

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
JUDICIARY
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

October 14, 2022

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

It is with profound concern that I write to you regarding a constituent, Mr. Eyvin Hernandez, who has been imprisoned in Venezuela since March 31, 2022. I urge you to act expeditiously to bring Mr. Hernandez home.

While on vacation in Colombia earlier this year, Mr. Hernandez accompanied a Venezuelan friend to the Colombia-Venezuela border to complete a routine passport requirement in order to continue on their travels together to Brazil. However, Mr. Hernandez and his friend believe they were targeted by corrupt Venezuelan officials who detained him and handed him over to the Venezuelan military counterintelligence body, Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar, where he is currently being held.

Mr. Hernandez is the son of working-class immigrants from Latin America who attended public schools in the Los Angeles area, and earned degrees in science. Mr. Hernandez joined the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office in 2006, where he has worked for the entirety of his career, and was most recently handling felony cases. He has been a passionate advocate for the most vulnerable people in the Los Angeles community: people experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse. Mr. Hernandez served as a mentor and trainer for dozens of newly-hired deputy public defenders. He also volunteered to advocate for children in the juvenile justice system.

It is my understanding that Mr. Hernandez's case is currently in the wrongful detention determination process, a necessary step to determine the transfer to the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA). Given the limited consular and diplomatic resources available to U.S. citizens in Venezuela, I encourage you to refer Mr. Hernandez's case to SPEHA. I also ask that you provide me with an update regarding his case, a timeline for your wrongful detention determination, and to provide Mr. Hernandez and his family all possible and available consular assistance in the meantime.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please let me know if I or my staff can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator