliation with the respect for human rights. To this end, it is established that *“Law enforcement officials, in the fulfillment of their duties, will use non-violent means as much as possible before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only when other means are ineffective or do not guarantee in any way the achievement of the intended result”* (general provision 4). Meanwhile, general provision 5 provides that *“When the use of firearms is unavoidable, law enforcement officials: a) Will exercise restraint and act in proportion to the seriousness of the crime and the legitimate objective that is pursued; b) They will minimize damage and injuries and respect and protect human life; c) They shall proceed in such a way that medical assistance and services are provided as soon as possible to injured or affected persons; d) They will try to notify what happened, as soon as possible, to the relatives or close friends of the injured or affected people”*.

In addition to this, the Organic Law of the Police Service and the National Police Force establishes a series of criteria that must be assumed and applied by officials when they must use public force. Indeed, the criteria to measure out the use of force are: *“1. The level of use of force to be applied is determined by the behavior of the person and not by the predisposition of the official. 2. The differentiated use of force implies that among psychic intimidation and life-threatening force, the official will measure out its use considering the progression from passive resistance to life-threatening aggression by the person. 3. The police officer must maintain the lowest level of use of force possible to achieve the proposed objective. 4. At no time should there be*

unnecessary physical harm, or moral mistreatment to the people who are the object of the police action, nor should the force be used as direct punishment” (Article 70).

The use of public force, such as firearms, would only be appropriate in accordance with the Basic Principles on the use of force and firearms by officials in charge of law enforcement when it is “in self-defense or to defend other persons, in the event of imminent danger of death or serious injury, or for the purpose of preventing the commission of a particularly serious crime involving a serious threat to life, or for the purpose of arresting a person who represents such danger, and fails to obey the authority, or to prevent their escape, and only if less extreme measures are insufficient to achieve those objectives. In any case, the intentional use of lethal weapons may only be applicable when it is strictly unavoidable to protect life” (special provision 9)³⁰. This corresponds to what is established in article 68 of the Organic Law of the Police Service and the National Police Corps, since the use of public force will always be guided by the “*principle of affirming life as a supreme constitutional and legal value*”, and it will be conditioned to the adoption of progressive scales of the use of force depending on the resistance and opposition of the person, so that the “*transfer in the use of deadly force will only be justified for the defense of the life of the person, a police officer or a third party*”.

In any case, in the face of any type of action by the State, through the use of public force, aimed at subduing persons who allegedly disturb public order or are singled out by the commission of a punishable act, the due process must always be a priority. In other words, in these cases, the public official must guarantee the validity of this right and choose, only in an exceptional and extraordinary cases, any path that involves the use of force that could endanger the lives of people.

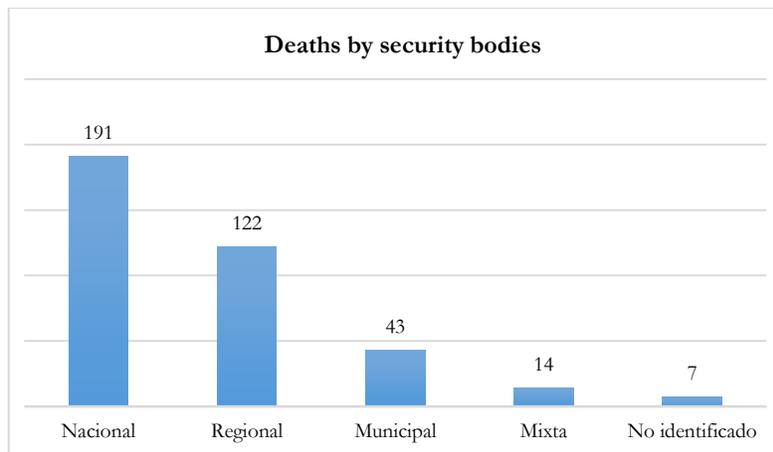
The right to due process is a universal right recognized in various international instruments³¹ and in the Constitution³². In general terms, it is a human right constituted by several guarantees and principles, both formal and substantial, necessary for the effective judicial protection of the persons involved in any process or procedure, in order to limit state actions regarding to protect the legal certainty.

As has already been noted, during the first semester of 2020, 262 violent events were registered with the participation of State security officials, which killed 377 people. In consideration of their characteristics, these cases were the consequence of the excessive and unjustified use of public force.

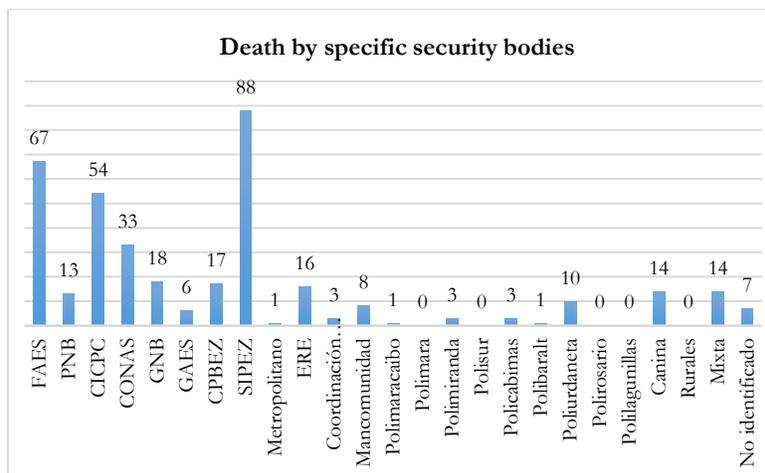
In the public force in the country, national, regional and municipal security bodies are distinguished, depending on whether their assignment belongs to the national, regional or municipal executive branches. In the first semester of 2020, the highest number of deaths is attributable to security forces associated to the national government: 191 (50.66% of the cases in the January-June period). For their part, the regional security forces killed 122 people (32.36%). Meanwhile, the municipal police caused the death of 43 people (11.41%). Likewise, in joint actions of mixed commissions, 14 people were killed (3.71%). In the cases of 7 people, the police force responsible for the death was not identified. It should be noted that in these cases, most classified as alleged clashes by the authorities, no security official died.

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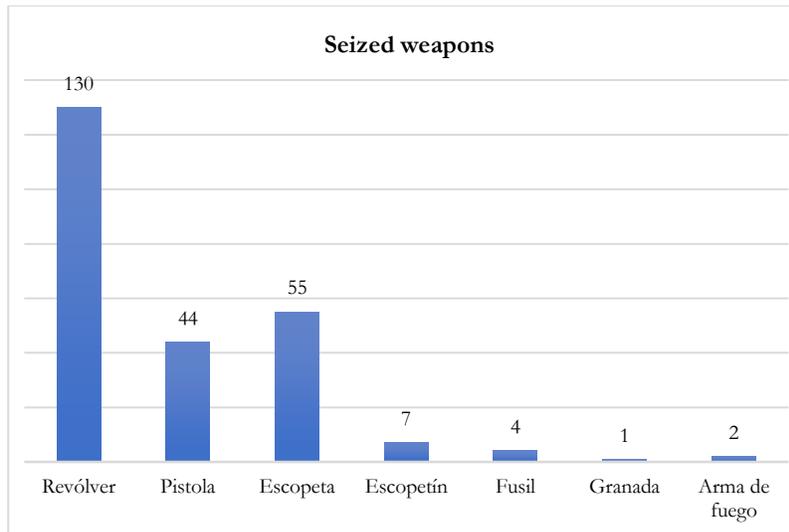
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Individually, the national security forces that caused the highest number of deaths due to police violence in the state of Zulia were the FAES³³ with 67 (17.77%), the CICPC³⁴ with 54 (14.32%), and the CONAS³⁵ with 33 (8.75%). In the case of regional security forces, the SIPEZ³⁶ killed 88 people (23.34%), the CPBEZ³⁷ 17 (4.51%), and the ERE³⁸ 16 (4.24%). Meanwhile, the municipal security forces that caused the most deaths were Poliurdaneta³⁹ with 10 (2.65%), Polimiranda⁴⁰ with 3 (0.80%), and Policabimas⁴¹ with 3 (0.80%). It should be noted that the GNB⁴² killed 18 people (4.77%), the Canine Group 14 (3.71%), and mixed commissions 14 (3.71%). For its part, the Police Association of the Maracaibo metropolitan area caused the death of 8 people (2.12%).



In most of the violent events of this first semester, the seizure of a series of weapons was reported, presumably used by alleged criminals in confrontations with the State security forces. In this seizure, 130 revolvers (53.50%), 55 shotguns (22.63%), 44 pistols (18.11%), 7 shotguns (2.88%), 4 rifles (1.65%), 1 grenade (0.41%), and 2 unspecified firearms (0.82%) were noted. At the same time, in 66 violent acts (25.19%) the seizure of some type of weapon was not documented.



Considerations regarding the State's obligation to investigate, judge, punish and repair human rights violations

The State must not only take the necessary measures and regulations to prevent any excessive use of public force that could lead to deaths or extrajudicial executions. It is also obliged to investigate, prosecute and punish those presumed responsible for any potentially unlawful death, as well as to repair material and moral damages caused to the victims' families. This obligation is prescribed in article 30 of the Constitution.

To this end, the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Deaths provides that *“The families of victims of unlawful death have the right to equal and effective access to justice; an adequate, effective and fast reparation; recognition of their situation before the law; and access to information on violations and relevant accountability mechanisms. Complete reparation includes restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, guarantees of non-repetition and satisfaction. Satisfaction includes fact-finding and the disclosure of the truth to the public by the government, a precise explanation of the violations that took place, the application of sanctions to those accountable for the violations”*⁴³.

Family members have the right to know the exact truth about the circumstances, events and motives that led to the death. Even society has the right to hear the cases of violations of the right to life carried out by State security organs. Therefore, the State must promptly, effectively, exhaustively, independently, impartially, and transparently investigate, since the *“obligation to investigate is an essential part of the defense of the right to life. This obligation, in praxis, puts the duties to respect and protect the right to life into effect, and promotes accountability and reparation when that substantive right may have been violated ... The impunity that is the result, for example, of unjustifiably short time limits or statutes of limitations or a general amnesty (de jure impunity), or even the inaction of the Prosecutor's Office or political interference (de facto impunity), is incompatible with this obligation. Any breach of the obligation to investigate is a violation of the right*

*to life. Investigations and prosecutions are essential to prevent future violations and promote accountability, justice, the right to reparation and the truth, as well as the rule of law*⁴⁴. In summary, the state's opacity and the lack of due diligence on the part of the State to know the truth about these events, can encourage an increase in lethality due to the actions of public security officials.

2. REPORT OF POLICE VIOLENCE EVENTS BY MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

January

In January, 60 violent events occurred with the participation of officials from State security agencies, all classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, resulting in 84 deaths, with no casualties among State agents. That is to say, on a daily average there were 1.94 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 22.28% of deaths were caused by police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 45 violent events (24.59% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), distributed as follows: 26 cases in Maracaibo; 10 in San Francisco; 5 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; 2 in Mara; and 2 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
 - 67 deaths (27.69% of the total in the first semester for this subregion): 37 in Maracaibo; 15 in San Francisco; 7 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; 3 in Mara; and 5 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 8 violent events (14.55% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 6 in Cabimas; and 1 in Valmore Rodríguez.
 - 10 deaths (11.63% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 6 in Cabimas; and 3 in Valmore Rodríguez.
- Guajira:
 - 2 violent events (50.00% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), both took place in Guajira.
 - 2 deaths (22.22% in the first semester in this subregion), both in Guajira.
- Perijá:
 - 2 violent events (33.33% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Machiques de Perijá; and 1 in Rosario de Perijá.
 - 2 deaths (33.33% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Machiques de Perijá; and 1 in Rosario de Perijá.
- South of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 3 violent events (23.08% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), all occurred in Colón.
 - 3 deaths (9.09% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), all in Colón.

February

In February, 30 violent events occurred with the participation of officials from State security agencies, all classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, resulting in 44 deaths, with no casualties among state agents. That is, on a daily average there were 1.03 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 11.67%

of deaths due to police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 20 violent events (10.93% of the total in the first semester in this subregion): 11 in Maracaibo; 4 in San Francisco; 3 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 2 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
 - 26 deaths (10.74% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 15 in Maracaibo; 5 in San Francisco; 4 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 2 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 7 violent events (12.73% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 5 in Cabimas; and 1 in Baralt.
 - 10 deaths (11.63% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 6 in Cabimas; and 3 in Valmore Rodríguez.
- Guajira:
 - 1 violent event (25.00% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), occurred in Guajira.
 - 6 deaths (66.67% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), all in Guajira.
- Perijá:
 - 1 violent event (16.67% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), occurred in Machiques de Perijá.
 - 1 deceased person (16.67% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), in Machiques de Perijá.
- South of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 1 violent event (7.69% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), occurred in Colón.
 - 1 deceased person (3.03% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), in Colón.

March

In March, 36 violent events occurred with the participation of officials from State security agencies. 32 of these events were classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, while another 4 occurred under unspecified circumstances, resulting in 66 deaths, with no casualties among state agents. In other words, on a daily average there were 1.20 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 17.51% of deaths due to police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 17 violent events (9.29% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 13 in Maracaibo; 2 in San Francisco; and 2 in La Cañada de Urdaneta.
 - 25 deaths (10.33% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 20 in Maracaibo; 3 in San Francisco; and 2 in La Cañada de Urdaneta.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 9 violent events (16.36% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 4 in Cabimas; 2 in Baralt; and 2 in Santa Rita.

- 14 deaths (16.28% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 4 in Cabimas; 4 in Baralt; and 5 in Santa Rita.
- Guajira:
 - 1 violent event (25.00% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), occurred in Guajira.
 - 1 deceased person (11.11% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), in Guajira.
- Perijá:
 - 2 violent events (33.33% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), both occurred in Rosario de Perijá.
 - 2 deaths (33.33% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), both in Rosario de Perijá.
- South of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 6 violent events (50.00% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), all occurred in Colón.
 - 24 deaths (53.85% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 21 in Colón; and 3 in Catatumbo.

April

In April, 40 violent incidents occurred with the participation of officials from State security agencies, all classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, resulting in 64 deaths, with no casualties among state agents. In other words, on a daily average there were 1.33 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 16.98% of deaths due to police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 27 violent events (14.75% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 20 in Maracaibo; 3 in San Francisco; 3 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 1 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
 - 36 deaths (14.88% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 27 in Maracaibo; 3 in San Francisco; 3 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 3 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 12 violent events (21.82% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 2 in Miranda; 3 in Cabimas; 2 in Lagunillas; 2 in Baralt; and 3 in Simón Bolívar 3.
 - 27 deaths (31.40% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 3 in Miranda; 14 in Cabimas; 2 in Lagunillas; 3 in Baralt; and 5 in Simón Bolívar.

In the Guajira, Perijá and South Lake Maracaibo subregions there were no events or deaths due to police violence. Likewise, it should be noted that this month there was a violent act and a death but the municipality where it took place was not specified.

May

In May, 52 violent events took place with the participation of officials from State security agencies. 51 of these events were classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, while 1 occurred under unspecified circumstances,

resulting in 64 deaths, with no casualties among state agents. That is to say, on a daily average there were 1.68 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 16.98% of deaths due to police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 41 violent events (22.40% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 26 in Maracaibo; 8 in San Francisco; 4 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 3 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
 - 49 deaths (20.25% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 31 in Maracaibo; 10 in San Francisco; 5 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 3 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 11 violent events (20.00% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 3 in Miranda; 3 in Cabimas; 3 in Baralt; 1 in Simón Bolívar 1; and 1 in Sucre.
 - 15 deaths (17.44% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Miranda; 6 in Cabimas; 3 in Baralt; 1 in Simón Bolívar; and 1 in Sucre.

In the Guajira, Perijá and South Lake Maracaibo subregions there were no events or deaths due to police violence.

June

In April, 44 violent events occurred with the participation of officials from State security agencies, all classified by the authorities as alleged confrontations between alleged criminals and the security forces, resulting in 55 deaths, with no casualties among state agents. That is to say, on a daily average, there were 1.47 violent events with the intervention of the State security organs, and 14.59% of the deaths due to police violence in the first half of 2020. Similarly, for this month the number of violent events and deaths by subregion is distributed as follows:

- Metropolitan area of Maracaibo:
 - 33 violent events (18.03% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 23 in Maracaibo; 6 in San Francisco; 2 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 2 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
 - 39 deaths (16.12% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 28 in Maracaibo; 6 in San Francisco; 3 in La Cañada de Urdaneta; and 2 in Jesús Enrique Lossada.
- East Coast of Lake Maracaibo:
 - 8 violent events (14.55% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Cabimas; 3 in Lagunillas; 2 in Baralt; and 2 in Santa Rita.
 - 10 deaths (11.63% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Cabimas; 5 in Lagunillas; 2 in Baralt; and 2 in Santa Rita.
- Perijá:
 - 1 violent event (16.67% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), occurred in Machiques de Perijá.
 - 1 deceased person (16.67% of the total for the first semester in this subregion), in Machiques de Perijá.
- South of Lake Maracaibo:

- 2 violent events (15.38% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 1 in Catatumbo 1; and 1 in Jesús María Semprún.
- 5 deaths (15.15% of the total for the first semester in this subregion): 4 in Catatumbo; and 1 in Jesús María Semprún.

There were no events or deaths due to police violence in the Guajira subregion.

3. OVERALL SITUATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE STATE OF ZULIA

In July, the exponential growth of Covid-19 cases in Zulia continued, aggravating the health situation. In this scenario, the administration of Nicolás Maduro, through decree number 4,247⁴⁵, extended, for the fourth time, the state of alarm which has been in force since March 13.

Worldwide, 17,106,007 infected people and 668,910 deaths were reported⁴⁶. In Venezuela, a total of 18,574⁴⁷ infections and 157 deaths were registered, which means that the number of people infected increased 218.53% compared to the previous month. Meanwhile, in Zulia the number of cases reported by the authorities at the end of July was 3,149, that is, 204.84% more than the accumulated until June (1,033), and 52 people died⁴⁸, although this does not include the deaths of health personnel as a consequence of the disease⁴⁹. This situation should catch the eye of the government and health authorities of the country and the region, as it is evident that the measures implemented have not been efficient enough to reduce the number of infections. It is important to highlight that the Nicolás Maduro administration blamed people they called *trocheros* (derogatory term) for the increase in Covid-19 cases, requesting the PSUV to deploy in people's brigades of prevention⁵⁰.

The outlook remains bleak in the so-called sentinel hospitals, which in mid-July were 15 throughout the region⁵¹. The limitations and deficiencies in terms of supplies and medicines, medical care, food provision, and adequate infrastructure, make these hospitals places where people suffer additional problems to the ones caused by the disease. In this regard, the relatives of people who are treated at the Maracaibo University Hospital reported that they usually provide the necessary medications to treat the symptoms of Covid-19. Several acts of corruption have even been denounced, specifically regarding the purchase of medicines from workers of that health center⁵².

The 22 hotels set up as shelters in Maracaibo⁵³ also have deficiencies to provide care for the asymptomatic patients who must remain in absolute isolation for at least 15 days. The complaints about the poor conditions of these shelters have not stopped. An example of how the circumstance has overwhelmed the authorities is the enabling of convention centers, libraries, universities and sports spaces to take care of people infected with Covid-19⁵⁴. Also, there are reports about trailers being enabled to house people suspected of being infected⁵⁵. All of this has forced many people to stay at home and receive direct treatment from their family members⁵⁶.

On the other hand, there were complaints about cases of deceased who tested positive for the rapid test, noting that their bodies were not handed over to their relatives until the results of the PCR test were known. The bodies are usually cremated, and the ashes are not immediately delivered to the relatives, noting that a good part of these cases are not evidenced in the statistics published by the government⁵⁷.

Regarding the situation of medical personnel, until July, the death of 18 doctors, two nurses and a surgical technologist has been reported in Zulia, out of a total of 34 health workers who have died in Venezuela from Covid-19⁵⁸, making Zulia the region with the highest number of cases of this type⁵⁹. This demonstrates the constant exposure of the medical and nursing staff, to the failure of the health authorities to supply, in a complete and timely manner, the necessary biosafety equipment and implements to fully carry out their functions and preserve their health.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the fact that the period of research of this Summary goes from January-June 2020 in relation to deaths caused by police violence, it is necessary to mention that of an 18-year-old who died in July 16 in the hands of officials of the GNB⁶⁰ who fired shots at him. The young man was protesting because the Coast Guard and GNB officials refused to allow the sale of gasoline in the area⁶¹. This event took place in the Almirante Padilla municipality, one of the two municipalities that had not reported deaths from police violence in the first half of the year. To date, no further details are known about the investigations concerning this case.

It is notorious that police violence due to excessive use of public force increased in the first half of 2020. The Maracaibo municipality continues to be the epicenter of police violence in the region, both in terms of the number of violent acts (45.59%) and the number of deaths (41.91%). For its part, the action of SIPEZ, associated to the Government of the state of Zulia, caused the highest number of deaths (88, 23.34% of cases), followed by FAES, associated to the national government (67, 17.77% of the cases). The latter confirms what was stated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in her report of July 3rd, where this national security body is pointed out as the one with the highest rate of lethality and excessive use of public force in the whole country.

Our reality suggests that these are not isolated events, but rather that they are part of a continuous, constant and growing process of deaths attributable to the security forces, which determines a systematic violation of the right to life. It is urgent that the Venezuelan State addresses this situation: on average, only in Zulia, there have been 2 daily deaths as a result of violent events in which a public security body participated. In this regard, it is necessary for the State to design and implement security policies in accordance with constitutional and international regulations regarding the limitations on the use of public force, with the reinforcement of training mechanisms for police and military officials.

In addition, the State has the obligation to assume a proactive attitude regarding the investigations of these deaths, which must be carried out independently, exhaustively, impartially, and transparently in order to determine the criminal liability of those found guilty. This is a debt that the State has with thousands of victims who still cannot find an explanation for the events that led to the death of their relatives.

NOTES

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (July, 3rd 2020), “*Results of the investigation of the complaints of possible violations of the human rights to life, liberty and physical and moral integrity in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*”, <http://onu.org.ve/consejo-de-derechos-humanos-resultados-de-la-investigacion-de-denuncias-de-posibles-violaciones-de-los-derechos-humanos-a-la-vida-la-libertad-y-la-integridad-fisica-y-moral-en-la-republica-bolivarian/>.

² *Idem*.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ Commission for Human Rights of the State of Zulia (May, 20, 2020), *2019 Annual Report on the overall situation of Human Rights in the state of Zulia*, <http://codhez.org/noticias/379-el-empeoramiento-de-las-condiciones-de-vida-y-la-violencia-policia-marcaron-la-situacion-de-derechos-humanos-del-zulia-durante-2019.html>.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, www.un.org/es/documents/udhr/, December, 18, 1948.

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016.

⁷ *Idem*.

⁸ “Includes, ...all deaths potentially caused by law enforcement officials or other State agents; deaths caused by paramilitary groups, militias or ‘death squads’ suspected of acting under the direction of the State or with its consent or acquiescence; as well as deaths caused by private military or security forces in the exercise of State functions” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016).

⁹ “Includes, ...all deaths of people detained in prisons, in other places of confinement (official and otherwise) and in other facilities where the State exercises greater control over their lives” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016).

¹⁰ “Includes, ...any situation in which a State fails to exercise due diligence to protect a person or persons against foreseeable external threats or acts of violence by non-State actors” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016).

¹¹ Organization of American States (May, 8, 2020), “*LACHR presents its preliminary observations and recommendations after the historic on-site visit to Venezuela to monitor the human rights situation*”, <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2020/106.asp>.

¹² *Idem*.

¹³ *Idem*.

¹⁴ “The right not to be arbitrarily deprived of life is a fundamental and universally recognized right that is applicable at all times and in all circumstances. No suspension is allowed, not even during an armed conflict or in exceptional situations” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016).

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, www.un.org/es/documents/udhr/, December, 16, 1966.

¹⁶ Venezuela denounced the American Convention on Human Rights on September 10, 2012 before the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). This took effect as of September 10, 2013.

¹⁷ Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights, American Convention on Human Rights, on <https://www.oas.org/>, November, 22, 1969. Ratified by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on July 18, 1978.

¹⁸ 2. In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court. 3. When deprivation of life constitutes the crime of genocide, it is understood that nothing in this article shall authorize any State Party to the present Covenant to derogate in any way from any obligation assumed under the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. 4. Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases. 5. Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women. 6. Nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant.”

(United Nations General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, on www.un.org/es/documents/udhr/, 16 de diciembre de 1966, article 6).

¹⁹ “*In no case shall capital punishment be inflicted for political offenses or related common crimes.*” (Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights, American Convention on Human Rights, on <https://www.oas.org/>, November, 22nd, 1969, article 4, numeral 4).

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sp/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/2ndOPCCPR.aspx>, December, 15th, 1989.

²¹ “*Personal liberty is inviolable, consequently: 1. No person can be arrested or detained except by virtue of a judicial order, unless he/she is caught red-handed. In this case, he/she will be brought before a judicial authority in a time that cannot exceed than forty-eight hours from the moment of the arrest. He/she will be tried in freedom, except for the reasons determined by law and appreciated by the judge in each case. 3. The penalty cannot transcend the sentenced person. There will be no life sentences or infamous sentences. The custodial penalties shall not exceed thirty years. 4. Any authority that executes custodial measures will be obliged to identify themselves. 5. No person shall continue in detention after the release order has been issued by the competent authority or once the sentence imposed has been completed.*” (article 44 of the Constitution).

²² Commission for Human Rights of the State of Zulia (May, 20, 2020), *2019 Annual Report on the overall situation of Human Rights in the state of Zulia*, <http://codhez.org/noticias/379-el-empeoramiento-de-las-condiciones-de-vida-y-la-violencia-policial-marcaron-la-situacion-de-derechos-humanos-del-zulia-durante-2019.html>.

²³ *Idem*.

²⁴ Organization of American States (July, 2nd, 2020), “*The LACHR expresses concern for the rights of the Venezuelan youth and calls for the adoption of comprehensive protection measures for this population*”, <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2020/159.asp>.

²⁵ “*20. In the training of law enforcement officials, Governments and law enforcement agencies shall give special attention to issues of police ethics and human rights, especially in the investigative process, to alternatives to the use of force and firearms, including the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the understanding of crowd behavior, and the methods of persuasion, negotiation and mediation, as well as to technical means, with a view to limiting the use of force and firearms. Law enforcement agencies should review their training programs and operational procedures in the light of particular incidents.*” (Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx>, September, 7th, 1990).

²⁶ “*18. Governments and law enforcement agencies shall ensure that all law enforcement officials are selected by proper screening procedures, have appropriate moral, psychological and physical qualities for the effective exercise of their functions and receive continuous and thorough professional training. Their continued fitness to perform these functions should be subject to periodic review.*” (Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx>, September, 7th, 1990).

²⁷ In this regard, there is a series of principles that aims to regulate the prevention and investigation of this type of executions, among which the following stand out: any such executions are recognized as offences under their criminal laws, and are punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account the seriousness of such offences; the State must guarantee the hierarchy and strict control of the officials with powers to use public force and firearms; No superior official may order his subordinates to carry out this type of execution; The State must guarantee that its officials do not carry out this type of conduct, and in any case, it must fully and effectively carry out investigations into alleged cases of extrajudicial executions to precisely determine the cause, manner and time of the death, the person responsible and the procedure or circumstance that caused it, for which all the necessary budgetary and technical resources must be provided; The protection of the surviving family members, the witnesses and those carrying out the investigation must be guaranteed, and those indicated by the aforementioned executions must be removed from any position or position of power or control; The persons identified as guilty of these executions must be subjected to a judicial process and an order from a superior official or a public authority may not be invoked as justification for extralegal, extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions. (United Nations Economic and Social Council, Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions. Resolution 1989/65, May, 24th, 1989).

²⁸ National Assembly, *Organic Law of the Police Service and the National Police Corps*, on Official Gazzette of the Republic number 5.940 extraordinary, December, 7th, 2009.

²⁹ Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*, <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx>, September, 7th, 1990.

³⁰ Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*, <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx>, September, 7th, 1990.

³¹ Article 8 (United Nations General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December, 10th, 1948). Article 8 (Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights, American Convention on Human Rights, November, 22, 1969.). Article 14 (United Nations General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1978, December, 16, 1966).

³² “*Due process will apply to all judicial and administrative actions; consequently: 1. Defense and legal assistance are inviolable rights in every degree of the investigation and the process. Every person has the right to be notified of the charges for which they are being investigated, to access the evidence and to have the time and adequate means to exercise their defense. Evidence obtained in violation of due process will be void. Every person found guilty has the right to appeal the ruling, with the exceptions established in this Constitution and the law. 2. Every person is presumed innocent until proven otherwise. 3. Every person has the right to be heard in any kind of process, with due guarantees and within a reasonable and legally determined period, by a competent, independent and impartial court previously established. Anyone who does not speak Spanish or cannot communicate verbally has the right to an interpreter. 4. Everyone has the right to be judged by their natural judges in ordinary or special jurisdictions, with the guarantees established in this Constitution and in the law. No person may be brought to trial without knowing the identity of the person who is judging him, nor may he/she be prosecuted by exceptional courts or by commissions created for that purpose. 5. No person may be compelled to confess guilty or testify against himself/herself, his/her spouse, common-law partner, or relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity and second degree of affinity. The confession will only be valid if it is made without coercion of any nature. 6. No person may be punished for acts or omissions that were not provided as crimes, misdemeanors or infractions in pre-existing laws. 7. No person may be put to trial for the same facts by virtue of which they had been previously tried. 8. Any person may request the State to restore or repair the legal situation injured by judicial error, delay or unjustified omission. The right of the individual to demand the personal responsibility of the magistrate, the judge is safe; and the right of the State to act against these” (National Constituent Assembly, Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in Official Gazette of the Republic number 36.860 ordinary, December, 30th, 1999, article 49).*

³³ Special Action Forces, organ associated to the Bolivarian National Police.

³⁴ Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Corps.

³⁵ Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Command, organ associated to the National Bolivarian Guard.

³⁶ Police Investigation Service of the state of Zulia, organ associated to the Police Corps of the state of Zulia.

³⁷ Bolivarian Police Corps of the state of Zulia.

³⁸ Special Response Team, organ associated to the Bolivarian Police Corps of the state of Zulia.

³⁹ Police of the La Cañada de Urdaneta municipality.

⁴⁰ Police of the Miranda municipality.

⁴¹ Police of the Cabimas municipality.

⁴² National Bolivarian Guard.

⁴³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*, on https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol_SP.pdf, 2016.

⁴⁴ *Idem*.

⁴⁵ President of the Republic, Decree N° 4.230, by means of which the State of Alarm throughout the National Territory is decreed, given the circumstances of social order that seriously endanger public health and the security of the citizens of the Bolivarian Republic, so that the National Executive adopt urgent, effective and necessary measures for the protection and preservation of the health of the Venezuelan population, in order to mitigate and eradicate the epidemic risks related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and its possible strains, guaranteeing timely attention, effective and efficient of the cases that originate, in the Official Gazette of the Republic number 6,554 extraordinary, of July 10, 2020.

⁴⁶ World Health Organization (July, 31st, 2020), “*Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 193*”, https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200731-covid-19-sitrep-193.pdf?sfvrsn=42a0221d_4.

⁴⁷ Panorama (July, 31st, 2020), “*Avanza el covid-19: el país supera los 18.500 casos; Zulia tiene 58 más*”, <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/Avanza-el-covid-19-el-pais-supera-los-18.500-casos-Zulia-tiene-58-mas---20200731-0061.html>.

⁴⁸ El Pitazo (August, 1st, 2020), “*Omar Prieto asegura que Zulia es el estado con más recuperados de COVID-19*”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/omar-prieto-asegura-que-zulia-es-el-estado-con-mas-recuperados-de-covid-19/>.

⁴⁹ El Diario (July, 5th, 2020), “*Los embates de la pandemia se recrudecen en Zulia*”, <https://eldiario.com/2020/07/05/los-embates-de-la-pandemia-se-recrudecen-en-zulia/>.

⁵⁰ Panorama (July, 5th, 2020), “*Venezuela supera los 7.000 contagios y Zulia reporta 193 casos y 2 muertes más*”, <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/Venezuela-supera-los-7.000-contagios-y-Zulia-reporta-193-casos-y-2-muertes-mas-20200705-0044.html>.

⁵¹ El Pitazo (July, 15th, 2020), “15 hospitales atienden casos de COVID-19 en Zulia”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/15-hospitales-atienden-casos-de-covid-19-en-zulia/>.

⁵² El Pitazo (July, 21st, 2020), “Zulia | Pacientes del HUM deben llevar medicamentos para tratar el COVID-19”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/zulia-pacientes-del-hum-deben-llevar-medicamentos-para-tratar-el-covid-19/>

⁵³ El Pitazo (July, 15th, 2020), “15 hospitales atienden casos de COVID-19 en Zulia”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/15-hospitales-atienden-casos-de-covid-19-en-zulia/>.

⁵⁴ Panorama (July, 7th, 2020), “Zulia con 19 hoteles, biblioteca, universidades, Palacio de Eventos y sedes deportivas para Covid-19”, <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/Zulia-con-19-hoteles-biblioteca-universidades-Palacio-de-Eventos-y-sedes-deportivas-para-covid-19-20200707-0016.html>.

⁵⁵ El Pitazo (July, 15th, 2020), “15 hospitales atienden casos de COVID-19 en Zulia”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/15-hospitales-atienden-casos-de-covid-19-en-zulia/>.

⁵⁶ El País (July, 3rd, 2020), “Maracaibo epicentro del coronavirus en Venezuela”, <https://elpais.com/internacional/2020-07-03/maracaibo-de-epicentro-de-las-disfunciones-de-venezuela-a-foco-descontrolado-de-la-pandemia.html>.

⁵⁷ El Pitazo (July, 15th, 2020), “15 hospitales atienden casos de COVID-19 en Zulia”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/15-hospitales-atienden-casos-de-covid-19-en-zulia/>.

⁵⁸ Efecto Cocuyo (July, 29th, 2020), “Fallece cirujano Edgar Manzanero por COVID-19 en Zulia”, <https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/fallece-cirujano-edgar-manzanero-por-covid-19-en-zulia/>.

⁵⁹ Efecto Cocuyo (July, 22nd, 2020), “Fallecen dos médicos en el Zulia por COVID-19 en menos de 24 horas”, <https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/fallecen-dos-medicos-en-el-zulia-por-covid-19-en-menos-de-24-horas/>.

⁶⁰ El Pitazo (July, 19th, 2020), “Zulia | Habitantes de Isla de Toas protestan por muerte de pescador”, <https://elpitazo.net/occidente/zulia-habitantes-de-isla-de-toas-protestan-por-muerte-de-pescador/>.

⁶¹ El Nacional (July, 17th, 2020), “Asesinaron a un joven pescador en isla de Toas durante una protesta por gasolina”, <https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/asesinaron-a-un-joven-pescador-en-isla-de-toas-durante-una-protesta-por-gasolina/>.