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Celsa Bautista Ontiveros
Minister of Penitentiary Affairs

Ministerio del Poder Popular para Asuntos Penitenciarios
Avenida Venezuela, Edificio Platinum, Urbanización El Rosal, Municipio Chacao, Caracas, Venezuela

**Twitter/X: @CelsaBautistaO**

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Dear Minister Celsa Bautista,

**For months authorities in Venezuela have withheld medical care for victims of politically arbitrary detention Emirlendris Benítez, María Auxiliadora Delgado and Juan Carlos Marrufo**. Their safety and health cannot wait any longer and it is within your power to ensure they receive immediate medical care and that their lives are safeguarded.

Emirlendris Benítez is serving an unfair 30-year prison sentence at the INOF centre at Los Teques, Caracas, after being arbitrarily detained and subjected to torture in August 2018. María Auxiliadora is also in your custody at the same INOF centre, having been detained since March 2019 together with her husband, Juan Carlos Marrufo, who is equally in your custody at the recently re-established Rodeo I prison. All three are under your care and responsibility.

Specifically, Emirlendris requires immediate surgery to treat the conditions derived from the torture and gender-based violence she endured after her unfair arrest. María Auxiliadora awaits medical imaging and testing that are needed to prevent and treat a life-threatening condition.

Juan Carlos Marrufo, who was first arrested on 19 March 2019 by the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM) together with his wife, María Auxiliadora, was unexpectedly transferred to Rodeo I prison in February. The conditions in this prison are extremely alarming and could amount to torture and other ill treatment.

**Emirlendris Benítez, Juan Carlos Marrufo and María Auxiliadora Delgado should be immediately and unconditionally released. While they remain in your custody, their lives and health are yours to protect. We urge you to urgently grant them access to trusted and adequate medical care, including urgent testing and treatment.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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