



GEORGE GASCÓN
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

HALL OF JUSTICE

211 WEST TEMPLE STREET, SUITE 1200 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-3205 (213) 974-3500

March 6, 2023

The Honorable Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As Los Angeles County District Attorney, I urge you to investigate and secure the release of Eyvin Hernandez, a public defender devoting his life to public service in the County of Los Angeles, who has been wrongfully detained in Venezuela since March 2022.

A U.S. citizen, Mr. Hernandez was vacationing in Colombia and had no intention of entering Venezuela, according to State Department investigations. While accompanying a friend to a border town, he was confronted by what has been described in reports as a paramilitary group, a gang or official Venezuelan forces. He was accused of being a spy, hooded, hand-cuffed and forcefully taken into Venezuela, where he is currently held at the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence prison. In a letter dated November 1, 2022, Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA) Roger Carstens issued a determination that Eyvin Hernandez has been unlawfully detained.

This urgent matter requires expeditious action. Mr. Hernandez was charged with criminal association and conspiracy, which are punishable with up to 16 years in jail in Venezuela. The judicial system in Venezuela is highly compromised, and any trial against Mr. Hernandez is unlikely to produce a fair result. A September 2022 report from the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFMV) of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that the “human rights violations by State intelligence agencies, orchestrated at the highest political levels, have taken place in a climate of almost complete impunity.” The same report states that the state intelligence agency, known as SEBIN, “has tortured or otherwise ill-treated detainees - including opposition politicians, journalists, protesters, and human rights defenders...”

As District Attorney of the largest local prosecutorial office in the United States, I implore you to take the necessary steps to bring Mr. Hernandez home. His family, friends and community live in

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constant fear for the mental and physical well-being of their captured loved one and are desperate to reunite with him as soon as possible.

With respect and gratitude,



George Gascon
District Attorney