Mr Nicolás Maduro

President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,

Miraflores Palace building,

Avenida Urdaneta,

Caracas, Venezuela

(Twitter : @NicolasMaduro)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(date)

Mr. President,

As a member/supporter of ACAT Belgium, I am sending you this letter to express my deep concern regarding the situations of **Emirlendris Benítez**, **Juan Carlos Marrufo** and **María Auxiliadora Delgado**.

María Auxiliadora Delgado and her husband, Juan Carlos Marrufo, have been arbitrarily detained since March 19, 2019 for involvement in so-called “criminal activities”. These charges are based exclusively on the fact that María Auxiliadora is the sister of a retired military officer who had allegedly taken part in an attack on Nicolás Maduro. Initially, both were imprisoned at the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (GDMC), at the Boleíta detention center. On February 19, 2024, Juan Carlos was transferred to Rodeo I prison. Despite a serious deterioration in each spouse's health, the authorities denied them all medical examinations and appropriate treatment.

Emirlendris Benítez is a businesswoman who has been arbitrarily detained since August 5, 2018. She was arrested on the basis of fabricated evidence, for the mere fact of having shared a car ride with third people allegedly involved in acts of violence committed against Nicolás Maduro. Although pregnant at the time of her arrest, she was tortured and forced to interrupt her pregnancy. In 2022, she was sentenced to 30 years in jail following a clearly unfair trial. As a result of the torture and inhuman conditions of detention, she is in urgent need of medical surgery. However, the operation was refused.

Venezuela is a State party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), which article 2 prohibits torture and other ill-treatment. The country is also a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which article 9 states that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, and which article 14 stipulates that everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

**On the basis of all the above, we urge you to use your authority to:**

* **Overturn the condemnation of Emirlendris Benítez;**
* **Grant Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado the right to a fair trial;**
* **Order the immediate release of Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado;**
* **Grant Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado the right to medical examinations and adequate treatment.**

Yours sincerely,

Name, Address, signature

**Copy** to the Venezuelan embassy in Belgium, Avenue F. D. Roosevelt 10 1050 Bruxelles

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