

28 April 2021

## Venezuela: Arbitrary detention of human rights defender Orlando Moreno Gibori

On 25 April 2021, human rights defender **Orlando Moreno Gibori** was arbitrarily detained in Tucupita, Delta Amacuro. The defender was gathering information regarding the shipwreck of a boat trying to reach Trinidad and Tobago, in which at least three Venezuelans died.

[Orlando Moreno Gibori](#) is a human rights defender, environmental activist, and member of the NGO Foro Penal's team of volunteers for over 7 years. **Foro Penal** is a national NGO that provides pro bono legal assistance to arbitrarily detained persons and victims of human rights violations; Orlando Moreno Gibori is the current coordinator of the NGO in Delta Amacuro, Venezuela.

On 25 April 2021, Orlando Moreno Gibori was violently and arbitrarily detained by officers of the Venezuelan Corp of Scientific, Criminal and Criminalistic Investigations (CICPC) without an arrest warrant or detention order, while documenting the demands of relatives of the victims of the shipwreck. The boat sailed on 23 April 2021, from La Horqueta, Delta Amacuro, to Trinidad and Tobago and sank with at least 24 people aboard in Boca de Serpiente on the Venezuelan coast. At the time of the arrest, the officers did not tell him the reason why he was being taken into custody and then proceeded to transfer him to the CICPC headquarters in Tucupita. The Second Control Judge of Delta Amacuro, Dr. Lizgreana Palma, set Orlando Moreno Gibori's hearing for 28 April 2021.

Front Line Defenders reiterates its deep concern at the ongoing criminalisation facing humanitarian workers and human rights defenders in the country. This detention illustrates the pattern of harassment and persecution against those who try to alleviate and document the negative impact that the complex humanitarian emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic have had on the population in Venezuela.

Front Line Defenders condemns the misuse of the judicial system to criminalise the work carried out by Foro Penal, in particular human rights defender Orlando Moreno Gibori. Front Line Defenders reiterates its deep concern that such detentions as the one carried out against Orlando Moreno Gibori have an intimidating effect on the community of human rights defenders in Venezuela, particularly those who continue to document and denounce the humanitarian crisis.

### Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Venezuela to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Orlando Moreno Gibori as it believes the detention was motivated solely by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and safety of Orlando Moreno Gibori as well as that of other members of Foro Penal in Delta Amacuro in constant consultation with them;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Venezuela can operate in a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights.