

**Scholars at Risk's Submission to the
3rd Cycle of Universal Periodic Review of Venezuela**
United Nations Human Rights Council
40th Session

Introduction

1. Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of higher education institutions dedicated to protecting threatened scholars, preventing attacks on higher education communities and promoting academic freedom worldwide. SAR has the Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC (2013), and welcomes the opportunity provided by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights to comment on conditions relating to academic freedom and attacks on higher education communities in Venezuela.
2. As part of its advocacy work, SAR monitors and analyzes attacks on higher education around the world, including within Venezuela. During this review period, SAR has received reports from colleagues within Venezuela and outside Venezuela, as well as from media, describing overall pressures and attacks on higher education throughout the country.
3. This submission is the product of a joint effort between SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project and the legal clinic of the Human Rights Centre of Ghent University, Belgium. SAR gratefully acknowledges the substantial research and drafting work of Ghent faculty and students.*
4. This submission focuses on Venezuela's compliance with its obligations under international law to protect and promote academic freedom and related rights within its territory. For more than two decades, scholars, students and higher education institutions in Venezuela have faced systemic pressures, including severe encroachments on university autonomy, targeted denials of funding to disfavored institutions, and individual attacks, such as arbitrary detention, arrest, and violence. These pressures have impacted the Venezuelan higher education sector profoundly, leading to mass migration out of the country by students and scholars, harming Venezuela's research output, and severely diminishing educational quality.

Applicable Legal Standards

5. Venezuela is bound by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
6. Academic freedom is fully and independently grounded in rights to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to education, and the right to the benefits of science, as articulated, respectively, in ICCPR Article 19, and ICESCR Articles 13 and 15(3).
7. As the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has affirmed, "the right to education can only be enjoyed if accompanied by the academic freedom of staff and students."¹

* This submission may not reflect the views of the Human Rights Centre, Ghent University, Ghent faculty and students, or individual SAR Network members, institutions, or participating individuals. SAR invites comments on this submission or inquiries about our work at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

8. In a recent report on academic freedom, the United Nations special rapporteur on the protection and promotion of freedom of opinion and expression reaffirmed the standards articulated by the CESCR, stating:

[A]cademic freedom should be understood to include the freedom of individuals, as members of academic communities (e.g., faculty, students, staff, scholars, administrators and community participants) or in their own pursuits, to conduct activities involving the discovery and transmission of information and ideas, and to do so with the full protection of human rights law.²

9. The special rapporteur explicitly recognized that academic freedom involves protections for institutional autonomy and self-governance: “States are under a positive obligation to create a general enabling environment for seeking, receiving and imparting information and ideas. Institutional protection and autonomy are a part of that enabling environment.”³
10. UNESCO, the specialized United Nations agency whose mandate includes higher education, research and human rights, has likewise defined institutional autonomy as “that degree of self-governance necessary for effective decision making by institutions of higher education regarding their academic work, standards, management and related activities consistent with systems of public accountability, especially in respect of funding provided by the state, and respect for academic freedom and human rights.”⁴
11. University autonomy is recognized in the Venezuelan University Act of 1958 and was incorporated in the Venezuelan National Constitution,⁵ which defines “a ‘permanent integral quality education’ as an essential root of democracy, a human right and a ‘public service,’ for whose provision Venezuela has the primary responsibility at all levels and for all its forms.”⁶
12. Academic freedom is enshrined in Articles 6, 7 and 9 of the University Law⁷ and in Article 36 of the Organic Law of Education.

Discussion

13. Ongoing pressures on Venezuelan higher education must be understood within a legal and policy framework that, beginning with the 1999 election of Hugo Chávez and continuing through the presidency of his successor, Nicolás Maduro, has imposed severe ideological pressures on universities, targeted professors and students, and depleted autonomous universities of resources to the point of severe dysfunction, the latter exacerbated by a decade-long economic⁸ and humanitarian crisis and the current Covid-19 pandemic.[†]

[†] Background information and analysis are drawn in significant part from SAR’s Free to Think 2020 Report, *Partner Perspective: The Decline of the Venezuelan University*, submitted by Aula Abierta and the University of Los Andes Human Rights Observatory. See SAR, Free to Think 2020 at 107, available at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Scholars-at-Risk-Free-to-Think-2020.pdf>. SAR gratefully acknowledges the ongoing

14. Beginning in 2003, through an initiative known as the “Misión Sucre,”⁹ the Chávez government established a university system to function in parallel with Venezuela’s existing, autonomous universities. These “Chavista” universities are non-autonomous—faculty and authorities’ appointments are strictly regulated and curricula are subject to government scrutiny¹⁰—ideologically driven, and according to government mandate, should operate to advance the Bolivarian socialist project.¹¹ In the years since 2003, the government has expanded the parallel university system, and taken control over a number of existing universities.¹² By 2020, almost 90% of Venezuelan universities were reportedly a part of this parallel system.¹³
15. While SAR does not distinguish between autonomous and Chavista universities in its reporting, it bears mention that only one incident reported by SAR during this review period involved a Chavista university.¹⁴ All other reported incidents involved autonomous universities, disfavored by the government and its supporters.

Violent and Coercive Attacks

16. **Government violence, wrongful detention, and other forms of coercive force** against the higher education community have been commonplace for over a decade. In 2009, Chávez ordered the violent repression of student protesters wherever a demonstration was held, telling military and police forces to “give them plenty of good tear gas.” Acts of violence, by both state and paramilitary forces were particularly common in the 2014-2019 time period.¹⁵
17. SAR has reported fourteen separate instances of state violence against nonviolent student protesters during this review period.¹⁶ On **May 24, 2017**, for example, Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) soldiers reportedly entered the campus of Orient University in the city of Bolivar and dispersed nonviolent student protesters using tear gas and firearms. Eight students were injured, and one, 22-year-old nursing student Augusto Sergio Pugas, died of a bullet wound to the head.¹⁷
18. On **November 14, 2019**, in Caracas, security forces reportedly deployed tear gas and pepper spray against university students demonstrating against threats to university autonomy and calling attention to Venezuela’s dire economic and social conditions.¹⁸ On **February 12, 2020**, unidentified individuals discharged tear gas during a master class at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV) Law School, in an apparent effort to prevent students from discussing a court ruling’s impact on the university’s autonomy.¹⁹ A similar attack occurred on the UCV campus on **February 18, 2020**.²⁰
19. **Detentions and arrests** of student protesters were also common during this review period. Between 2017 and 2019 in particular, the NGO Aula Abierta documented arbitrary detentions of at least 450 university students and 19 university professors during

contributions of Aula Abierta and the University of Los Andes Human Rights Observatory to this submission, and to work in support of academic freedom more broadly.

demonstrations.²¹ Many of the victims were reportedly wounded, and some were tortured or otherwise subjected to cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.²²

20. This review period has seen **targeted threats against students and scholars** continue unabated.
21. On **May 15, 2017**, for example, Carlos “Pancho” Ramirez, a law student and activist at the University of Los Andes (ULA), was detained by GNB soldiers, reportedly on charges of “rebellion” and “threatening or offending soldiers” in connection with student protests he had attended. He was detained for six months.²³
22. On **March 5, 2018**, Bolivarian National Intelligence Service officers reportedly detained Johan Lobo and Michael Labrador, student leaders from ULA, following televised comments they made regarding a transport strike which had recently begun in the city of Mérida. They were detained for more than three months, for at least part of which they were not permitted to communicate with lawyers or relatives.²⁴
23. On **October 9, 2019**, a criminal court in Caracas issued an order prohibiting a planned screening of a film titled “Chavismo: The Plague of the 21st Century” at Simón Bolívar University, or, for that matter, any other public space. The order followed a media campaign by supporters of the Maduro government, and an investigation by the local prosecutor’s office for the crime of “promoting or inciting hatred.”²⁵
24. On **March 2020**, Dr. Freddy Pachano, director of the University of the State of Zulia’s medical school, publicly raised concerns during the onset of Covid-19 about the lack of adequate protective equipment for medical staff. In response, Omar Prieto, Zulia’s governor, stated that “this is an issue of national security and this man has to be investigated,” ordering a criminal investigation against Dr. Pachano.²⁶ To avoid arrest, Dr. Pachano fled the country. Maracaibo, Zulia’s capital, later became the epicenter of the virus within Venezuela.
25. And on **May 14, 2020**, Diosdado Cabello, president of the National Constituent Assembly and vice president of the ruling party, publicly suggested that raids and arrests were appropriate retaliation against members of the Academy of Physics, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences who had authored a report indicating that the country’s coronavirus situation was far worse than official numbers showed.^{27, 28}
26. Fear of government reprisals has also triggered self-censorship. In September 2019, the NGO Aula Abierta held a conference on the campus of the University of Zulia, in which engineering professors were asked to analyze Venezuela’s electrical problems. Although Zulia had experienced blackouts of ten hours a day or more, professors privately informed Aula Abierta personnel that neither they, nor their colleagues, were willing to speak at the conference.²⁹

Budget Constraints

27. Public universities—both autonomous and Bolivarian institutions—depend on budgets assigned by the state, within the framework of an oil-based economy. This leaves

autonomous universities vulnerable to both economic crisis and to politicization of funding decisions. Chavista universities have been able to expand significantly over the past twenty years—facing far fewer administrative hurdles than their autonomous counterparts—and consequently have drawn a greater and greater portion of state budgets.³⁰

28. Long before the current economic crisis, scholars had expressed concerns about the distribution of resources to autonomous universities.³¹ As the crisis grew, resources appear to have been increasingly diverted away from autonomous universities and toward Chavista ones. Indeed, as noted in a recent New York Times essay, “as part of [Chávez’s] long-term strategy to weaken [the] influence [of disfavored institutions], he denied the [Central University of Venezuela] (and other public institutions) essential financial resources.”³²
29. One recent analysis reflected that assigned budgets at autonomous universities range between 1% and 30% of what is requested, with 90% of those funds generally allocated for the payment of salaries alone, practically eliminating funding for operating expenses and making much academic work impossible.³³
30. Reported deficits include:
 - a. Central University of Venezuela—which UNESCO deemed “a masterpiece of modern city planning, architecture and art” and an “outstanding example of the coherent realization of the urban, architectural and artistic ideals of the early 20th century”³⁴—in 2017 and 2019 reportedly “received just 28% of its requested annual funding, down from 44% in 2014.”³⁵ Its budget was even further reduced in 2021,³⁶ resulting in broken toilets, leaking ceilings, classrooms without electricity, broken floors and a collapsed roof.³⁷
 - b. The University of Zulia, which in 2019 operated at a 99.86% deficit, receiving only Bs. 933,583,563 (roughly USD \$142,156) of the Bs. 667,849,997,430 (roughly USD \$101 million) required to meet its operating expenses.³⁸
 - c. Simon Bolivar University, which is expected to receive only 0.5% of its requested budget in 2021.³⁹
31. These deficits severely impact access to technology and equipment, academic travel, books and journals, university infrastructures and professors’ salaries—roughly equivalent to USD \$5-\$20 per month.⁴⁰ The Covid-19 crisis exposed and exacerbated these vulnerabilities: crumbling infrastructure led to frequent electrical and internet outages, and, without a sufficient budget, the tools and training necessary to switch to online education model were frequently inaccessible.⁴¹

State Control over University Governance

32. The State’s encroachment upon university autonomy is reflected in a still unresolved, decade-old case concerning Venezuela’s Organic Law on Education (LOE). Under the LOE, enacted by Chávez in 2009, the executive consolidated control over several aspects

of education, including research, formation of new academic programs, allocation of financial resources,⁴² and teacher training.⁴³ The LOE also expanded the population of those eligible to vote for university authorities to include workers and non-academic personnel—a move seen as an effort to give control over university governance to a more pro-government voting bloc.⁴⁴

33. In 2010, a group of university rectors filed a lawsuit challenging the LOE for violating the Venezuelan Constitution’s guarantee of university autonomy.⁴⁵ As part of the suit, the rectors demanded that elections of deans, rectors, and other university officials, which had been stalled as a result of separate court actions, commence immediately.⁴⁶ The Supreme Court of Justice waited nearly a decade to issue a decision, leaving the elections of university personnel stalled, and leaving administrators in office long after the expiration of their terms. The National Council of Universities (CNU), a State body loyal to the Maduro government, took the position that, while the case was pending, if an administrator died or left office, the CNU (rather than the university) should appoint their replacement.
34. In several cases, the CNU installed government allies as university authorities. In 2017, for example, Luis Holder, a military officer was appointed academic vice-rector of Simón Bolívar University.⁴⁷ In 2019, the CNU appointed Clotilde Navarro, another government ally, as administrative vice-rector of Zulia University.⁴⁸
35. On August 27, 2019, the court finally issued a judgment on the injunction requested nearly a decade earlier, lifting the suspension of university elections and ordering that elections occur within six months. But the judgment (Judgment 0324) mandated election procedures similar to those provided in the LOE, which critics charged constitutional protections of university autonomy. The decision triggered nationwide protests.⁴⁹
36. On December 3, 2019, the National Assembly (then controlled by opposition parties) appointed scholars Manuel Rachadell Sánchez and Miguel Eduardo Alujas as representatives to the CNU. Both scholars were selected on the basis of their demonstrated concern for university autonomy. On December 9, however, the Supreme Court of Justice (widely seen as loyal to the executive branch) annulled the appointment of the scholars, claiming that the National Assembly was in contempt and that its actions had no legal effect. In addition to the annulment, the court issued sanctions against Professors Rachadell and Alujas, including a travel ban, a freeze on their bank accounts, and a ban prohibiting them from selling property and other assets. The court further ordered criminal investigations against the scholars.⁵⁰ In February 2020, amid national protests, as the deadline set by the court for university elections approached, the court suspended Judgment 0324.⁵¹ As of this report, the status of university elections, as well as the larger question of the constitutionality of the LOE remain unsettled.

Impacts of Pressures on Venezuelan Higher Education

37. The economic crisis in Venezuela, combined with the targeted pressures described above, have led to a mass exodus of scholars. Recent reports indicate that approximately 50% of professors from all Venezuelan universities,⁵² and 30% of the country’s researchers had

left by 2019.⁵³ By 2018, budget constraints and the migration of researchers had reportedly left 77% of the country's laboratories paralyzed or abandoned.⁵⁴

38. These factors have, not surprisingly, contributed to a massive diminution in the country's research output and publications. According to one report, in 1998, Venezuelan universities provided 4,8% of the journal articles from Latin America. By 2019, that number dropped to .8%.⁵⁵
39. Likewise, twenty years of eroding institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and mounting repression of dissent by students and scholars have harmed Venezuela's international standing as an environment for the free exchange of ideas. According to the Academic Freedom Index, a global analysis of national protection for academic freedom, Venezuela received a score of 0.28 out of 1.00 (a "D" ranking), placing it near the bottom quintile of the 140 countries evaluated and well below the average for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (0.77).⁵⁶

Recommendations

SAR respectfully urges UN member states to call on Venezuelan authorities to:

1. Refrain from engaging in arrests, prosecutions, or violence intended to prevent or retaliate for the nonviolent exercise of the right to academic freedom, including in particular on-campus expression;
2. Ensure wherever possible adequate funding of all public universities; take measures to ensure that funding decisions are undertaken in a transparent, equitable, and non-ideological manner; and take immediate action to rectify any past funding decisions which failed to meet this standard;
3. Ensure university autonomy, consistent with international human rights standards and Venezuela's constitution;
4. Ensure that violent attacks on scholars and students are investigated in a thorough, transparent, and public manner, and that perpetrators are held accountable;
5. Release and reverse all charges against student protesters and scholars currently imprisoned, or facing imprisonment, in connection with the nonviolent exercise of the right to free expression, academic freedom, or freedom of association, and pending such release, ensure humane treatment of detainees, due process, and access to family and counsel.

¹ CESCR, General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Article 13) (8 December 1999), para. 38.

² A/75/261, 28 July 2020 at para. 8.

³ *Ibid.* para. 9.

⁴ UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) at para. 17.

⁵ See Articles 102 and 103 of the 1999 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

⁶ See Thomas Murh and Antoni Verger, *Venezuela: Higher Education For All*, January 2006, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276918225_Venezuela_Higher_Education_For_All

⁷ See Article 9 of the University Law: “Universities are autonomous”. Within the provisions of this law and its regulations they have: 1. Organizational autonomy, under which they may adopt internal rules”.

⁸ See *Venezuela to introduce 1-million-bolivar bill as inflation persists* Reuters, 6 March 2021, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/venezuela-economy-idUSL2N2L401H>.

⁹ See Report EPIKEIA, ODHULA and ULA Venezuela, *Doctrinal universities vs. knowledge universities: the parallel university system in Venezuela 2013-2019* (“Doctrinal universities vs. knowledge universities”), available at <https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Report-Doctrinal-universities-vs.-knowledge-universities-The-parallel-university-system-in-Venezuela-2003-2019.pdf>. Misión Sucre was part of a larger set of social and economic programs known as the Plan de la Patria, or Homeland Plan. See Aula Abierta, *Restrictions and reprisals against autonomy and academic freedom in higher education system in Venezuela*, March 2016, available at <http://aulaabiervenezuela.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ODDHHULA-Venezuela-Restrictions-and-reprisals-against-autonomy-and-academic-freedom-in-higher-education-system-1.pdf>. The Plan de la Patria runs in six-year cycles, the most recent of which, for 2019-2025, is available at: <http://www.mppp.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DESPLEGABLE-PLAN-PATRIA-2019-2025.pdf>

¹⁰ Hugo Pérez Hernáiz, *Higher Education in Venezuela: Skirting University Autonomy through the Creation of a Parallel system* Venezuelan Politics and Human Rights, 19 July 2018, available at <https://www.venezuelablog.org/higher-education-venezuela-skirting-university-autonomy-creation-parallel-system/>

¹¹ See *Doctrinal universities vs. knowledge universities*, note 9, *supra* discussing Article 2 of the *Alma Mater Mission*, which “aims to generate a new institutional fabric of Venezuelan higher education in order to develop and transform higher education based on the strengthening of popular power and the construction of a socialist society.”

¹² See *Doctrinal universities vs. knowledge universities*, note 9, *supra*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-04-territorial-polytechnic-university-jos%a9-antonio-anzo%a1tegui/> As described *infra*, SAR reported incidents at a number of autonomous universities, including University of Zulia, Central University of Venezuela, University of Simon Bolivar, University of Carabobo, University of the Andes, And Andres Bello Catholic University.

¹⁵ See Derechos Universitarios, “Aula Abierta denounces multiple violations of academic freedom in Latin America,” June 5, 2020, available at <http://derechosuniversitarios.org/index.php/2020/06/05/aula-abierta-denounces-multiple-violations-against-academicfreedom-in-latin-america/>

¹⁶ See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-02-14-university-los-andes/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-03-06-university-los-andes/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-03-22-various-institutions/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-03-31-central-university-venezuela/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-04-05-tachira-experimental-university/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-04-06-university-carabobo/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-04-central-university-venezuela/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-16-andr%a9s-bello-catholic-university/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-24-orient-university/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-06-15-various-institutions/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-07-02-pedagogical-experimental-university/>; <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2018-11-14-university-of->

[carabobo/](https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2018-11-21-central-university-of-venezuela/); <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2018-11-21-central-university-of-venezuela/>;
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2019-11-14-central-university-of-venezuela/>;

¹⁷ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-24-orient-university/>

¹⁸ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2019-11-14-central-university-of-venezuela/>

¹⁹ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2020-02-12-central-university-of-venezuela/>

²⁰ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2020-02-18-central-university-of-venezuela/>

²¹ See Derechos Universitarios, “Las cifras de criminalización de la protesta y la discriminación contra universitarios en Latinoamérica son alarmantes,” May 10, 2019, available at

<http://derechosuniversitarios.org/index.php/2019/05/10/las-cifrasde-criminalizacion-de-la-protesta-y-la-discriminacion-contrauniversitarios-en-latinoamerica-son-alarmanes/>

²² See also <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-11-03-university-los-andes/>,
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-01-31-university-los-andes/>, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-03-31-central-university-venezuela/>,
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-06-15-various-institutions/>,
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-07-02-pedagogical-experimental-university/>

²³ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-15-university-los-andes/>

²⁴ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2018-03-05-university-los-andes-ula/>

²⁵ <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2019-10-08-university-of-simon-bolivar/>

²⁶ See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Scholars-at-Risk-Free-to-Think-2020.pdf>

²⁷ Rodrigo Pérez Ortega, *Scientists rush to defend Venezuelan colleagues threatened over coronavirus study* Science Magazine, 2 June 2020, available at <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/06/scientists-rush-defend-venezuelan-colleagues-threatened-over-coronavirus-study>

²⁸ See Censorship and the Health Crisis in Venezuela, Summary of Marielba Núñez Presentation The Venezuelan Tragedy – A Panel Discussion October 3, 2020, available at <https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/7b83da88-98f0-4d91-b505-6a2ee158e3cb~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

²⁹ See Derechos Universitarios, June 5, 2020, note 15, *supra*.

³⁰ See WOLA, Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas, *Venezuela’s higher education crisis worsens* 28 November 2017, available at <https://www.wola.org/analysis/venezuelas-higher-education-crisis-worsens/>

³¹ In June 2009, for example, Claudio Bifano, former president of the Venezuela Academy of Physical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, raised concerns that universities and centers of research had been subjected to drastic budget cuts that severely affected most research programs, and that restrictions had been imposed on the acquisition of scientific literature and information, as well as internet access. See Claudio Bifano, “Venezuelan Science at Risk,” Science, June 19, 2009, <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/324/5934/1514.1>

³² Vegas, Federico, *A Venezuelan World Heritage Site is In Ruins, and That’s Not By Accident*, New York Times, July 7, 2021, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/07/opinion/venezuela-landmark-university.html?searchResultPosition%3D1&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1626321482541000&usg=AOvVaw3Qnw-d8fHaVJPcINIdv_1e7

³³ See David Gómez Gamboa, Karla Velazco Silva, Innes Faría Villarreal, and Ricardo Villalobos Fontalvo, *Libertad Académica y Autonomía Universitaria: una mirada desde los derechos humanos. Referencias a Venezuela*

(2010-2019), Ediciones del Vicerrectorado Académico, Universidad del Zulia (2019), p. 106, available at <http://derechosuniversitarios.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/02/Libertad-acad%C3%A9mica-yautonom%C3%ADa-universitaria-una-mirada-desde-losderechos-humanos-Referencias-a-Venezuela-2010-2019.pdf>. For a comparative national budget for academic research, see University of Los Andes Human Rights Observatory, “El sistema paralelo universitario en Venezuela, 2003-2019,” February 2020, available at <https://www.uladdhh.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Informe-El-sistema-paralelo-universitarioen-Venezuela.-2003-2019-Descargar-1.pdf>

³⁴ See Vegas, Federico, note 32, *supra*.

³⁵ See Rachele Krygier and Anthony Faiola, “Venezuela’s universities feel the sting of economic and political crisis,” The Washington Post, November 17, 2017, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/venezuelasuniversities-feel-the-sting-of-economic-and-politicalcrisis/2017/11/15/665068aa-c59b-11e7-9922-4151f5ca6168_story.html

³⁶ See Presupuesto aprobado a la UCV corresponde al 2,27% del monto solicitado, 16 October 2020, available at <https://ucvnoticias.wordpress.com/2020/10/16/presupuesto-aprobado-a-la-ucv-corresponde-al-227-del-monto-solicitado/>

³⁷ Centro de Comunicación Nacional, President (E) Guaidó spoke out on the roof collapse in the Central University of Venezuela, 17 June 2020, available at <https://presidenciave.com/presidency/president-e-guaido-spoke-out-on-the-roof-collapse-in-the-central-university-of-venezuela/>

³⁸ See María Victoria Fermín Kancev, *Gobierno aprobó solo 0,14% del presupuesto solicitado por LUZ para 2019*, Efecto Cocuyo, 3 December 2018, available at <https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/gobierno-aprobo-solo-014-del-presupuesto-solicitado-por-luz-para-2019/>; see also *Venezuela’s education system*, Borgen Magazine, 21 October 2019, available at <https://borgenproject.org/venezuelas-education-system/>

³⁹ Carmen Victoria Inojosa, *El presupuesto 2021 deja a las universidades en la quiebra* Crónica Uno, 17 October 2020, available at <https://cronica.uno/el-presupuesto-2021-deja-a-las-universidades-en-la-quiebra/>

⁴⁰ See David Gómez Gamboa, Karla Velazco Silva, Innes Faría Villarreal, and Ricardo Villalobos Fontalvo, note 33, *supra*, at 106..

⁴¹ Maria B. Jordán, *Virus y falta de presupuesto fueron un reto para universidades* La Prensa de Lara, 21 December 2020, available at <https://www.laprensalarara.com.ve/nota/25391/2020/12/virus-y-falta-de-presupuesto-fueron-un-reto-para-universidades>.

⁴² Laurie Arnoldy, *Fact and fiction: Venezuelan education reform law*, 2010, available at <https://scholar.smu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1484&context=lbra>

⁴³ Mayda Hocevar, Nelson Riveras, David Gómez, *Threats to Academic Freedom in Venezuela: Legislative Impositions and Patterns of Discrimination Towards University Teachers and Students*, 11 December 2017 available at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Threats-to-Academic-Freedom-in-Venezuela.pdf>.

⁴⁴ See Free to Think 2020 Report, *Partner Perspective: The Decline of the Venezuelan University*, submitted by Aula Abierta and the University of Los Andes Human Rights Observatory. See SAR, Free to Think 2020 at 107, available at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Scholars-at-Risk-Free-to-Think-2020.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Venezuelan Constitution, art. 109

⁴⁶ See Free to Think 2020 Report, *Partner Perspective: The Decline of the Venezuelan University*, note 44, *supra*.

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- ⁴⁷ See Aula Abierta, “Violan la autonomía universitaria de la USB en Venezuela,” July 12, 2017, available at <http://aulaabiertavenezuela.org/index.php/2017/07/12/infringen-la-autonomia-universitariade-la-usb/>
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