

SCHOLARS AT RISK
N E T W O R K

Via email to: correo@presidencia.gob.ve

President Nicolas Maduro
Final Avenida Urdaneta
Esq. de Bolero, Palacio de Miraflores
Caracas, Distrito Capital
Venezuela

March 3, 2017

Re: Professor Santiago Guevara

Your Excellency:

I write on behalf of the Scholars at Risk Network to express concern over the arrest and detention of Professor Santiago Guevara, an economist from the University of Carabobo, apparently based on nonviolent expression. I respectfully urge you to reconsider any charges arising out of Professor Guevara's nonviolent expressive activity, and to ensure that the case against him otherwise proceeds in a manner consistent with Venezuela's obligations under international law.

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of more than 450 universities and colleges in 34 countries dedicated to protecting the human rights of scholars around the world, and to raising awareness, understanding of, and respect for the principles of academic freedom and its constituent freedoms of expression, opinion, thought, association, and travel. In cases like that of Professor Guevara, involving alleged infringement of these freedoms, Scholars at Risk investigates hoping to clarify and resolve matters favorably.

Professor Guevara, a 65-year-old economist who has taught at the University of Carabobo's Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences for 42 years, has led economic development projects in Venezuela, and has frequently commented in the media on the current administration's economic policies. SAR understands that on February 21, 2017, officers from the Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) reportedly visited Professor Guevara at his home in Valencia, where they served him with a summons instructing him to report to the DGCIM. Professor Guevara did so voluntarily later that evening, and was taken into custody. On February 23, he was reportedly brought before a military court and charged with "treason," "incitement to rebellion," and crimes against the "security and independence of the nation." While the evidentiary basis for the charges has not been disclosed, Professor Guevara's colleagues allege that his arrest was a response to his recent publications, and that DGCIM officers have questioned him specifically about his articles commenting on economic conditions and political unrest in Venezuela.

We welcome any additional information that may explain these events or clarify our understandings. Absent this, the facts as described suggest that Professor Guevara has been arrested and detained as a result of nonviolent exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and academic freedom – conduct that is expressly protected under international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights, to which Venezuela is a party.

SAR therefore respectfully urges you to direct the appropriate authorities to ensure Professor Guevara's release, drop any charges against him that arise out of his nonviolent exercise of the rights to free expression and academic freedom, and, pending such actions, to ensure that the case against him otherwise proceeds in a manner consistent with Venezuela's obligations under international law.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Robert Quinn
Executive Director

CC:

The Honorable Rafael Ramírez Carreño
Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations
335 East 46th Street
New York, New York 10017
Fax: +1(212)557-3528
Email: misionvenezuelaonu@gmail.com

The Honorable Gustavo Enrique González López
Minister of Popular Power for Interior, Justice and Peace
Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz
Esquina Platanal, Este 1, Av. Urdaneta
Caracas, Distrito Capital
Venezuela

Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar
Cafetin Jacinto
Calle Vargas, Caracas, Distrito Capital
Venezuela

The Honorable Hugbel Rafael Roa Carucí
Minister of Popular Power for Higher Education, Science and Technology
Despacho del Ministro(a) del Poder Popular para Educación Universitaria, Ciencia y Tecnología
Av Universidad
Caracas 1010
Venezuela

Dr. Jessy Divo de Romero
Rector of the University of Carabobo
Avenida Salvador Allende
Naguanagua 2005, Carabobo
Venezuela
Email: rector@uc.edu.ve

The Honorable Bernardo Alvarez
Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States
Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
1099 30th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
USA
Email: despacho.embveus@mppre.gob.ve

The Honorable Lee McClenny
Chargé d'Affaires
United States Embassy
Calle F con Calle Suapure
Urb. Colinas de Valle Arriba,
Caracas 1080
Venezuela

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520
USA

The Honorable Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Email: InfoDesk@ohchr.org