

Distinguished Foreign Ministers
Member States of the Lima Group

February 21, 2019

With our highest consideration:

We write to express our concerns regarding the lack of progress made in the region in overcoming obstacles to migration imposed on those leaving Venezuela.

On September 3 and 4, 2018, representatives of various countries¹ met in the city of Quito with the aim of advancing agreements to provide coordinated responses to the Venezuelan human mobility crisis. One of the agreements made in this meeting was “to accept expired travel documents of Venezuelan citizens as valid identification documents for migration purposes.” However, to date, this agreement has not been translated into specific administrative measures that allow for its implementation. To the contrary, there are widespread measures that restrict Venezuelans’ entry into many countries, and recent decisions have been made which imply greater barriers of access for people who require international protection.

The member states of the Lima Group are aware that the political, institutional, and humanitarian crisis ailing Venezuela will not be overcome in the short term, and that as long as it persists, the flow of people will continue—and increase. Therefore there is an urgent need for the adoption of lasting, coordinated, long-term measures, with a perspective on protecting the people of Venezuela.

In this regard, we respectfully request that the Lima Group include, in its final declaration emerging from the upcoming meeting in Bogota, an appeal to receiving countries advocating for the immediate adoption of administrative and other measures in order to facilitate Venezuelans’ access to these countries’ territory. We also request that they advance entry guidelines in a coordinated and articulated manner, in such a way that they do not keep presenting contradictory requirements for admission to different countries, such as with verification of police records.

Moreover, we value the constant references that the Lima Group has made to Venezuela’s complex humanitarian emergency. We are also concerned about the growing trend of using aid for purposes unrelated to humanitarian principles, which is creating a scenario of greater confrontation

¹ The Republic of Argentina, Federative Republic of Brazil, Republic of Chile, Republic of Colombia, Republic of Costa Rica, Republic of Ecuador, United Mexican States, Republic of Panama, Republic of Paraguay, Republic of Peru and Oriental Republic of Uruguay

which leads to the criminalization and persecution of humanitarian workers that have long been carrying out work in Venezuela.²

For this reason we respectfully request that the Lima Group include, in its final declaration emerging from the upcoming meeting in Bogota, a paragraph rejecting the criminalization of humanitarian workers and urging all countries to refrain from using aid for any non-humanitarian ends. We request this in order to avoid further negative consequences for the recipients of aid, the most vulnerable sectors of Venezuela's population.

With nothing more to add we take this opportunity to reiterate our high esteem for you and to thank you for your efforts in contributing to the restoration of democracy in Venezuela through mechanisms that favor peaceful options over the use of force, through coordinated multilateral actions that are sensitive to any possible negative effects on the rights of those who live in Venezuela.

Sincerely,

Acceso a la Justicia – Venezuela

Acción Solidaria – Venezuela

Centro de Derechos Humanos, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello – Venezuela

Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional, CEJIL – Regional

Civilis Derechos Humanos – Venezuela

Conectas Direitos Humanos – Brazil

Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos – Peru

Dejusticia – Colombia

Instituto Migrações e Direitos Humanos – Brasil

Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos, Provea - Venezuela

Red Jesuita con Migrantes LAC – Regional

Washington Office on Latin America – WOLA – Regional/United States

² See the attached (a) Statement signed by 128 Venezuelan civil society organizations in relation to the illegal search and arbitrary detention of representatives of the Fundación Manos Amigas por la Vida (Mavid Foundation) and the confiscation of antiretroviral drugs and milk formulas for pregnant mothers and children with HIV/AIDS, by the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Corps (Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas, Penales y Criminalísticas, CICPC) in Valencia, Carabobo State, on February 15, 2019; (b) Summary of the case of arrests of doctors, pharmacists and employees of the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security in Táchira state.