A/HRC/CRP.9

18 September 2023

English and Spanish only

Human Rights Council
Fifty-fourth session

The Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions of the Bolivarian National Police Corps and its relationship with the former Special Action Forces

International independent fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

* The present document should be read in conjunction with the official report (A/HRC/54/57).

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. In its resolution 42/25 of 27 September 2019, the Human Rights Council established the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereinafter "the mission"). The mandate of the mission was extended in September 2019 through resolution 42/25,[1] and in October 2022 through resolution 51/29, for an additional period of two years.[2]

2. The mission has the mandate to investigate gross violations of human rights, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including those related to sexual and gender-based violence, committed in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since 2014.[3]

3. The present conference room paper accompanies the report of the mission to the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/54/57) submitted in accordance with resolution 51/29.

4. In its first report to the Human Rights Council, presented in 2020, the mission identified the Special Action Forces (FAES) of the Bolivarian National Police Corps (PNB[4]) as one of the law enforcement agencies most engaged in the perpetration of crimes and serious human rights violations since 2017.[5] As stated in that report, the FAES was created in April 2016 as an "elite" tactical force within the PNB[6] and its members were described by several sources as unprofessional and "lacking in training".[7] The mission concluded that the FAES became the most lethal security force in the country, responsible for 64.5% of the deaths the mission reviewed in 2019.[8]

5. In that report, the mission also concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that officers of the FAES and the Scientific, Criminal and Forensic Investigations Corps (CICPC) carried out extrajudicial executions, and that they did not act alone, but rather as part of brigades or squads. The mission found reasonable grounds to believe that other FAES or CICPC officers who had participated in the operations contributed to the commission of these violations and crimes. However, the mission was unable to identify these individuals by name.[9]

6. In addition, the mission found that the extrajudicial executions were not isolated acts, but that there was an agreed practice to kill persons with criminal records, or presumed to have such records, even if they did not resist arrest, in order to demonstrate "results" in the fight against crime.[10] The mission concluded that specific times and places were chosen to conduct the operations, and that police vehicles and firearms were used. The mission identified that members of the FAES and the CICPC acted jointly and performed different functions to ensure that there were no relatives, neighbours or other witnesses present, in order to cover up the crime scene and simulate alleged "resistance to authority".[11] The mission recommended, as did the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[12]

[1] A/HRC/RES/42/25, para. 24.
[2] A/HRC/RES/51/29, para. 10.
[3] A/HRC/RES/45/20, para. 15.
[4] As it has done since its previous reports, the mission will henceforth use the acronym PNB to refer to the Bolivarian National Police Corps.
[5] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 202-208; paras. 2033-2060.
[6] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 202.
[7] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 204.
[8] Ibid.
[9] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 2038.
[10] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 2039; Lupa por la Vida, "Operaciones Trueno letales", 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/.
[11] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 2039.
[12] A/HRC/41/18, para. 81 (i).

to "[d]ismantle the FAES given the high number of extrajudicial executions carried out by this police force since its creation".[13]

7. At the end of December 2020, media outlets reported that the FAES would be reformed.[14] In her 2022 report, presented to the Human Rights Council in June of that year, the High Commissioner indicated that the FAES had been officially dissolved as part of the restructuring of the PNB, which began in 2021.[15]

8. In March 2023, during its last oral update to the Human Rights Council, the mission reported that

[t]he FAES were formally dissolved in June 2022. However, information in possession of the mission indicates that their main functions, commands and members have been absorbed by the new Directorate of Strategic Actions and Tactics (DAET) as part of the Bolivarian National Police.[16]

9. Based on its investigations, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that: first, there is an overlap between the functions of the former FAES and the Directorate of Strategic Actions and Tactics (DAET); second, both entities of the PNB share a same modus operandi; and third, within the high command of the DAET there are officials who led or were part of the FAES, as well as other security forces involved in human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since at least 2014.

10. The mission also has reasonable grounds to believe that there is continuity between the FAES and the DAET. In addition, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that officials whose participation in human rights violations has been denounced in the recent past – and in some cases, corroborated by the mission – have been kept by the Government in the top command positions of this police directorate.

B. Methodology

11. As in previous reports, the mission adopted the methodology and best practices developed by the United Nations for human rights fact-finding investigations. The mission applied the principles of independence, impartiality, objectivity, transparency and integrity. The working methodology which was used consisted of:

1) conducting confidential interviews, both in person and through secure telephone or video connections, with former FAES and SEBIN officials, witnesses of alleged human rights violations perpetrated by the FAES and the SEBIN, persons with access to internal DAET information, and victims' lawyers and relatives;

2) collecting and analysing official documents, including organizational charts and criminal records, and public statements and declarations by authorities and public officials;

3) collecting and analysing documentary information from other sources, including civil society organizations, human rights organizations, media, and open sources; and

4) collecting and reviewing photographic and video information obtained from former FAES and SEBIN officials, from official web pages of the Venezuelan government and its security forces, from open sources and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube).

[13] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation No. 48.

[14] Proiuris, Un enroque de dependencias permitiría actuación encubierta de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at https://www.proiuris.org/?p=63830; TalCual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet.

[15] A/HRC/50/59, para. 11. However, the mission could not find any official document referring to such a dissolution.

[16] YouTube video, UN Human Rights Council (@UNHumanRightsCouncil), Venezuela: informe verbal actualizado de la Misión de determinación de los hechos | HRC52, 22 March 2023. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83St00ng_18 /. [min. 09:35].

12. The mission decided to publicly name the persons who held or hold positions of responsibility in the former FAES and the DAET, including senior officials and other commanders (infra, section III.4). Given the purpose of the present investigation, the mission did not arrive at any conclusions regarding the possible criminal responsibility of the aforementioned persons, and referred, where appropriate, to the conclusions already published in its previous reports. However, given the series of allegations of violations and crimes committed by officers working for these bodies, their possible criminal responsibility should be investigated by competent judicial authorities acting in full respect for procedural guarantees and due process norms.

II. Precursors of the DAET

A. The Operations for the Liberation of the People (OLPs) and the Operations for the Humanistic Liberation of the People (OLHPs)

13. As detailed in the mission's first report, the Operations for the Liberation of the People (OLPs) were joint military and police operations that were carried out since July 2015 with the aim, according to the Government, of combating organized crime, particularly drug trafficking, extortion, robbery, kidnapping and homicide.[17] The mission collected information that indicates that these operations may also have been aimed at "social cleansing".[18]

14. The OLPs were directed from the highest level of Government, as was confirmed by President Maduro himself, referring to the role of the Minister of the Interior in the OLPs.[19] State representatives stated on 19 occasions documented by the mission that the President had directly ordered OLPs.[20]

15. The OLPs were described by human rights organizations as a "carte blanche for the security forces to commit excesses and abuses against residents of working-class areas".[21] According to a report on the OLPs published by the Public Prosecutor's Office, the number of people who died in these operations in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela between July 2015 and March 2017 was 505 (502 men, three women, including 27 minors).[22] Meanwhile, the mission recorded 413 people killed (306 men, including 16 minors, and three women) in the 140 cases[23] examined for the 2020 report. Eight of these cases involved up to 10 or more deaths in a single operation.[24] The mission's investigations confirmed that in several cases the security forces failed to comply with international standards for the use of lethal force and that human rights violations and crimes were committed.[25]

[17] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1020-1024.

[18] In a televised statement, President Maduro accidentally referred to the OLPs as "cleansing" operations. YouTube Video, La Patilla Patillavideo, "Maduro llama operación de «limpieza» a la OLP", 23 July 2015. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1GXUa9Tj58. Furthermore, according to former Attorney General, Luisa Ortega Díaz, when the Public Prosecutor's Office expressed concern about the high level of complaints received about the OLPs, the Minister of the Interior said that the orders had come from the President and that the order was to carry out a "social cleansing". Declaration by former Attorney General, Luisa Ortega Díaz, to the International Criminal Court, 16 November 2017, on file with the mission.

[19] YouTube video, Cadena completa, Nicolás Maduro activa seis líneas para combatir la inseguridad, 18 January 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZIia4O6X60.

[20] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1023 (Compilation of videos on file with the mission).

[21] Provea, Hace cinco años el "Operativo de Liberación del Pueblo" abrió el camino para la represión total en Venezuela, 12 July 2020. Available at: https://provea.org/actualidad/hace-cinco-anos-el-operativo-de-liberacion-del-pueblo-abrio-el-camino-para-la-represion-total-en-venezuela/.

[22] Report of the Public Prosecutor's Office, "Actuaciones del Ministerio Público relacionadas con las OLP en Venezuela julio 2015 - marzo 2017". Available at: https://www.scribd.com/document/360500346/Informe-del-Ministerio-Publico-sobre-OLP-2017#.

[23] A case refers to a particular incident, event or occurrence, which could involve one or more victims.

[24] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1040.

[25] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 2017-2025.

16. One of the operations that was most criticized was the one carried out in Barlovento, Miranda State, in October 2016.[26] In its 2020 report, the mission concluded that it had reasonable grounds to believe that this operation had particular characteristics, as it was carried out in accordance with a military plan (Plan Rondón) and with the leadership and sole participation of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB).[27] The mission concluded with reasonable grounds to believe that, during Operation Barlovento, arbitrary detentions, acts of torture, extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances were committed against 12 men.[28]

17. On 15 January 2017, following the public outcry caused by Operation Barlovento, the Government re-launched the OLPs under the name of "Operations for the Humanist Liberation of the People" (OLHPs).[29] The OLHPs were presented as "search units against paramilitarized gangs, criminal gangs that operate within a territory and subject that community to violence, to criminality",[30] and it was emphasized that they would respect human rights.[31]

18. The OLHPs were conducted under the joint responsibility of the Ministry of People's Power for Internal Relations, Justice and Peace (Ministry of the Interior) and the Ministry of People's Power for Defence (Ministry of Defence), unlike the OLPs, which were only under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior.[32]

19. In January 2017 the Government also approved the Action Protocol for the State Security Forces in the Operation of Humanist Liberation of the People[33] which defined the modes of participation and responsibilities of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the various security agencies, including the PNB, the CICPC, the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN) and the state and municipal police.[34] The document also contains regulations on proportional use of potentially lethal force, medical assistance to injured and affected persons, notification of their families, and immediate communication of the facts to supervisors.[35]

20. According to different media outlets, the OLHPs began in January 2017 and were carried out until mid-July of the same year, that is, for just over six months.[36] In the operation carried out in the El Valle district of Caracas on 10 March 2017 alone, nine deaths and 50

[26] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1165-1220.

[27] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 2028.

[28] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1218.

[29] YouTube video, Luigino Bracci Roa from Venezuela, "Cadena completa: Nicolás Maduro activa seis líneas para combatir la inseguridad", 18 January 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZIia4O6X60. [min. 1:15.00]

[30] El Nuevo Herald, Gobierno venezolano asegura que nuevo plan de seguridad no es represivo, 18 January 2017. Available at: https://www.elnuevoherald.com/noticias/america-latina/venezuela-es/article127217494.html/.

[31] Ibid.

[32] BBC Mundo, Una pena de muerte disimulada: la polémica Operación de Liberación del Pueblo, la mano dura del gobierno de Venezuela contra el crimen, 28 November 2016. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-38126651#:~:text=El%20ministro%20de%20Relaciones%20Relaciones%20Interiores,el%20responsable%20de%20de%20la%20OLP.https://www.scribd.com/document/360500479/Protocolo-de-Actuacion-de-Los-Cuerpos-de-Seguridad-de-Estado-en-La-OLHP.

[33] Ministry of People's Power for Internal Relations, Justice and Peace, Protocolo de actuación de los cuerpos de seguridad del estado en la operación de liberación humanista del pueblo, January 2017. Available at: https://www.scribd.com/document/360500479/Protocolo-de-Actuacion-de-Los-Cuerpos-de-Seguridad-de-Estado-en-La-OLHP.

[34] Ibid., paras. 53-59.

[35] Ibid.

[36] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1025, 1031; Táchira, Press release: Nueva fase de la OLHP derrotará bandas criminales paramilitarizadas en Venezuela, 18 January 2017. Available at: http://www.tachira.gob.ve/2017/01/18/nueva-fase-de-la-olhp-derrotara-bandas-criminales-paramilitarizadas-en-venezuela/

arrests were registered.[37] In this case, the mission concluded that two brothers were extrajudicially executed by PNB anti-drug agents and that their relatives were victims of arbitrary detention.[38]

B. The Special Action Forces (FAES)

21. The Special Action Forces (FAES) were a tactical force of the PNB specialized in the fight against crime and terrorism, which were active between 2017 and 2022.[39] According to several sources, the FAES and its operations were a continuation of the OLP/OLHP, as they shared their same purpose and modus operandi.[40]

22. According to different sources, the FAES were created on 26 April 2016[41] and announced officially on 14 July 2017, during a speech by President Maduro at the joint graduation ceremony of the National Experimental University of Security (UNES) of the PNB police training program.[42] At this event, President Maduro officially presented the FAES. Division General Alexis Escalona Marrero, Vice Minister of Prevention and Citizen Security, indicated that this force would begin its work with 641 officials,[43] and Major General Néstor Reverol, Minister of the Interior,[44] indicated that they would be an immediate reaction force to address criminal violence throughout the national territory. A few weeks later, in another graduation speech at the UNES, President Maduro offered "all the support for the FAES in its daily work of providing security to the people of Venezuela."[45]

23. In the investigations for its previous reports, the mission was unable to identify the legal basis for the creation of the FAES, nor was it able to access their operating protocols, organizational charts or other similar documents.[46] As a result of its most recent investigations, the mission obtained information from an internal PNB source indicating that the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE[47]); the Directorate of Intelligence and Strategy (DIE), which was renamed the Directorate of Strategic Intelligence;[48] the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DIP) and the Directorate Against Organized Crime (DCDO)[49] were all linked to the FAES at some point after 2017, and then became part of the DAET (infra).[50]

[37] Efecto Cocuyo, Las OLHP siguen no ser "humanitarias", aseguran expertos, 11 March 2017. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/sucesos/las-olhp-siguen-sin-ser-humanitarias-aseguran-expertos/.

[38] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1264.

[39] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 202-208.

[40] Human Rights Watch, Venezuela: Ejecuciones extrajudiciales en zonas de bajos recursos, 18 September 2019. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/es/news/2019/09/18/venezuela-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales-en-zonas-de-bajos-recursos

[41] Provea, FAES opera como una fábrica de ejecuciones en zonas populares, 4 July 2019. Available at: https://provea.org/actualidad/faes-opera-como-una-fabrica-de-ejecuciones-en-zonas-populares/

[42] Voz de América, ¿Qué hacen las FAES en Venezuela y por qué las señala la ONU y HRW?, 20 September 2019. Available at: https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/que-hacen-las-faes-en-venezuela-y-por-que-las-se%C3%B1ala-la-onu-y-hrw-/5092055.html; YouTube video, Luigino Bracci Roa de Venezuela, Maduro en la graduación conjunta en la UNES de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 14 de julio de 2017, 15 July 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ43MSRCeUA. [min. 1:32:27]

[43] Ibid.

[44] YouTube video, Luigino Bracci Roa de Venezuela, Maduro en la graduación conjunta en la UNES de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 14 de julio 2017, 15 July 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ43MSRCeUA. [min. 1:38:05]

[45] YouTube video, Héctor Antolínez, Nicolás Maduro ofreció todo su apoyo al FAES tras informe Bachelet, 9 September 2019. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhBtA9KTV9E.

[46] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 202.

[47] Instagram post, FAES-UOTE [@dcdo.cpnb], 11 July 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CRNQIkStqe9/?img_index=3

[48] Instagram post, FAES-UOTE [@dcdo.cpnb], 12 July 2021. Available at https://www.instagram.com/p/CRQGgjhNDX3/?img_index=2

[49] Instagram post, FAES-UOTE [@dcdo.cpnb], 17 July 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CRb7JcmNiIb/

[50] Interview OOIV053.

24. In her 2019 report on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, presented to the Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the operations of the FAES, concluding that there were reasonable grounds to believe that many of the extrajudicial executions committed prior to 2019 were perpetrated by the security forces, in particular the FAES. The High Commissioner expressed concern that the authorities could be using the FAES, as well as other security forces, as part of a policy of social control.[51] In this report, the High Commissioner called on the Venezuelan State to "[d]issolve the Special Action Forces of the Bolivarian National Police and establish an impartial and independent national mechanism, with the support of the international community, to investigate extrajudicial executions during security operations, ensure accountability of perpetrators and redress for victims".[52]

25. During her oral update to the Human Rights Council in September of the same year, the High Commissioner noted that her office continued to document cases of possible extrajudicial executions committed by the FAES and indicated that an NGO had identified 57 new cases in Caracas, which reportedly took place during the month of July 2019.[53] On that occasion, the High Commissioner reiterated her recommendation to dissolve the FAES and expressed concern about the support for their actions at the highest level of the Government.[54]

26. As mentioned above, in its first report the mission concluded that the FAES was the most lethal State security force in 2019. The mission stated that it had reasonable grounds to believe that, together with the CICPC, the FAES carried out extrajudicial killings in the context of security operations against suspected criminals and criminal gangs, particularly in marginalised neighbourhoods.[55] In this regard, the mission concluded that, in such operations, both the FAES and the CICPC shot victims at close range in their vital areas, and in the official version submitted stated that the person had been killed in "a confrontation" or in "an exchange of fire". The mission also identified a pattern of allegations that the police attempted to cover up the killings by simulating confrontations, including altering crime scenes, simulating shootings or escapes by the victims, and "planting" weapons, among others.[56]

27. While the most documented area of FAES intervention was in security operations against organized crime, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that they also participated in operations and repressive actions against real or perceived opponents of the Government, committing violations and crimes. This conference room paper also addresses this dimension of the FAES' operations (infra).

28. The progressive internal transformation of the FAES, which culminated in its dissolution, began in December 2020.[57] At that time, the regional FAES became part of the Strategic Intelligence Directorate (DIE) under the command of General Commissary Ronny González Montesinos.[58] Commissary Leonel García was then the Deputy Director of the DIE, while Commissaries Hugo Méndez and José Márquez served as Assistant Directors.[59] The FAES in Caracas remained under the command of its Director, Major Commissary José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, seconded by Chief Commissary Richar Contreras, as Deputy Director, and Chief Commissary Florencio Escalona as Head of Operations.[60]

[51] A/HRC/41/18, para. 78.
[52] A/HRC/41/18, para. 81(i).
[53] High Commissioner for Human Rights, Oral update on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 9 September 2019.
[54] Ibid.
[55] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1275 - 1278.
[56] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1281, 1282.
[57] Proiuris, Un enroque de dependencias permitiría actuación encubierta de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://www.proiuris.org/?p=63830; TalCual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid; Interview OOIV053.
[60] Ibid.

29. On 20 April 2022, new security operations, known as *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations, were launched with the specific objective of dismantling criminal organizations.[61] These operations were coordinated by the Strategic Operational Command of the Bolivarian National Armed Force (CEOFANB), with the participation of the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO) and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DIP) of the PNB, as well as the National Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Command (CONAS) of the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB).[62]

30. According to several people present during the arrests and raids carried out in the first *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations, the security agents who intervened identified themselves as members of the FAES.[63] In Operations *Trueno* ("Thunder") I and II, carried out in Guárico State and Yaracuy State in April and May 2022 respectively, eight civilians were reported killed[64] and 56 detained.[65]

III. The Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

31. On 27 July 2022, the General Commander of the PNB, Major General Elio Estrada Paredes, presided over the presentation ceremony of the new Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET) at El Helicoide.[66] According to some sources, one of the first operations in which the DAET intervened was Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") III, carried out against alleged criminal gangs between 31 August and 5 September 2022.[67]

A. Legal framework

32. On 13 April 2021, by Decree number 4582, President Nicolás Maduro ordered the restructuring of the PNB.[68] In the same decree, he stipulated that the process would last six

[61] Últimas Noticias, Operación Trueno retumba en Guárico contra el Tren del Llano, 20 April 2022, Available at: https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/general/operacion-trueno-retumba-en-guarico-contra-el-tren-del-llano-2/. The "Tren del Llano" is a criminal organization that has been operating since 2016 in the José Tadeo Monagas municipality of Altagracia de Orituco. This organization is known for carrying out illegal activities such as extortion or charging protection money for traders and farmers in Guárico and the northwest of the state. Diario contraste noticias, Células de la banda delictiva del "Tren del Llano" siguen activas en el país, 28 June 2023. Available at: https://www.diariocontraste.com/2023/06/celulas-de-la-banda-delictiva-del-tren-del-llano-siguen-activas-en-el-pais/#ixzz8BJv5SIcd.

[62] Interview OOIV053; Tal Cual, Un mes en vilo llevan habitantes de Guárico por operativo policial, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/un-mes-en-vilo-llevan-habitantes-de-guarico-por-operativo-policial/.

[63] Internal mission document TTDC00, DV_OperaciónTrueno_FFM_2023.pdf, submitted to the mission by the NGO Defiende Venezuela, June 2023; Tal Cual Digital, Un mes en vilo llevan habitantes de Guárico por operativo policial, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/un-mes-en-vilo-llevan-habitantes-de-guarico-por-operativo-policial/.

[64] Lupa por la vida, Operaciones trueno letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/.

[65] Tweet by Remigio Ceballos Ichaso [@CeballosIchaso1], 22 April 2022. Available at: https://twitter.com/CeballosIchaso1/status/1517609988646133760.

[66] Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/; Diario de Guayana, CPNB inauguró Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas, 28 July 2022. Available at: https://eldiariodeguayana.com.ve/cpnb-inauguro-direccion-de-acciones-estrategicas-y-tacticas/

[67] Correo del Caroni, Unos 8 muertos y más de 20 detenidos deja Operativo Trueno en Guárico, 5 September 2022. Available at: https://correodelcaroni.com/region/sucesos/unos-8-muertos-y-mas-de-20-detenidos-deja-operativo-trueno-en-guarico/; Agencia Occidental de noticias, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, July 27, 2022. Available at: https://fundaaon.com/inauguran-direccion-de-acciones-estrategicas-y-tacticas-de-la-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

[68] Decree No. 4582, Official Gazette No. 42.105, 13 April 2021.

months and that it could only be extended once, for the same period of time, by means of a resolution of the Executive Vice-President.[69]

33. The restructuring of the police force was entrusted to a Restructuring Commission chaired by the Minister of the Interior, with the responsibility, inter alia, to submit the restructuring plan to the President of the Republic and to implement it in all organizational, functional and operational aspects of the police force.[70]

34. According to Decree number 4582, the restructuring plan was to contain the definition of the organizational, administrative and functional structure of the PNB, the reforms or changes needed to achieve greater efficiency in the fulfilment of goals and objectives, and the regulatory reforms necessary for the functioning of the police force.[71] The decree also specified that the restructuring should be carried out "within the framework of the parameters of respect for human rights".[72]

35. On 11 October 2021 the Executive Vice-President approved resolution number 009/2021 extending the PNB restructuring process by six months.[73] The extension was justified by the complexity of the restructuring process and the need to fully comply with the principles of effectiveness, transparency, cooperation and efficiency provided for in the Constitution.[74]

36. Once the extended deadline expired on 13 April 2022, there was no public information on the outcome of the police restructuring, nor on the creation of new directorates or units. However, three months later, on 27 July 2022, the General Commander of the PNB presented the DAET as a new police directorate in the framework of the security plan *Gran Misión Cuadrante de Paz* ("Great Peace Quadrant Mission").[75] The new Directorate was linked to Quadrant 2, against corruption,[76] and Quadrant 7, for the strengthening and expansion of the PNB.[77] At the inauguration of the DAET, the General Commander of the Police announced that the new directorate would be composed of the 10 special divisions for immediate action, in order to centralise all special operations.[78] As in the case of the FAES, the mission has not been able to access any norm, guideline, protocol or other document regulating the functioning and operations of the DAET, as such documents are not public.

B. Organization and functions

37. The mission has been able to access two PNB organizational charts. The first is an outdated organizational chart that was available at the time of writing on the PNB's official

[69] Ibid., art. 2.

[70] Ibid., arts. 3 and 4; Acceso a la Justicia, Reestructuración del Cuerpo de Policía Nacional Bolivariana, CPNB, 1 May 2021. Available at: https://accesoalajusticia.org/reestructuracion-del-cuerpo-de-policia-nacional-bolivariana-cpnb/.

[71] Decree No. 4582, Official Gazette No. 42.105, 13 April 2021, art. 5, para. 3.

[72] Decree No. 4582, Official Gazette No. 42.105, 13 April 2021.

[73] Resolution No. 009/2021, Official Gazette No. 42.231 of 11 October 2021.

[74] Ibid.

[75] A Peace Quadrant is understood as the basic unit of territorial organization, geographically delimited, as part of the Popular System of Protection for Peace (SP3) and the Integral Defence of the Nation; where the functions that guarantee the development of the socio-cultural, educational, economic, environmental and political spheres are executed, as well as the safeguarding of the physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity of people and goods in the face of any risk or vulnerability. Ministry of Popular Power for Internal Relations, Justice and Peace, Gran Misión Cuadrantes de Paz, p. 9, 16 July 2018. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CUADRANTES_DE_PAZ.pdf.

[76] Ministry of Interior, Gran Misión Cuadrantes de Paz, p. 14, quadrant 2, 16 July 2018. Available at http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CUADRANTES_DE_PAZ.pdf.

[77] Ministry of Interior, Gran Misión Cuadrantes de Paz, p. 18, quadrant 7, 16 July 2018. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CUADRANTES_DE_PAZ.pdf.

[78] Interview OOIV053; Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccionacciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

website (Table 1).[79] Despite the different changes that the PNB has undergone in its organization, the organizational chart continues to reflect the structure corresponding to the partial reform of the PNB's organic regulations carried out in August 2014[80] - i.e. before the creation of the FAES (2017) and the DAET (2022).

38. As it is an outdated organizational chart, it does not reflect the creation of other police directorates established after 2014, such as the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO) or the General Directorate of Operations and Tactical Actions (DGOAT), which are analysed below. In this organizational chart, among the different components of the PNB, the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE), and not the FAES, is the only entity in charge of special operations. The UOTE is at a second level ("advisory and support level") in the police chain of command, with the PNB General Commander above it, at the "top level", and the PNB General Commander above them, the Vice-Minister of the Integrated Police System. The Vice-Minister is above the Minister of the Interior in this chain of command.

39. At the third, or "substantive level", there are seven directorates reporting to the PNB Commander General: the Directorate of Land Transit, the Directorate of Strategic Intelligence, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the Directorate of Community Police, the Directorate of Public Order, the Directorate of Surveillance and Patrolling, and the Directorate of Migration Police.

40. According to a source interviewed by the mission, in the gradual process of transformation of the FAES, the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO) - to which the Terrorism and Subversion Unit (*Unidad de Terrorismo y Subversión*[81]) was attached - was created, under Chief Commissary Richar Contreras.[82] The mission was unable to obtain official information regarding the establishment of the DCDO and its location within the PNB's organizational chart, as well as the date of its creation. The first public references to the DCDO date back to April 2021, when the DCDO logo was published on its social networks.[83] In May 2021, several media outlets referred to its creation and the replacement of the logos in the FAES offices with those of the DCDO.[84]

[79] Ministry of the Interior, Bolivarian National Police Corps, (2023). Available at: https://policianacionalbolivariana.org/Organigrama.

[80] Decree No. 1.152, Chapter II, 5 August 2014, Official Gazette No. 40.468.

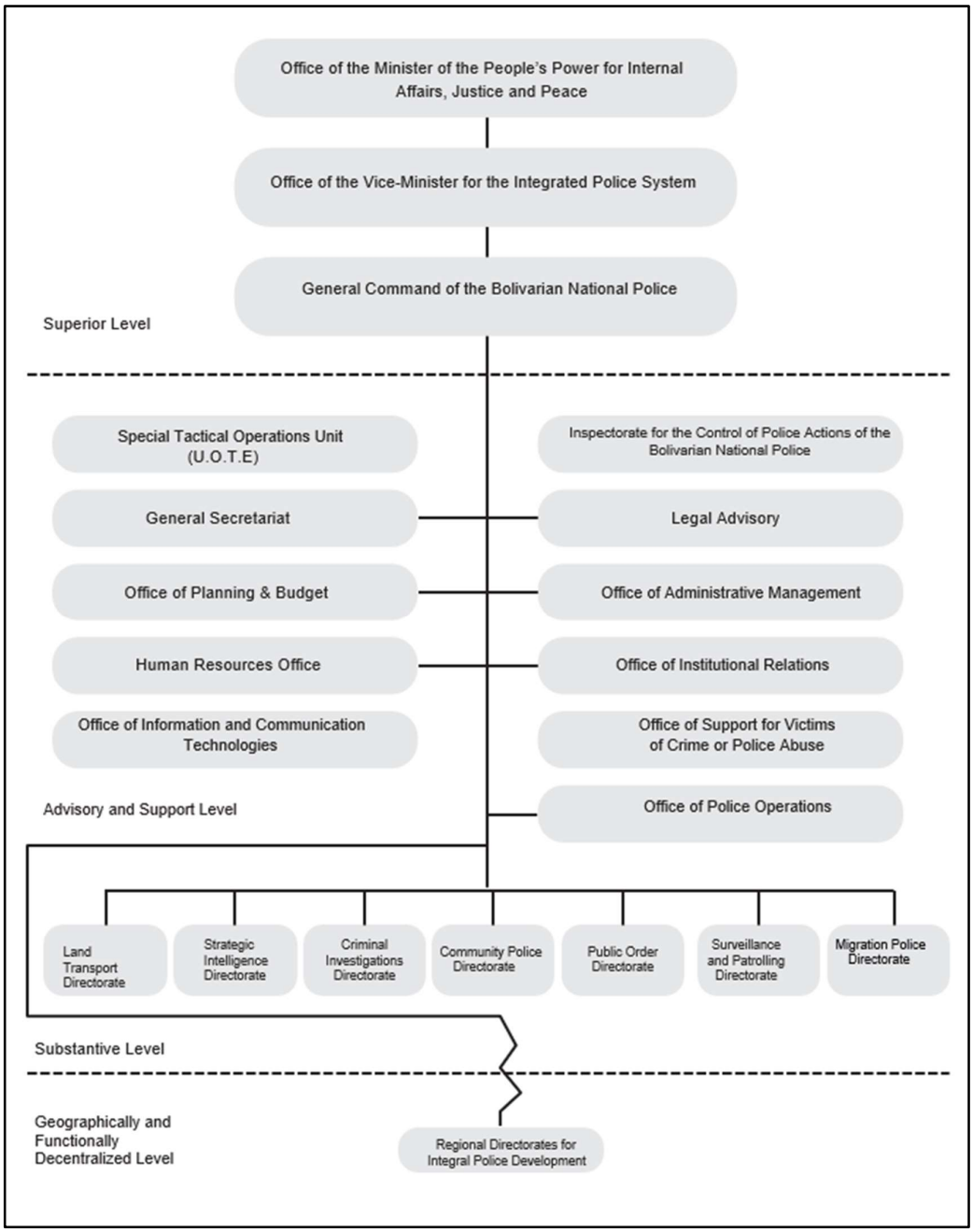
[81] Instagram post, DCDO.CPNB [@dcdo.cpnb], 10 November 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CkyHUv3AmZW/

[82] Interview OOIV053; Somos tu voz, Marino Alvarado: Creación de dcdo es solo cambio de nomenclatura para la FAES, 21 May 2021. Available at: https://somostuvoz.net/marino-alvarado-creacion-de-dcdo-es-solo-cambio-de-nomenclatura-para-la-faes/; Instagram post, DCDO.CPNB [@dcdocpnb], 15 April 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CNsxNSMlYZk/?hl=es/.

[83] Ibid.

[84] El Diario, Sustitución de las FAES por la DCDO, una "operación maquillaje", 27 May 2021. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2021/05/27/sustitucion-faes-por-dcdo-operacion-maquillaje/https://eldiario.com/2021/05/27/sustitucion-faes-por-dcdo-operacion-maquillaje/; Tweet, PROVEA [@_Provea], 21 May 2021. Available at: https://twitter.com/_Provea/status/1395820050666475524

Table 1:
Organizational chart of the Bolivarian National Police[85]



Source: Mission's own elaboration, based on the official organigram published at: https://policianacionalbolivariana.org/Organigrama

41. The 2021-2022 police reform brought about a change in the structure of the PNB, which is reflected in a second organizational chart (Table 2) that is not on the official websites, but which is in force at least from February 2023. The mission had access to this second organizational chart through a source with access to internal PNB information.[86]

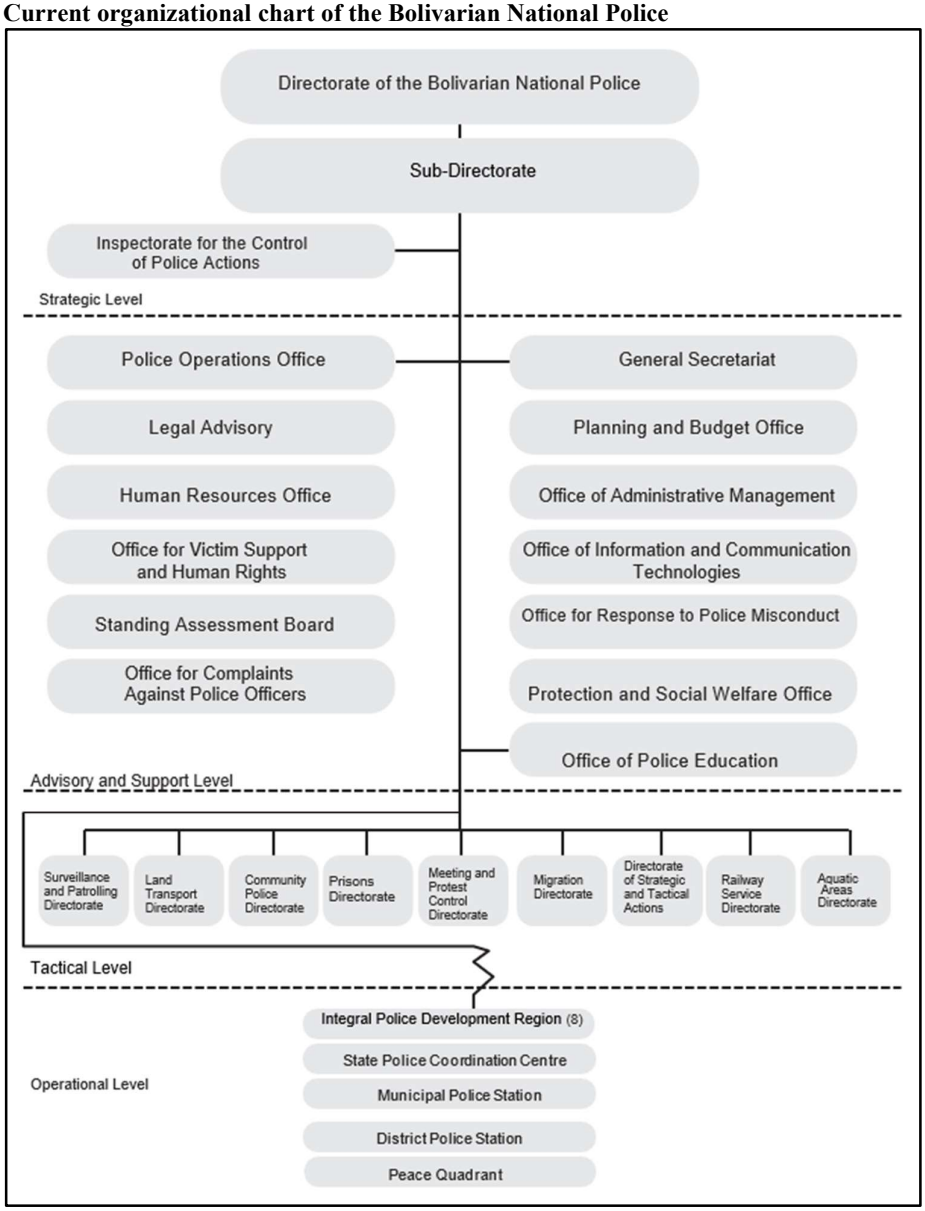
42. This second organigram shows changes in relation to the first organigram of 2014, such as the inclusion, at the "strategic level" ("top level" in the 2014 organigram) of a Sub-Directorate below the National Directorate of the PNB. The Sub-Directorate includes the

[85] Ministry of the Interior, Bolivarian National Police Corps, (2023). Available at: https://policianacionalbolivariana.org/Organigrama

[86] Interview OOIV071.

Inspectorate for the Control of Police Action, which in the 2014 organizational chart was at the second level of the chain of command, together with other components that made up the "advisory and support level".

Table 2:
Current organizational chart of the Bolivarian National Police



Source: Mission's own elaboration, based on document submitted to the mission.[87]

43. The "advisory and support level" of the current organigram contains 13 components, eight of which were also included in the 2014 organigram. It should be noted that the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE), which, according to the 2014 organizational chart, reported directly to the PNB Commander General, is no longer reflected at this level.

44. The "tactical level" of the new organigram (formerly "substantive level") contains nine Directorates, four of which also appeared in the 2014 organigram and five new ones, including the DAET, which reports directly to the PNB Deputy Directorate. At the last level, the "operational level" (called "geographically and functionally decentralized level" in the 2014 organigram), there are five components.

[87] Interview OOIV071; Official document OODOC006.

45. As for the DAET, the new organizational chart does not reflect the components of which it is comprised. However, based on its research,[88] the mission was able to reconstruct its internal structure as follows:

- At the first level, a Directorate, a Deputy Directorate, a Sub-Directorate and an Operations Directorate.
- At the second level, 10 special immediate action divisions, namely: Criminal Investigations Division (DIP), Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE), Motorised Division, Division Against Organised Crime (DCDO), with its Unit Against Terrorism and Subversion (UCTS), Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division, Canine Division (DIV-K9), Anti-Drug Division (DCD), Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE), Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery (DCHRV), and Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE).[89]

46. This structure can be seen in an organizational chart that the mission prepared on the basis of the information gathered (Table 3, infra).

47. Compared to the PNB's 2014 organizational chart, the UOTE was absorbed by the DAET, as were the DIP and the DIE. The latter ceased to be "directorates" of the PNB to become "divisions" of the new DAET. For its part, the DCDO, which did not appear in the 2014 organizational chart as it was created later (supra), also became a division of the DAET.

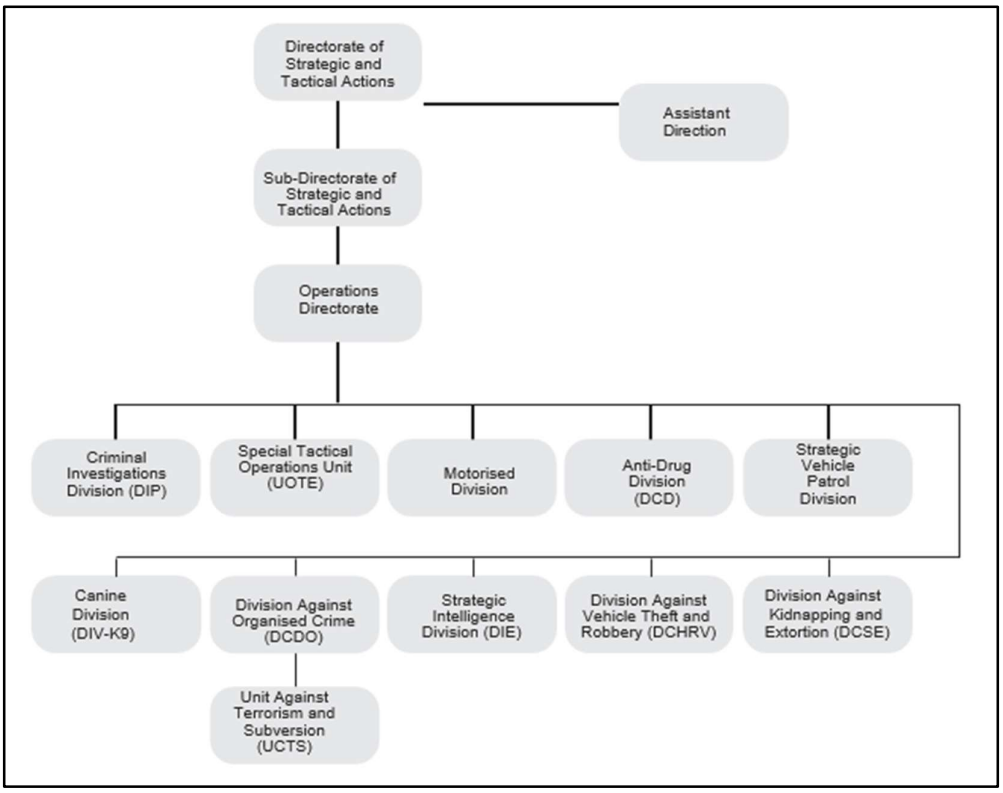
48. Given the apparent functions of its 10 divisions, the DAET's mission does not seem to be limited to only those functions suggested by its official name ("strategic and tactical actions"). In fact, the components of this Directorate have functions related to the fight against organized crime (drugs, car theft, extortion, kidnapping), patrolling, intelligence and investigation, all typical and principal functions of a police force, thus turning the DAET into an enhanced Directorate. A source with access to internal PNB information told the mission that the power of the DAET is such that its commander has more influence than the PNB commander himself.[90]

[88] Interview OOIV053; Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

[89] Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

[90] Interview OOIV053.

Table 3:
Organigram of the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions



Source: Mission's own elaboration

C. Modus operandi

49. The FAES operations and actions that took place between 14 July 2017[91] and 26 July 2022 were mainly carried out in the framework of the fight against organized crime. However, the mission documented that FAES were also involved in the repression of protests and in the selective political repression of persons opposed to the government or perceived as such.[92] In both areas, the FAES followed a certain modus operandi which, in general, was reproduced in the actions of the DAET and the components of the PNB which were absorbed, as divisions, by this Directorate.

1. The modus operandi of the DAET in the framework of security operations to combat crime.

50. In this section, the mission analyses the modus operandi of the DAET vis-à-vis that of its predecessor the FAES in relation to its actions in the framework of anti-crime security operations. The analysis takes into account the mission's findings in its previous reports with regard to the FAES and what has been documented since 2022 with regard to the DAET and its participation in the so-called *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations, which are discussed infra.

a) The modus operandi of FAES

51. For its 2020 report, the mission investigated 11 cases of killings by state security forces, in particular the FAES and the CICPC, in which 18 people were killed.[93]

[91] BBC World, Venezuela: the FAES, the controversial elite police created by Nicolás Maduro and accused of being an extermination group, 11 December 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50677411.
[92] A/HCR/51/CRP.3, para. 55.
[93] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 999.

52. The modus operandi of the FAES can be characterised as follows:

- Neighbourhoods cordoned off and residents ordered to stay indoors: In several cases, neighbourhoods were cordoned off and residents were ordered to stay indoors. Some residents were able to see relevant events or hear gunshots or shouts.[94]
- Targets selected: police officers directly approached the houses where the targeted persons lived, suggesting prior intelligence work to identify and locate the targets.[95] In the cases investigated, the FAES kept files with information on the persons sought, including photos, names, nicknames, alleged crimes and the identity of the person implicating the potential victim.[96]
- Time of the operations: the killings most often occurred at the victims' homes or in the neighbourhood, in several cases in the morning or late at night, at times when the people attacked were at home.[97]
- Absence of warrants: security forces entered homes without producing a warrant.[98]
- Separation of targets and their families: In almost all of the cases examined, the police removed the victim's family members (mainly women, the elderly and children) from their homes or isolated them from the priority individual in separate rooms or in separate locations within the same dwelling.[99] This was allegedly intended to prevent eyewitnesses to the events from being present.[100]
- Mistreatment: during arrests, some family members, especially women, were insulted for being wives or mothers of the alleged "criminals".[101]
- Clothing: most of the officers had their faces covered[102] and were dressed in black.[103]
- Theft of property: in most cases, security agents took basic goods, such as food and clothing, as well as valuables, including cash, jewellery and electronic devices from victims' homes.[104]

[94] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1276. See also Infobae, Cómo los colectivos chavistas lograron que la Fiscalía arreste a integrantes de FAES que asesinaron a cinco hombres en Venezuela, 16 June 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/06/16/como-los-colectivos-chavistas-lograron-que-la-fiscalia-arreste-a-integrantes-de-faes-que-asesinaron-a-cinco-hombres-en-venezuela/; El Nacional, Criminalistas analizan nuevo modus operandi de la FAES contra sus víctimas, 2 May 2019. Available at: https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/sucesos/criminalistas-analizan-nuevo-modus-operandi-faes-contra-sus-victimas_281206/

[95] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1274.

[96] Document RSHH05.

[97] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1275. See also La Razón, Las FAES, el escuadrón de la muerte creado por Maduro que aterroriza a los barrios pobres, 17 November 2020. Available at: https://www.larazon.es/internacional/20201117/nsmujtv3k5fqbbypbkx3jmqjjq.html

[98] Ibid.

[99] El Nacional, Criminalistas analizan nuevo modus operandi de la FAES contra sus víctimas, 2 May 2019. Available at: https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/sucesos/criminalistas-analizan-nuevo-modus-operandi-faes-contra-sus-victimas_281206/

[100] A/HRC/45/3, para. 1275. See also Maduradas, GRAVE! Este sería el presunto modus operandi de la Faes para asesinar a sus víctimas, 3 May 2019. Available at: https://maduradas.com/grave-este-seria-presunto-modus-operandi-la-faes-asesinar-victimas/

[101] A/HRC/45/3, para. 1234. See also La Razón, Las FAES, el escuadrón de la muerte creado por Maduro que aterroriza a los barrios pobres, 17 November 2020. Available at: https://www.larazon.es/internacional/20201117/nsmujtv3k5fqbbypbkx3jmqjjq.html

[102] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1394.

[103] El Nacional, Criminalistas analizan nuevo modus operandi de la FAES contra sus víctimas, 2 May 2019. Available at: https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/sucesos/criminalistas-analizan-nuevo-modus-operandi-faes-contra-sus-victimas_281206/

[104] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1278. See also La Razón, Las FAES, el escuadrón de la muerte creado por Maduro que aterroriza a los barrios pobres, 17 November 2020. Available at: https://www.larazon.es/internacional/20201117/nsmujtv3k5fqbbypbkx3jmqjjq.html

- Shooting of victims in vital areas: The mission documented a pattern of point-blank shots to vital areas, including the head and chest, with one or two shots fired.[105]
- Official version: the official version of the events involving the FAES was consistently that the victims had been killed while resisting arrest, in a "confrontation" and/or during an exchange of fire.[106] The official version was contradicted by the versions of the relatives of those killed.[107]
- Custody: persons interviewed by the mission stated that the victims were last seen or heard when they were under the control of police officers, and that they were on a bed, or on the floor, with a hood over their heads or with their hands raised. In some cases, they saw the officers fire the fatal shot.[108]
- No criminal record: In 723 of the cases examined by the mission, the families of the victims stated that they had no criminal record.[109]

53. In its March 2021 oral update, the mission identified the continuation of patterns of extrajudicial executions carried out by the FAES.[110] One of the most lethal operations was known as the "La Vega massacre", which took place from 7 to 9 January 2021. According to open sources, the operation resulted in the arbitrary deprivation of life of 23 people.[111] However, according to a former member of the FAES who was present during the operation and who was interviewed by the mission, 47 people were actually executed.[112]

54. According to the same source, the victims were selectively chosen and were mostly men between 18 and 35 years old, with tattoos, with judicial records or suspected of belonging to criminal gangs in the slums. Once these people were identified, they were isolated and taken to another location to be executed by the FAES brigades' own officers. The corpses were taken directly to the morgue, without first being registered at the local hospital.[113]

b) The modus operandi of the DAET in the Trueno ("Thunder") Operations

55. The mission analysed the seven *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations with a focus on those that took place after the creation of the DAET, i.e. the last five, carried out between August and October 2022. The first two operations, however, involved units that months later were integrated into the DAET, such as the DCDO, the DIP and the DIE.[114] The Minister of the

[105] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1280. See also Runrun.es, Los modus operandi del Cicpc y las Faes: Cada brigada tiene que tener un muerto, 21 September 2020. Available at: https://runrun.es/megafono/424053/los-modus-operandi-del-cicpc-y-las-faes-cada-brigada-tiene-que-tener-un-muerto/.

[106] Infobae, Cómo los colectivos chavistas lograron que la Fiscalía arreste a integrantes de FAES que asesinaron a cinco hombres en Venezuela, 16 June 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/06/16/como-los-colectivos-chavistas-lograron-que-la-fiscalia-arreste-a-integrantes-de-faes-que-asesinaron-a-cinco-hombres-en-venezuela/.

[107] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1281.

[108] Ibid. Infobae, Cómo los colectivos chavistas lograron que la Fiscalía arreste a integrantes de FAES que asesinaron a cinco hombres en Venezuela, 16 June 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/06/16/como-los-colectivos-chavistas-lograron-que-la-fiscalia-arreste-a-integrantes-de-faes-que-asesinaron-a-cinco-hombres-en-venezuela/

[109] A/H/45/CRP.11, para. 1284.

[110] OHCHR, Statement by Marta Valiñas, Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-Finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, at the 46th session of the Human Rights Council, 10 March 2021. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/es/2021/03/statement-marta-valinas-chairperson-independent-international-fact-finding-mission?LangID=S&NewsID=26872

[111] Provea, Tras un año de la masacre de La Vega los responsables siguen sin rendir cuentas a la justicia, 8 January 2022. Available at: https://provea.org/publicaciones/investigaciones/tras-un-ano-de-la-masacre-de-la-vega-los-responsables-siguen-sin-rendir-cuentas-a-la-justicia/

[112] Interview OOIV053.

[113] Interview OOIV053.

[114] Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/; Defiende Venezuela, Los allanamientos ilegales,

Interior, Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, stated that these operations responded to direct instructions from the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro.[115]

56. In the seven *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations, 72 people were killed and at least 345 arrested. The operations took place in five Venezuelan states: Aragua (5 deaths),[116] Yaracuy (8 deaths),[117] Guárico (17 deaths),[118] Miranda (36 deaths)[119] and Anzoátegui (6 deaths).[120] According to the media, all operations involved massive participation of members of different security forces: the PNB through the FAES (until the second operation) and the DAET - through the personnel of its different divisions - the FANB, the GNB, the GNB's CONAS, the CICPC, the SEBIN, the Miranda state police and the municipal police of Sucre.[121]

57. Although, as noted above, the objective of the operations was to dismantle different criminal organizations (e.g. "Tren de Aragua", "Tren del Llano", "Wisleysi", "Carlos Capa"), in most cases the relatives of the deceased denied their loved ones' links to these organizations.[122] In none of the *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations were any of the leaders of the gangs targeted by the security forces captured.[123]

58. The first two operations were carried out before the creation of the DAET. However, as explained above, they involved units that are now an integral part of this Directorate, such as the DCDO, the DIP and the DIE.[124]

detenciones arbitrarias, extorsiones y desapariciones forzadas (undated). Available at: https://defiendevenezuela.org/los-allanamientos-ilegales-detenciones-arbitrarias-extorsiones-y-desapariciones-forzadas/; Efecto Cucuyo, "Operación Trueno" en Guárico viola derechos humanos, denuncia ONG, May 26, 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/operacion-trueno-en-guarico-viola-derechos-humanos-denuncia-ong/

115 Runrun.es, #MonitorDeVictimas | Operaciones Trueno: las OLP de 2022, 31 December 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/; The mission has no information related to this operation as official reports never mentioned it as "Operación Trueno".

116 YouTube video, Anon Candanga TV, Operacion Trueno V, 16 September 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9WQp5w_u1U

117 La Prensa Diario de Lara, Operativo policial Trueno deja 32 detenidos en Yaracuy, 6 May 2022. Available at: https://www.laprensalara.com.ve/nota/46249/2022/05/operativo-policial-trueno-deja-32-detenidos-en-yaracuy

118 Instagram post, CPNB DIP [@dipcpnb.official], 3 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiED_KmI8d6/

119 Efecto Cucuyo, ¿Qué ocurre en los Valles del Tuy con el operativo policial que ha dejado 23 muertes violentas, 15 September 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/sucesos/que-ocurre-en-los-valles-del-tuy-con-el-operativo-policial-que-ha-dejado-23-muertes-violentas/

120 Die Bolivar, Facebook post, Video "Operación Trueno III", 20 August 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/Die-Sie-Bolivar-105165468940181/videos/operaci%C3%B3n-trueno-iii/834972604187883/?_rdr

121 El Siglo, "Operación Trueno" en su primera fase desarticuló al "Tren del Llano", 26 April 2022. Available at: https://elsiglo.com.ve/2022/04/26/operacion-trueno-primera-fase-desarticulo-tren-del-llano/https://elsiglo.com.ve/2022/04/26/operacion-trueno-primera-fase-desarticulo-tren-del-llano/; CPNB Strategic Intelligence Division Instagram post (dipcpnb.oficial) , Operation Thunder III, September 3, 2023. Available at https://www.instagram.com/p/CiEDrgPDWtQ/, Instagram post from https://www.instagram.com/p/CiEDrgPDWtQ/ CPNB Strategic Intelligence Division [@dipcpnb.official], 10 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CiVM6zbDRLr/; CPNB Strategic Intelligence Division Instagram post [@dipcpnb.official], 11 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CiYOI8hD_aL/; Facebook post by Die Bolivar, 20 August 2022. Available at: https://m.facebook.com/Die-Sie-Bolivar-105165468940181/videos/operaci%C3%B3n-trueno-iii/834972604187883/?_se_imp=0nbUUc6nNHpbVi56n

122 Runrun.co.uk, #MonitorDeVictimas | Operaciones Trueno: las OLP de 2022, 31 December 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/

123 Ibid.

124 Interview OOIV053, Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at:

59. According to open sources, Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") I was carried out against the "Tren del Llano" gang on 20 April 2022, in the state of Guárico.[125] The operation led to the arrest of 24 people.[126] Inhabitants of the localities where the actions were carried out indicated that the agents identified themselves as members of the FAES.[127] During the operation, illegal searches and seizures, arbitrary detentions, extortion and acts of torture, ill-treatment and gender-based violence against members of the affected communities were reported.[128] The operation was carried out by more than 800 officers belonging to the DCDO, the DIP, the DIE (currently attached to the DAET), other components of the PNB, the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB), the National Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Command (CONAS-GNB), and the CICPC.[129]

60. According to a media source, Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") II was carried out on 2 May 2022 against the gangs of "El Mimosín" and "Wilmer El Bachiller" in the municipalities of Veroes and Bruzual, in the state of Yaracuy.[130] The Operation resulted in the death of eight men, which, according to another news source, occurred in alleged clashes with security forces, and 31 people were arrested.[131] Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") II involved PNB officers, including those from the DIP (now attached to the DAET), the CICPC and the GNB's CONAS.[132]

61. According to another media source, Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") III was the first operation in which the DAET participated as such. The Operation was carried out against the "Tren del Llano" and the "Banda del Zorrito", between 31 August and 5 September 2022, in the municipalities of Barcelona and Anacao, in the state of Anzoátegui, and in the municipalities of Leonardo Infante (Valle de la Pascua), José Félix Ribas (Tucupido), José Tadeo Monagas and Pedro Zaraza (Zaraza), in the state of Guárico.[133] In this operation, according to sources consulted by the mission, 14 alleged members of the "Tren del Llano"

https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/, Defiende Venezuela, Los Allanamientos Ilegales, Detenciones Arbitrarias, Extorsiones Y Desapariciones Forzadas, (2023). Available at: https://defiendevenezuela.org/los-allanamientos-ilegales-detenciones-arbitrarias-extorsiones-y-desapariciones-forzadas/; Efecto Cucuyo, Operación Trueno en Guárico viola derechos humanos, denuncia ONG, May 26, 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/operacion-trueno-en-guarico-viola-derechos-humanos-denuncia-ong/

125 Ultimas noticias, Operación Trueno retumba en Guárico contra el Tren del Llano, 20 April 2022. Available at: https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/sucesos/operacion-trueno-retumba-en-guarico-contra-el-tren-del-llano-2/

126 La Iguana, "Tren del Llano" ringleaders still on the run: Eligio Rojas describes "Operation Thunder", 24 April 2022. Available at: https://www.laiguana.tv/articulos/1039465-tren-del-llano-cabecilla-fuga/

127 Tal cual, Un mes en vilo llevan habitantes de Guárico por operativo policial, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/un-mes-en-vilo-llevan-habitantes-de-guarico-por-operativo-policial/

128 Efecto Cocuyo, "Operación Trueno" en Guárico viola derechos humanos, denuncia ONG, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/operacion-trueno-en-guarico-viola-derechos-humanos-denuncia-ong/; Tal cual, "Un mes en vilo llevan habitantes de Guárico por operativo policial", 26 May 2022. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/un-mes-en-vilo-llevan-habitantes-de-guarico-por-operativo-policial/.

129 Tal Cual, Un mes en vilo llevan habitantes de Guárico por operativo policial, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/un-mes-en-vilo-llevan-habitantes-de-guarico-por-operativo-policial/, Efecto Cocuyo, "Operación Trueno" en Guárico viola derechos humanos, denuncia ONG, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/operacion-trueno-en-guarico-viola-derechos-humanos-denuncia-ong/; RedRadioVe, Organismos de seguridad desmantelaron banda criminal que operaba en Guárico, April 22, 2022. Available at: https://redradiove.com/organismos-de-seguridad-desmantelaron-banda-criminal-que-operaba-en-guarico/

130 El Pitazo, Faes kills three men in Yaracuy during operation Trueno, 2 May 2022. Available at: https://elpitazo.net/sucesos/faes-mata-a-tres-hombres-en-yaracuy-durante-operativo-trueno/

131 Notiespartano, Ratifican privativa de libertad a los 31 detenidos de la "Operación Trueno", 13 May 2022. Available at https://notiespartano.com/ratifican-privativa-de-libertad-a-los-31-detenidos-de-la-operacion-trueno/, "Operaciones Trueno letales", 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

132 Ibid.

133 Ultimas Noticias, Operation Thunder III has the Zorrito gang under siege, 25 August 2022. Available at: https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/general/operacion-trueno-iii-tiene-cercada-a-la-banda-del-zorrito/

gang were killed in clashes and 180 people were arrested.[134] More than 2,000[135] officials took part, including members of the DAET - from its DCDO[136] and DCD[137] - and other divisions of the PNB, GNB, CONAS, CICPC and SEBIN.[138] According to a journalistic source, acts of sexual violence took place, with women being forced to undress and show their genitals to the agents, all men.[139] This operation also repeated the pattern of separation of family nuclei, including children. A source interviewed by an observatory of extrajudicial executions, whose account was consulted by the mission, described the modus operandi of the security forces involved in Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") III in the following terms: "*they enter houses without a warrant, they search the whole house, as well as mobile phones. If there are people with criminal records, whether or not they are linked to the 'Tren del Llano' gang, they execute them. Everyone is being linked to the gang and that is not the case. The officials act and then investigate. They come to kill*".[140]

62. In Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") IV, carried out between 8 and 11 September 2022 against the "Carlos Capa Gang"[141] in Miranda State, the same pattern of action was repeated where, according to several sources, officers shot to kill.[142] At least 30 people were killed in this Operation and more than 100 arrests were made, including those of two officers belonging to the Municipal Police, the Chief of Operations of the Urdaneta Police, Osmel González, and the Chief Supervisor of the Yare Police, Patricia Eliana Rodríguez López.[143] The relatives of those killed in the Operation denounced that they were victims of alleged extrajudicial executions.[144] More than 1,600 officers from the DAET - from the UOTE and the DCDO, Motorised and Vehicle Patrol divisions - and from other security forces such as

[134] Monitor de víctimas, #MonitordeVíctimas | Mataron a 14 presuntos integrantes de la banda Tren del Llano en la Operación Trueno en Guárico - Runrun, 8 September 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/482652/monitordevictimas-mataron-a-14-presuntos-integrantes-de-la-banda-tren-del-llano-en-la-operacion-trueno-en-guarico/

[135] Ibid.

[136] Noticias Venezuela en Contacto newspaper, Abatidos seis socios de Carlos Capa en Valles del Tuy, 9 September 2022. Available at: https://diarionoticiasvenezuelaencontacto.wordpress.com/2022/09/09/abatidos-seis-socios-de-carlos-capa-en-valles-del-tuy/

[137] Instagram post, CPNB DIP [@dipcpnb.official], Video "Operation Thunder III", 3 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiED_KmI8d6/

[138] Correo del Caroni, Unos 8 muertos y más de 20 detenidos deja Operativo Trueno en Guárico, 5 September 2022. Available at: https://correodelcaroni.com/region/sucesos/unos-8-muertos-y-mas-de-20-detenidos-deja-operativo-trueno-en-guarico/

[139] Defiende Venezuela, Los Allanamientos Ilegales, Detenciones Arbitrarias, Extorsiones y Desapariciones Forzadas, undated. Available at: https://defiendevenezuela.org/los-allanamientos-ilegales-detenciones-arbitrarias-extorsiones-y-desapariciones-forzadas/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=los-allanamientos-ilegales-detenciones-arbitrarias-extorsiones-y-desapariciones-forzadas

[140] Lupa por la Vida, Operaciones Trueno Letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

[141] Últimas noticias, Operación Trueno III tiene cercada a la banda del Zorrito, 25 August 2022. Available at: https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/general/operacion-trueno-iii-tiene-cercada-a-la-banda-del-zorrito/ Carried out in the municipalities of Valles del Tuy, Ocumare del Tuy, Tomás Lander, Rangel sector of Ocumare, Soledad in San Francisco de Yare, El Yagual de Nueva Cúa; Santa Lucía; Cúa. Tomuso in the municipality of Independencia; El Murciélago in Cúa, Cartanal in the municipality of Independencia, Santa Lucía, Colonia Mendoza in Ocumare del Tuy, El Tanque in Cartanal and San Antonio de Yare.

[142] Proiuris, FAES executes 16 ways to kill, 19 November 2019. Available at: https://www.proiuris.org/?p=57900, Lupa por la Vida, "Operaciones Trueno letales", 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

[143] La revista del Tuy, Resumen de la Operación "Trueno IV" en valles del Tuy: más de 30 abatidos, policías corruptos detenidos y mucha zozobra, 15 September 2022. Available at: https://larevistadeltuy.com/resumen-de-la-operacion-trueno-iv-en-valles-del-tuy-mas-de-30-abatidos-policias-corruptos-detenidos-y-mucha-zozobra/

[144] Lupa por la vida, Operaciones trueno letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

the CONAS of the GNB, the CICPC and the Miranda State Police took part in the operation.[145]

63. According to open sources, Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") V was carried out on 15 September 2022 in the municipalities of La Guaira, Santiago Mariño, Carayaca, Puerto Cruz, Ocumare de la Costa and Colonia Tovar, in the state of Aragua.[146] Some 1,270 officers of the DAET - with its DCDO and Motorised divisions[147] - and other units of the PNB, the GNB's CONAS, the Special Actions Brigade (BAES) and the CICPC's Anti-extortion and Kidnapping Group[148] were reportedly involved in the Operation. The Operation reportedly resulted in two men being killed in the Monte Oscuro sector of the municipality of Tovar.[149]

64. Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") VII, against the organized crime groups "Banda de Wilexis"[150] and "Los Chicorrios", was carried out on 28 September 2022 in Miranda State.[151] In the course of the operation 14 men and a teenager were killed by the security agencies.[152] Three people were arrested in other municipalities hours before the authorities identified them for allegedly taking part in clashes. According to media reports, the three people were captured in their homes in the districts of Petare and Filas de Mariche, in Miranda State, and executed in other areas of Filas de Mariche.[153] The relatives of the victims denounced extrajudicial executions, pointing out that the people killed did not "confront" the security forces, but were executed. They also denounced raids without warrants and arbitrary detentions.[154] It is estimated that around 1500 officers[155] from the DAET -- DCDO, DIP and

[145] Efecto Cucuyo, ¿Qué ocurre en los Valles del Tuy con el operativo policial que ha dejado 23 muertes violentas, 15 September 2022. Available at: https://efe c tococuyo.com/sucesos/que-ocurre-en-los-valles-del-tuy-con-el-operativo-policial-que-ha-dejado-23-muertes-violentas/https://efectococuyo.com/sucesos/que-ocurre-en-los-valles-del-tuy-con-el-operativo-policial-que-ha-dejado-23-muertes-violentas/; Diario de noticias Venezuela, Abatidos seis socios de Carlos Capa en Valles del Tuy, 9 September, Available at: Abatidos seis socios de Carlos Capa en Valles del Tuy - Noticias Venezuela en Contacto (wordpress.com).

[146] Lupa por la vida, Operaciones trueno letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

[147] Youtube video, CPNB contra bandas criminales [cpnbcontrabandascriminales9497], 16 September 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDS0_p9sH4g

[148] See Altos funcionarios sostuvieron encuentros para planificar el operativo, El siglo, "Autoridades de seguridad buscan neutralizar a bandas delictivas en Aragua", 16 September 2022. Available at: https://elsiglo.com.ve/2022/09/16/autoridades-seguridad-buscan-neutralizar-bandas-delictivas-aragua/

[149] Runrun.es, #MonitorDeVictimas | Operaciones Trueno: las OLP de 2022, 31 December 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/

[150] El Diario, Cuerpos policiales se desplegaron en Petare para capturar a miembros de la banda de Wilexis, 29 September 2022. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2022/09/29/cuerpos-policiales-petare-capturar-banda-de-wilexis/

[151] Runrun.es, Operación policíal Trueno VII ejecuto a 14 hombres y un adolescente en Petare. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/485231/monitordevictimas-operacion-policial-trueno-vii-ejecuto-a-14-hombres-y-un-adolescente-en-petare/. Carried out in the Sucre-Petare municipality, José Félix Ribas neighbourhood, Maca, La Dolorita, San Blas II, El llanito sectors.

[152] Lupa por la vida, Operaciones trueno letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/

[153] Runrun.es, #MonitordeVíctimas | Operación policial Trueno VII ejecuto a 14 hombres y un adolescente en Petare, Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/485231/monitordevictimas-operacion-policial-trueno-vii-ejecuto-a-14-hombres-y-un-adolescente-en-petare/

[154] Lupa por la vida, Operaciones trueno letales, 23 November 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/operaciones-trueno-letales/o-vii

[155] A/HRC/48/CRP.5, Box 9: Case of the Drones, paras. 275, Box 11: The Case of Ada Macuare; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 295.

[155] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 271, 439, 447, 496, 521.

UOTE,[156] from other PNB units,[157] from CONAS of the GNB, from the CICPC, from the Miranda State Police and from the Municipal Police of Sucre[158] participated in this operation.

65. The NGO PROVEA documented an increase in the number of women killed in the *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations compared to the OLPs/OLHPs. According to PROVEA, this increase is allegedly associated with the practice of detaining women who are romantically linked to gang leaders, and executing them if the gang leader is not found.[159]

2. The modus operandi of the DAET in the context of selective repression

66. Along with security operations, the mission documented the involvement of DAET in acts of selective repression since its creation in July 2022. Within this framework, the mission corroborated that there is continuity between the ways in which the new Directorate, and particularly the pre-existing components of the PNB that were absorbed by this Directorate, acted with those of its predecessor, the FAES.

a) FAES modus operandi

67. In its previous reports, the mission investigated a series of acts constituting crimes and human rights violations committed by PNB officers in the context of selective political repression. In several cases, the mission was unable to identify to which directorate, unit or component of the PNB the officers involved belonged.[160]

68. In other cases, however, particularly in cases of arbitrary detention, the mission was able to determine that the officers belonged to the FAES. Indeed, in its 2020 report, the mission indicated that in detentions involving SEBIN, this security force occasionally acted together with the FAES.[161] It also found that certain arbitrary detentions were carried out by FAES officers, who subsequently handed the detainees over to SEBIN, whose officers interrogated and tortured them.[162] In the case of Gilber Caro, the mission concluded that it had reasonable grounds to believe that FAES officials perpetrated his third arbitrary detention in December 2019, as well as his subsequent short-term enforced disappearance.[163]

69. In its 2022 report, the mission again identified cases in which FAES members occasionally participated alongside SEBIN members in the detention of persons opposed to or perceived as such.[164] In contrast, the DGCIM normally carried out arrests alone, although on a significant number of occasions it was supported by other security forces, including the FAES.[165]

70. The mission also gathered evidence that FAES officers were involved in joint counter-insurgency operations in connection with alleged armed attempts to overthrow the government. In June 2020, President Maduro presided over a public ceremony to decorate the officers responsible for Operation *Negro Primero* ("The First Black", in reference to Venezuelan war hero Pedro Camejo) (executed in response to Operation *Gedeón* aimed at

[156] See image of UOTE officers, El Clarín article, Siete abatidos durante operación Trueno VII en Petare, 29 September 2022. Available at https://elclarinweb.com/noticias/sucesos/siete-abatidos-durante-operacion-trueno-vii-en-petare/; Instagram post. CPNB DIP [@dipcpnb.oficial], video of DAET units, 1 October 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CjLTyfbo8gv/?hl=es

[157] Runrun.es, #MonitordeVíctimas | Operación policial Trueno VII ejecuto a 14 hombres y un adolescente en Petare, Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/485231/monitordevictimas-operacion-policial-trueno-vii-ejecuto-a-14-hombres-y-un-adolescente-en-petare/

[158] El Diario, Cuerpos policiales se desplegaron en Petare para capturar a miembros de la banda de Wilexis, 29 September 2022. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2022/09/29/cuerpos-policiales-petare-capturar-banda-de-wilexis/https://eldiario.com/2022/09/29/cuerpos-policiales-petare-capturar-banda-de-wilexis/, Monitor de víctimas - El Siglo, Siete abatidos durante operación Trueno VII, 29 September 2022. Available at: https://elsiglo.com.ve/2022/09/29/siete-abatidos-operacion-trueno-vii/

[159] Interview with PROVEA, 10 April 2023.

[160] See, for example, A/HRC/48/CRP.5, Box 9: Case of the Drones, paras. 275, Box 11: The Case of Ada Macuare; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 295.

[161] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 271, 439.

[162] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 496, 521.

[163] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 447.

[164] A/HCR/51/CRP.3, para. 290.

[165] A/HCR/51/CRP.3, para. 80.

overthrowing the Government).[166] In that act, President Maduro referred to "a special task force made up of the FAES, SEBIN, and DGCIM to act jointly with the Bolivarian Shield and the Bolivarian National Armed Forces in the face of any terrorist attack".[167] In this tribute, the President decorated officers who would go on to assume high positions in the chain of command of the FAES and, later, the DAET: Director General of the Bolivarian National Police, Elio Estrada Paredes;[168] Director of the FAES, José Miguel Domínguez[169] (later Director of the DAET); General Commissary Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos[170] (later Deputy Director of the DAET); and Chief Commissary Leonel Alberto García Rivas (later Deputy Director of the DAET). Also decorated was Chief Inspector Fray Jesús García Pérez, a former FAES officer who is currently in charge of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE)[171] of the DAET.

71. Between 2020 and July 2022, the date of the creation of the DAET, the mission was able to identify that officers from the FAES or from components of the PNB, which became divisions of the DAET, such as the DIP or the DIE, were involved in human rights violations and crimes in the framework of selective repression (see other conference room paper on restrictions to civic space)[172].

72. In the case of the arbitrary detention and short-term enforced disappearance of Carla Da Silva, which occurred between 5 and 15 May 2020, the victim was interrogated at the FAES headquarters in La Quebradita, Caracas, by the then Director of the FAES and later Director of the DAET, Miguel Domínguez (see other conference room paper on restrictions to civic space[173]). Another FAES official, Vladimir Rodríguez Cordero, was denounced by Da Silva as the official who ordered and participated in her torture.[174] In the case of Karen Hernández, detained since the same date as Da Silva at the FAES headquarters in La Quebradita, FAES officials committed ill-treatment and threats of rape against the victim.[175] It should be noted that both women, after initially being held for three days in the FAES facilities, were handed over to SEBIN and detained in El Helicoide.[176]

73. The mission also investigated the arbitrary detention of Javier Tarazona, Rafael Tarazona, Omar de Dios García and Jhonny Romero on 2 July 2021. The detention was carried out by FAES and SEBIN officials in the city of Coro, Falcón State.[177] After being temporarily detained at the FAES headquarters in Coro, the four persons were transported to Caracas and handed over to SEBIN to be held at their detention centre in El Helicoide.[178]

74. In the context of the "Gringo Espía" case, one of the persons arbitrarily arrested without a warrant by members of the FAES on 12 September 2020 was Ivonne Coromoto Barrios Finol, who was detained at the FAES headquarters in San Francisco, Maracaibo, and suffered ill-treatment, sexual harassment and an attempted rape.[179] She was subsequently

[166] Tweet from CARIVE (Coalición Activa de la Reserva Internacional Venezolana) [@Carive15], 16 November 2020. Available at: https://twitter.com/Carive15/status/1328523655987556357?s=20%20, Ministry for Ecosocialism, Press release: "condecorados efectivos que participaron en la Operación Negro Primero", 3 June 2020. Available at: http://www.minec.gob.ve/condecorados-efectivos-que-participaron-en-la-operacion-negro-primero/

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] See the official website of the Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism, Condecorados efectivos que participaron en la Operación Negro Primero, 03 June 2020. Available at: http://www.minec.gob.ve/condecorados-efectivos-que-participaron-en-la-operacion-negro-primero/

[169] Ibid.

[170] Interview OOIV053.

[171] UOTE POR VENEZUELA, Instagram post [@uote_por_venezuela], 6 May 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cr6TZexgptO/?hl=es/.

[172] See Conference Room Paper: The State Apparatus, its Mechanisms of Repression, and Restrictions on Civic and Democratic Space [hereinafter "Restrictions on Civic Space"], Chapter III.

[173] *Ibid*. Case 4: Operation Gideon

[174] *Ibid.*

[175] *Ibid.*

[176] *Ibid.*

[177] *Ibid.* Case 11: Javier Tarazona and other Fundaredes activists.

[178] *Ibid.*

[179] *Ibid*. Case 6: Matthew John Heath and eight others - "Gringo Spy" Case.

transferred to a cell at another FAES headquarters in Caracas and finally handed over to the DGCIM, who detained her in the Boleíta detention centre.[180]

75. In the case of the arbitrary detention of Roland Carreño, he was arbitrarily detained by officers of the Criminal Investigations Directorate (Dirección de Investigaciones Penales, DIP), attached to the PNB, on 26 October 2020.[181] Carreño's detention was linked to his political participation in the opposition party Voluntad Popular. Carreño was transferred to El Helicoide, where he is currently detained in connection with the departure from the country of Voluntad Popular leader Leopoldo López.[182]

b) The modus operandi of the DAET and its components

76. In only one of the cases of targeted repression investigated by the mission to date were the perpetrators DAET officers.[183] In relation to other cases prior to the creation of the DAET in July 2022, the mission identified the involvement of police units that later became part of this police directorate.

77. As documented by the mission in the other conference room paper accompanying the mission's report, Néstor Astudillo, a trade union leader and member of the Red Flag political party, was arbitrarily detained on 6 July 2022[184]. The four agents who carried out the arrest wore jackets with PNB DIP insignia, who forcibly entered Astudillo's home without presenting any arrest warrant or search warrant.[185] Astudillo was detained at the PNB police headquarters in La Quebradita.[186]

78. Another trade union leader, Emilio Negrín, was arrested on 5 July 2022 by DGCIM officials, according to the source interviewed by the mission.[187] Negrín was taken to the PNB headquarters in La Quebradita, where officials from the Strategic Intelligence Directorate (Dirección de Inteligencia Estratégica, DIE) seized his mobile phone for analysis.[188]

79. A third union leader and Red Flag activist, Alonso Meléndez, was also arrested on 5 July 2022. Meléndez was arrested at his residence in Santa Cruz de los Taques by a contingent of police wearing bulletproof vests with DIE insignia.[189] According to testimony gathered by the mission, Meléndez was first taken to La Quebradita, located in the San Martín neighbourhood of Caracas, and later, on 8 July, to the PNB detention centre located in La Yaguara, San Martín de Caracas.[190] There, Meléndez was subjected to threats and ill-treatment by PNB officers.[191]

80. Based on the above cases, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the FAES, until its disbandment in July 2022, as well as other components of the FAES and the PNB that subsequently became part of the DAET, carried out arbitrary detentions of persons opposed or perceived to be opposed to the Government, arbitrarily detained them in the PNB facilities of La Quebradita and La Yaguara, and ill-treated them while in their custody. The mission also has reasonable grounds to believe that, in some cases, these bodies handed over the detainees to other State security bodies, which, on occasion, also subjected them to torture or ill-treatment.

81. The mission also investigated the case of José Antonio Cádiz Morales, a health unionist who in 2022 took part in the mobilisations to protest against the ONAPRE directive,[192] and in 2023 in the protests of nurses, teachers, pensioners and senior citizens.[193]

[180] *Ibid.*
[181] *Ibid.* Case 7: Roland Carreño.
[182] *Ibid.*
[183] *Ibid.* Case 19: José Antonio Cádiz Morales.
[184] *Ibid*. Case 16: Six union leaders.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] *Ibid.*
[187] *Ibid.*
[188] *Ibid.*
[189] *Ibid.*
[190] *Ibid.*
[191] *Ibid.*
[192] *Ibid.* Case 19: José Antonio Cádiz Morales.
[193] *Ibid.*

Cadiz was the victim of arbitrary detention and torture in August 2023.[194] On 21 August 2023, officers of the Motorised Division of the DAET detained him on the street while he was going to his home with two other people.[195] While they were released almost immediately, Cádiz was taken hooded and held at gunpoint to an unidentified facility in the city of Caracas, where he was arbitrarily detained for more than 24 hours. DAET officials, along with others who identified themselves as members of the DGCIM and SEBIN, subjected Cádiz to acts of torture while interrogating him. Cádiz, who was accused of being a "terrorist", was beaten on his face and chest, and electricity was applied to his genitals, while he was questioned about other trade union leaders and political figures of Voluntad Popular and shown their photographs.[196] The officials threatened Cádiz with death, and when he was released on the night of 22 August 2023, they told him that he already knew what would happen to him if he continued to participate in the protests.[197]

82. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that José Antonio Cádiz was arbitrarily detained by officials of the DAET and that he was subjected to torture by officials of this same directorate of the PNB, as well as by other officials of the DGCIM and SEBIN,[198] because he was a trade unionist protesting against the Government, and to extract information from him about trade union and political leaders of the opposition. Based on this case, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that, like the FAES in the recent past, the DAET uses practices of selective repression against persons opposed or perceived as such, and that it acts alone or together with other State security forces in the perpetration of human rights violations and crimes.

D. Command positions

83. For this conference room paper, the mission investigated the chain of command of the DAET, from its creation in July 2022 until 5 June 2023. Since this cut-off date, there have been a series of changes to the chain of command of the PNB and the DAET,[199] including up to the time of finalising this conference room paper. The new command positions are identified throughout the following section.

84. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the DAET is led by former FAES officials, including some of its directors.[200] At the top of the PNB chain of command is the Minister of the Interior, Chief Admiral Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, followed by the Director of the PNB, Major General Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes,[201] and the Assistant Director of the PNB, Brigadier General Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna.[202]

85. According to a source interviewed by the mission, the following positions and officials - all male - held the top positions in the chain of command as of 5 June 2023:[203]

- Director, Major Commissary José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez;
- Deputy Director, General Commissary Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos;
- Assistant Director, Chief Commissary Leonel Alberto García Rivas; and
- Head of Operations, Chief Commissary Florencio Ramón Escalona.

194 *Ibid*; Tweet from PROVEA [@_Provea], 22 August 2023. Available at https://twitter.com/_Provea/status/1694018771449467113?t=KQ0yrnMCrrhMh1jA_gE9 m w&s=09

195 *Ibid.* Case 19: José Antonio Cádiz Morales.

196 *Ibid.*

197 *Ibid.*

198 *Ibid.*

199 Interview OOIV053; Interview OOIV071.

200 Interview OOIV053; Runrun.es, #MonitorDeVíctimas | La DAET: cambio de siglas, igual letalidad, by César Salgado, 26 August 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/opinion/481579/la-daet-monitor-de-victimas-cesar-salgado/.

201 UNES, Capitulo II Del cuerpo de Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 7 December 2009. Available at: http://www.unes.edu.ve/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/gacetaestatutopolicial.pdf

202 Resolution No. 077 of 4 June 2019, Official Gazette No. 41.684 of 5 June 2019.

203 Interview OOIV071.

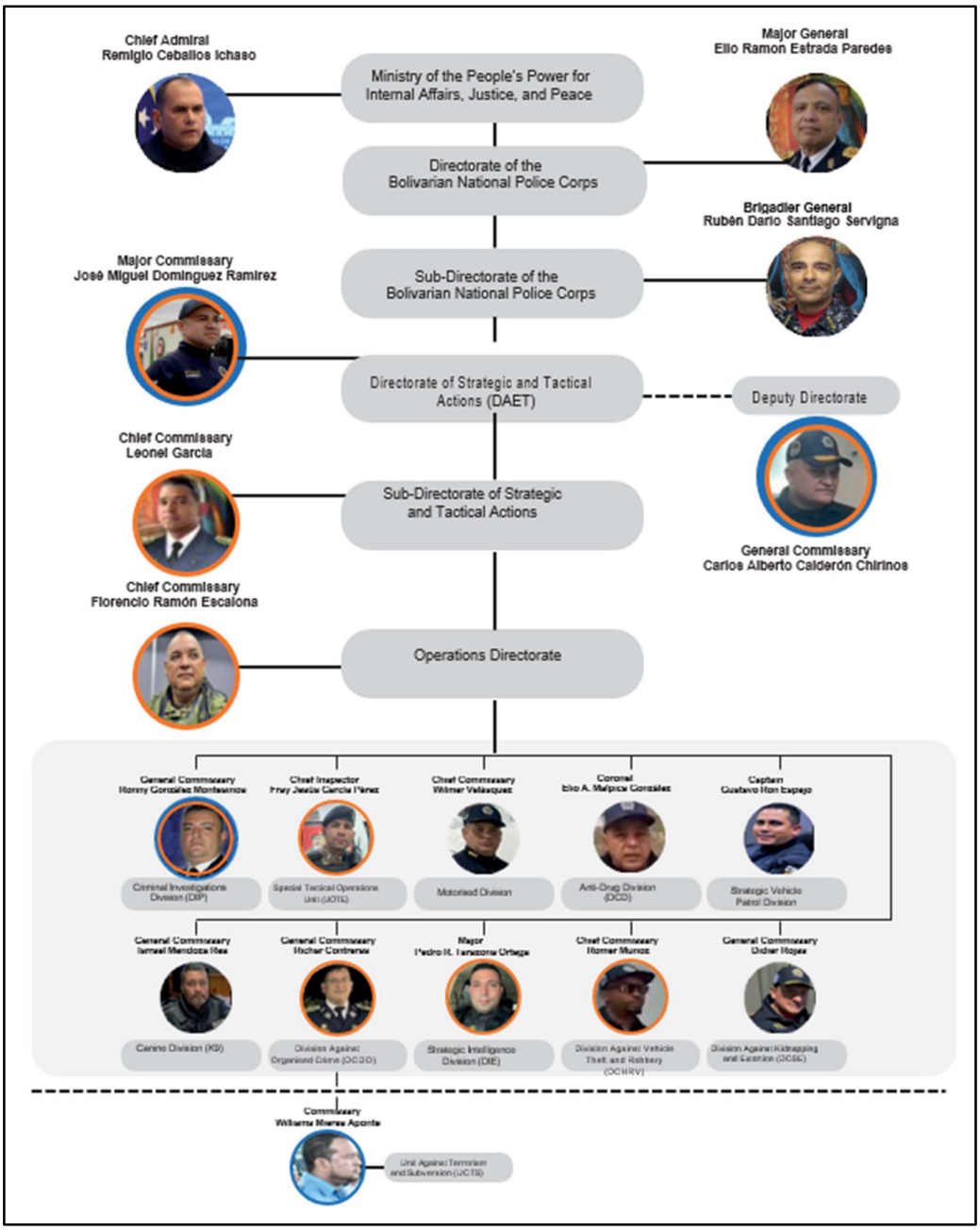
86. At the next level, according to the same source, are the following Heads of Division:[204]

- Criminal Investigations Division (DIP), General Commissary Ronny Fernando González Montesinos;[205]
- Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE), Chief Inspector Fray Jesús García Pérez;[206]
- Motorised Division, Chief Commissary Wilmer Antonio Velázquez Rodríguez;[207]
- Division Against Organised Crime (DCDO), Chief Commissary Richar Contreras;[208]
- Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division, Captain Gustavo Alejandro Ron Espejo;[209]
- Canine Division (DIV-K9), General Commissary Isrrael José Mendoza Rea;[210]
- Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE), Major Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega;[211]
- Anti-Drug Division (DCD), Coronel Elio Abraham Malpica González;[212]
- Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery (DCHRV), Chief Commissary Romer Muñoz;[213] and
- Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE), General Commissary Didier Rojas.[214]

87. Of the 15 persons identified as commanders and mid-level commanders of the DAET who appear in the following organigram (Table 4), at least 10 were members of the FAES (marked with an orange circle), as well as other State security forces (marked with a blue circle).[215] Of these 10 persons, José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez,[216] Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos,[217] and Ronny Fernando González Montesinos[218] were identified by the mission in its previous reports, with reasonable grounds to believe that they were responsible for human rights violations and crimes.

[204] Interview OOIV071.
[205] A/HCR/51/CRP.3, pp. 96-97.
[206] Instagram post by UOTE por Venezuela [@uote_por_venezuela], 6 May 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cr6TZexgptO/?hl=es/.
[207] Instagram post by C/J WILMER VELASQUEZ [@wilmervelazquez_], 4 August 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg2SMTRJRbr/
[208] Interview OOIV071.
[209] Instagram post by Espacios Aquaticos CPNB [@dnespaciosacuaticoscpnb], 28 July 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cgkpt4JOeh7/
[210] Facebook post by Cuerpo de Policía Nacional Bolivariana [@Comisario General Isrrael Mendoza], 4 August 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/231509720527789/posts/1766071877071558/
[211] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 488, 521, 576; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, paras. 303, 369-377, 386-396.
[212] Facebook post by Cuerpo de Policía Nacional Bolivariana [@Coronel Elio Malpica], 21 August 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/Cuerpo-de-Polic%C3%ADa-Nacional-Bolivariana-231509720527789/videos/repost-cpnbdaet-with-letrepost-la-divisi%C3%B3n-contra-drogas-de-nuestra-polic%C3%ADa-naci/620559749430544/
[213] Interview OOIV071.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Voz de America, ¿Qué hacen las FAES en Venezuela y por qué las señala la ONU y HRW?, 20 September 2019. Available at: https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/que-hacen-las-faes-en-venezuela-y-por-que-las-se%C3%B1ala-la-onu-y-hrw-/5092055.html
[216] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 3.
[217] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 488, 521, 576; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, paras. 303, 371, 386-396.
[218] A/HCR/51/CRP.3, paras. 369-377.

Table 4:
Photographic organizational chart of the DAET chain of command (up to 5 June 2023)



Source: Mission's own elaboration.

Legend: Orange circles: former FAES officers. Blue circles: former SEBIN officials.

1. Chain of command

a) *Chief Admiral Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, Minister of Internal Relations, Justice and Peace (Minister of the Interior)*

88. Remigio Ceballos Ichaso was born in Venezuela on 1 May 1963.[219] He graduated from the Venezuelan Naval School in July 1985, specialising in the Naval Infantry. He has held

[219] Dateas, Consulta: Ceballos Ichaso Remigio - Dtto. Capital - Venezuela, 12 July 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/ceballos-ichaso-remigio-1389562.

several important positions in his military career. In 2002, he served as aide to former President Hugo Chávez.[220] Between 2013 and 2014, Remigio Ceballos was Director of Investigations, Doctrine and Training of the Second Command, and Chief of Staff of the General Command of the Bolivarian Militia. Between 2014 and 2015, he was Vice Minister for Defence Planning and Development of the Ministry of Defence, and Commander of the Infantry of the Naval Operations Command of the General Command of the Bolivarian Navy.[221] Between July 2015 and July 2021, Ceballos served as Second Commander and Chief of Staff of the General Command of the Bolivarian Militia, Head of the "Integral Security and Defence Plan" of the *Gran Misión de Abastecimiento Soberano* ("Great Mission of Sovereign Supply"), and Commander of the Strategic Operational Command of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (CEOFANB),[222] in charge of the planning, programming, leadership, execution and joint operational strategic control of the FANB, reporting directly to the President of the Republic, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.[223]

89. In August 2021, President Maduro appointed Remigio Ceballos Ichaso as Minister of the Interior, replacing Chief Admiral (active reserve) Carmen Teresa Meléndez Rivas.[224] From this position, Ceballos Ichaso has led the different operations carried out by the security agencies under his charge, such as the PNB,[225] the CICPC,[226] the SEBIN[227] and the Strategic Operations Group (GOES).[228] In 2021, Ceballos Ichaso was also appointed Sectoral Vice-President for Citizen Security and Peace.[229]

[220] INAMEH, A/J Remigio Ceballos: Venezuela es un país de grandes libertades, (2023). Available at: http://www.inameh.gob.ve/web/prensa/noticias.php?n=2094; Runrún.es, #EnchufaDÍN Felicita a Remigio Ceballos por su nuevo cargo, 1 September 2021. Available at: https://runrun.es/rr-es-plus/453516/enchufadin-felicita-a-remigio-ceballos-por-su-nuevo-cargo/.

[221] Ibid., Runrún.

[222] Infodefensa.com, El almirante Remigio Ceballos nuevo ministro del Interior de Venezuela, 20 August 2021. Available at: https://www.infodefensa.com/texto-diario/mostrar/3110838/almirante-remigio-ceballos-nuevo-ministro-interior-venezuela; Instagram post, President Maduro [@nicolasmaduro], 1 July 2017. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BWBY5nkla2b/?hl=es.

[223] CEOFANB, Historical Review, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://ceofanb.mil.veceofanb/resena/.

[224] Infodefensa.com, El almirante Remigio Ceballos, nuevo ministro del Interior de Venezuela, 20 August 2021. Available at: https://www.infodefensa.com/texto-diario/mostrar/3110838/almirante-remigio-ceballos-nuevo-ministro-interior-venezuela.

[225] National Bolivarian Police, Historical Review, (2021). Available at: https://policianacionalbolivariana.org/Rese%C3%B1aHistorica.

[226] CICPC, Line of Command, 4 February 2022. Available at: https://www.cicpc.gob.ve/index.php/about/linea-de-mando.html.

[227] Decree No. 4.601, 29 April 2021, Official Gazette No. 42.116 of 29 April 2021; Impacto Venezuela, El SEBIN cambia de despacho y ahora depende del ministerio de Relaciones Interiores, 6 May 2021. Available at: https://impactovenezuela.com/el-sebin-cambia-de-desapacho-y-ahora-depende-del-ministerio-de-relaciones-interiores-gaceta/.

[228] Decree No. 4.668 of 5 April 2022, Official Gazette No. 42.352 of 5 April 2022.

[229] The sectoral vice-presidency for citizen security and peace, is a high governing body for Government action, for the coordination of the Ministries with competence in the matters of Interior Relations, Justice and Peace, and Penitentiary Service; as well as the definition of fundamental lines for the formulation of public policies related to the scope of its activity, its execution and control; Decree no. 4.430, Official Gazette no. 42.062, February 2021; Tweet by Nicolás Maduro [@NicolasMaduro], 19 August 2021. Available at: https://twitter.com/NicolasMaduro/status / 1428395274540658697.

90. The minister has been sanctioned by Canada,[230] the United States,[231] the United Kingdom,[232] the European Union,[233] North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia[234] for playing a key role in Venezuela's political and economic crisis, for corruption, and for serious human rights violations.[235]

Table 5:
Biographical data of Remigio Ceballos Ichaso as of 5 June 2023

MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, JUSTICE AND PEACE
SECTORIAL VICE-PRESIDENT FOR CITIZEN SECURITY AND PEACE

Name : Remigio Ceballos Ichaso

Identification number: V-6.557.495

Date and place of birth: 01/05/1963, La Vega, Libertador

Rank: Chief Admiral

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Venezuelan Naval School	Navy cadet	07/1985
Presidency of the Republic of Venezuela	Aide to the President of the Republic	2002
National Bolivarian Militia	Director of Investigations, Doctrine and Training	2013-2014
General Command of the Bolivarian Militia	Chief of Staff	2013-2014
Ministry of Defence	Vice Minister for Defence Planning and Development	2014-2015
Naval Operations Command of the Bolivarian Navy	Commander of the Bolivarian Navy Infantry	2014-2015
Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) **Strategic Operational Command (CEOFANB)**	Second Commander and Joint Chief of Staff Commander - Head of the "Integrated Security and Defence Plan"	2015-2021
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace	Minister for Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace Sectoral Vice-President for Citizen Security and Peace	08/2021

Source: Mission's own elaboration

[230] Transparencia.org, Canadá Impone Sanciones A Funcionarios Del Gobierno De Nicolás Maduro, Available at: https://transparenciave.org/canada-impone-sanciones-funcionarios-del-gobierno-nicolas-maduro/; Efecto Cocuyo, Canadá sanciona a Maduro junto a otros 39 funcionarios del Gobierno de Venezuela, 22 September 2017. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/politica/canada-sanciona-a-maduro-junto-a-otros-39-funcionarios-del-gobierno-de-venezuela/.

[231] Runrún.es, Departamento del Tesoro-sanciona a 5 funcionarios del régimen de Maduro, 5 November 2019. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/392475/departamento-del-tesoro-sanciona-a-5-funcionarios-del-regimen-de-maduro/; US Department of the Treasury, Treasury Takes Steps to Harmonize International Sanctions Efforts Against Venezuelan Officials, 5 November 2019. Available at: https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm825.

[232] Reuters, Reino Unido sanciona a 11 personas por violaciones DDHH incluyendo a tres venezolanos, 10 January 2020. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/inglaterra-sanciones-idLTAKBN28K2XU; Infobae, El Reino Unido sancionó a militares del régimen de Nicolás Maduro por violar derechos humanos en Venezuela, 10 December 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/12/10/el-reino-unido-sanciono-a-militares-del-regimen-de-nicolas-maduro-por-violar-derechos-humanos-en-venezuela/.

[233] Defensa.com, El Jefe de Estado Mayor de las Fuerzas Armadas de Venezuela, Remigio Ceballos, sancionado por la UE, 23 February 2021. Available at: https://www.defensa.com/venezuela/jefe-estado-mayor-fuerzas-armadas-venezuela-remigio-ceballos-ue.

[234] Analítica, Ocho países se adhieren a las sanciones de la Unión Europea contra el madurismo, 19 March 2021. Available at: https://www.analitica.com/actualidad-internacional/ocho-paises-se-adhieren-a-las-sanciones-de-la-union-europea-contra-el-madurismo/.

[235] Vendata, Consultation: Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, 12 July 2023. Available at: https://vendata.org/site/sanciones/.

b) Major General Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes, Director of the Bolivarian National Police until July 2023. Current Commander of the GNB.

91. Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes was born in Venezuela on 2 December 1966.[236] From 2016 to 2017 he was commander of Zone number 11 of the GNB in Zulia State and in 2018 he held the position of commander of Zone number 43 (Capital District) of the GNB.[237] On 3 May 2019 he was appointed by Interior Minister Néstor Reverol as Director of the Bolivarian National Police Corps, replacing General Carlos Pérez Ampueda who had held the post since 2017.[238]

92. As Director of the PNB, Estrada Paredes created the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET) in July 2022.[239] In August of the same year, President Maduro appointed him Vice-Minister of the Integrated Police System (VISIPOL).[240] In the process of restructuring the PNB, he established a new hierarchy of ranks in the security force[241] and led the multiple operations carried out by the PNB in the different states of the country, including Operation *Gran Cacique Guaicaipuro*, Operation *Negro Primero* ("The First Black", in reference to Venezuelan war hero Pedro Camejo, executed in response to Operation *Gedeón* aimed at overthrowing the Government) and the *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations.[242]

93. On 13 July 2023, President Maduro appointed Estrada Paredes as the new Commander of the GNB.[243] The Directorate of the PNB was assigned to Brigadier General Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna.[244]

236 Dateas, Consulta Estrada Paredes Elio Ramón - Dtto. Capital - Venezuela, 13 July 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/estrada-paredes-elio-ramon-1268996

237 Asociación Civil Control Ciudadano, Designado el Mayor General de la GNB, Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes, como Viceministro del Sistema Integrado de Policía, del Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y paz, 7 September 2022. Available at: https://www.controlciudadano.org/noticias/designado-el-mayor-general-de-la-gnb-elio-ramon-estrada-paredes-como-viceministro-del-sistema-integrado-de-policia-del-ministerio-del-poder-popular-para-relaciones-interiores-justicia-y-paz/.

238 Resolution No. 046 of 6 May 2019, Official Gazette No. 41.627 of 7 May 2019.

239 Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

240 Asociación Civil Control Ciudadano, Designado el Mayor General de la GNB, Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes, como Viceministro del Sistema Integrado de Policía, del Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y paz, 7 September 2022. Available at: https://www.controlciudadano.org/noticias/designado-el-mayor-general-de-la-gnb-elio-ramon-estrada-paredes-como-viceministro-del-sistema-integrado-de-policia-del-ministerio-del-poder-popular-para-relaciones-interiores-justicia-y-paz/; Decree No. 4.732, Official Gazette No. 42.451 of 30 August 2022.

241 Ministry of the Interior, Jefe de Estado lidera graduación de 4.389 funcionarios en el contexto del 13º Aniversario de la PNB, 20 December 2022. Available at: http://venezuela.gob.ve/Site/Web/Principal/paginas/classMostrarEvento3.php?id_evento=22861.

242 YouTube video, Venezolana de Televisión, Programa Especial | Detalles de la Operación Gran Cacique Indio Guaicaipuro a 1 mes de su ejecución, 7 August 2021. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbPf3dByUSQ; Ultimas Noticias, Trazan nuevas estrategias para brindar mejor seguridad a los tuyeros, 15 September 2022. Available at: https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/miranda/trazan-nuevas-estrategias-para-brindar-mejor-seguridad-a-los-tuyeros/; Con el Mazo Dando, Hace dos años a la Operación Gedeón le salió la Operación Negro Primero, 3 May 2022. Available at: https://mazo4f.com/hace-dos-anos-a-la-operacion-gedeon-le-salio-la-operacion-negro-primero.

243 Ministry for Ecosocialism, Presidente Maduro designó nuevos comandantes de las REDI, 13 July 2023. Available at: http://www.minec.gob.ve/presidente-maduro-designo-nuevos-comandantes-de-las-redi-2/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CI%20want%20to%20congratulate%20the%20M%2FG,and%20the%20security%20of%20the%20pa%C3%ADs%E2%80%9D.

244 Tweet by President Nicolás Maduro [@NicolasMaduro], 18 July 2023. Available at: https://twitter.com/NicolasMaduro/status/1681425037985759233.

Table 6:
Biographical data of Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes as of 5 June 2023

DIRECTOR OF THE BOLIVARIAN NATIONAL POLICE (PNB)

Name: Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes

Identification number: V-6.857.541

Date and place of birth : 02/12/1966, El Valle, Libertador

Rank: Major General

Unit: Directorate of the National Bolivarian Police

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Guard (GNB)	Commander of Zone No. 11, Zulia State	2016-2017
Bolivarian National Guard (GNB)	Commander of Zone No. 43, Capital District	2018
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Director	05/2019
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace	Vice Minister of the Integrated Police System (VISIPOL)	08/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

c) *Brigadier General Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna, Assistant Director of the Bolivarian National Police until July 2023. Current Director of the PNB.*

94. A member of the GNB,[245] in January 2013 Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna was appointed Interim Director of the Office of the 171 Security and Emergency Attention Centres, attached to the Vice-Ministry of Prevention and Citizen Security of the Ministry of the Interior.[246] In August of the same year, he became Director General of Human Resources, as an Interim, of the National Treasury Office of the Ministry of Finance.[247] In December 2018 he became the Interim Director General of the Administrative Management Office of the Ministry of Interior.[248] On 4 June 2019 he was appointed Interim Assistant Director of the Bolivarian National Police (PNB).[249] In December 2022 he received the rank of Major Commissary in the PNB.[250] On 18 July 2023 he was appointed by President Maduro as Director of the PNB.[251]

[245] Ministry of Defence, Resolution No. 010316, 30 June 2015.
[246] Ministry of Interior, Resolution No. 22, Official Gazette No. 40.089 of 14 January 2013.
[247] Ministry of Finance, National Treasury Office, Administrative Ruling No. 2013-017 of 23 August 2013, Official Gazette No. 40.236 of 26 August 2013.
[248] Ministry of the Interior, Resolution No. 239, Official Gazette No. 41.550 of 20 December 2018.
[249] Ministry of the Interior, Resolution No. 077 of 4 June 2019, Official Gazette No. 41.648 of 5 June 2019.
[250] Instagram post, Rubén Santiago [@ruben_santiago_s], 20 December 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CmaXyr-IEhi/?img_index=1
[251] Tweet by Nicolás Maduro [@NicolasMaduro], 18 July 2023. Available at: https://twitter.com/NicolasMaduro/status/1681425037985759233; Ministry of Interior, Justice and Peace, General de Brigada Rubén Santiago designado como nuevo Comandante General de la PNB, 18 July 2023. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/?p=84926.

Table 7:
Biographical data of Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna as of 5 June 2023

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE BOLIVARIAN NATIONAL POLICE (PNB)

Name: Rubén Darío Santiago Servigna

Identification number: V-12.221.568

Date and place of birth: (Information not available)

Rank: Brigadier General

Unit: Sub-Directorate of the Bolivarian National Police

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Ministry of Internal Relations, Justice and Peace – Vice-Ministry of Prevention and Citizen Security	Director in Charge of the Office of the 171 Security and Emergency Attention Centres	01/2013
Ministry of Finance - National Treasury Office	Interim General Director of Human Resources	08/2013
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace	Interim General Director of the Office of Administrative Management	12/2018
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Assistant Director of the PNB	06/2019

Source: Mission's own elaboration

2. Senior officials of the DAET

a) *Major Commissary José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, Director of the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions and current Assistante Director of the PNB.*

95. José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, alias "Miguelito", was born in Venezuela on 17 October 1979.[252] His name was first made public when it became known that SEBIN officials were involved in the murder of Bassil Da Costa, in the centre of Caracas, during the protest of 12 February 2014.[253] At that time, according to a media source, Domínguez Ramírez was the leader of the *Colectivo Revolucionario Continente* ("Continent Revolutionary Colectivo"), which operated in the neighbourhoods of Catia and 23 de Enero, west of Caracas, and was attached to the SEBIN Intelligence Directorate.[254] He also held the title of Commissary in the Municipal Police of Libertador and the Caracas Police.[255]

96. According to a source interviewed by the mission, Domínguez Ramírez was already known as "Miguelito" since the time he was the bodyguard of Freddy Bernal, former mayor of the Libertador municipality of Caracas, who was also the National Chief of the Local

[252] Dateas, Domínguez Ramírez José Miguel - Dtto. Capital - Venezuela, accessed 7 July 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/dominguez-ramirez-jose-miguel-734896.

[253] Runrun.es, "Miguelito" el nuevo jefe de las FAES fue miembro de un colectivo y esta sancionado por EEUU, 6 May 2019. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/380036/miguelito-el-nuevo-jefe-de-las-faes-fue-miembro-de-un-colectivo-y-esta-sancionado-por-ee-uu/; El Mercurio Web, Nuevo jefe de las FAES es un colectivo sospechoso de asesinar a Bassil da Costa, 6 May 2019. Available at: https://elmercurioweb.com/noticias/2019/5/6/nuevo-jefe-de-las-faes-es-un-colectivo-sospechoso-de-asesinar-a-bassil-da-costa.

[254] Interview OOIV071. See Runrun.es, "Miguelito" el nuevo jefe de las FAES fue miembro de un colectivo y esta sancionado por EEUU, 6 May 2019. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/380036/miguelito-el-nuevo-jefe-de-las-faes-fue-miembro-de-un-colectivo-y-esta-sancionado-por-ee-uu/.

[255] Runrun.es, "Miguelito" el nuevo jefe de las FAES fue miembro de un colectivo y esta sancionado por EEUU, May 6, 2019. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/380036/miguelito-el-nuevo-jefe-de-las-faes-fue-miembro-de-un-colectivo-y-esta-sancionado-por-ee-uu/; Runrun.es, Con colectivos y Sebin armaron la trama de violencia el 12F, 16 February 2016. Available: https://runrun.es/investigacion/248568/con-colectivos-y-sebin-armaron-la-trama-de-violencia-el-12f/.

Administration and Production Committees (CLAP) and Presidential Commissioner for the Transformation of the Police System.[256] In 2018, when Bernal was appointed "protector" of Táchira (an unofficial position parallel to that of Governor), he promoted "Miguelito" from Director of Operations of the FAES in Táchira State to Head of the FAES in the same state.[257]

97. According to a source interviewed by the mission, in July 2018 Domínguez Ramírez was appointed Assistant Director of the FAES at the national level, a position he held until 30 April 2019.[258] On that date, the then Director of the FAES, GNB Lieutenant Colonel Rafael Bastardo Mendoza, was appointed with diplomatic functions in Cuba and Domínguez Ramírez was then promoted to the position of Director of the FAES.[259] In December 2020, the regional FAES became part of the Directorate of Intelligence and Strategy (DIE) of the PNB.[260] However, according to open sources, Domínguez Ramírez reportedly remained in command of the FAES in Caracas.[261]

98. During his tenure as Director of the FAES, Miguelito received various awards from President Maduro, including a decoration for his participation in Operation *Negro Primero* ("The First Black", in reference to Venezuelan war hero Pedro Camejo) *Aplastamiento del Enemigo* ("Crushing the Enemy"),[262] in which eight people died and 12 were arrested.[263]

99. At the time of the creation of the DAET, on 27 July 2022, the General Commander of the PNB appointed José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez as the new director. Domínguez Ramírez was therefore in command of this Directorate during Operations *Trueno* ("Thunder") III to VII. When the new Director of the PNB, Brigadier General Rubén Santiago Servigna,[264] took over, Domínguez was appointed Assistant Director of the PNB, a position he holds simultaneously with that of Director of the DAET.[265]

[256] Interview OOIV071. See also Runrun.es, "Miguelito" el nuevo jefe de las FAES fue miembro de un colectivo y esta sancionado por EEUU, 6 May 2019. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/380036/miguelito-el-nuevo-jefe-de-las-faes-fue-miembro-de-un-colectivo-y-esta-sancionado-por-ee-uu//.

[257] US Department of the Treasury, Treasury Sanctions Security Officials Associated with Violence and Obstruction of Humanitarian Aid Delivery, 1 March 2019. Available at: https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm619

[258] Interview OOIV053; A/HRC/45/CRP.11 para. 203; Infobae, Uno de los militares venezolanos sancionados por el reino unido ya había sido castigado por el propio régimen después de participar en la operación libertad/, 11 December 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/12/11/uno-de-los-militares-venezolanos-sancionados-por-el-reino-unido-ya-habia-sido-castigado-por-el-propio-regimen-tras-participar-en-la-operacion-libertad/.

[259] Infobae, Uno de los militares venezolanos sancionados por el Reino Unido ya había sido castigado por el propio régimen tras participar en la Operación Libertad, 11 December 2020. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2020/12/11/uno-de-los-militares-venezolanos-sancionados-por-el-reino-unido-ya-habia-sido-castigado-por-el-propio-regimen-tras-participar-en-la-operacion-libertad/.

[260] Proiuris, Un enroque de dependencias permitiría actuación encubierta de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://www.proiuris.org/?p=63830; TalCual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet/.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ministry for Ecosocialism, Condecorados Efectivos que participaron en la Operación Negro Primero, 3 June 2020. Available at: http://www.minec.gob.ve/condecorados-efectivos-que-participaron-en-la-operacion-negro-primero/; See Facebook profile, Nicolas Maduro, 5 May 2020. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/NicolasMaduro/posts/2799243333639465/.

[263] Voces en lucha, Gedeón vs. Negro Primero, 8 May 2020. Available at: https://vocesenlucha.com/15-gedeon-vs-negro-primero/.

[264] Ministry of Interior, General de Brigada Rubén Santiago designado como nuevo Comandante General de la PNB, 18 July 2023. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/?p=84926#:~:text=Santiago%20Servigna%2C%20oficial%20de%20la,Segundo%20Comandante%20de%20este%20cuerpo.

[265] Interview OOIV071; Instagram post, Unidad de Operaciones Tácticas Especiales [@uote_por_venezuela], 28 July 2023. Available at:

100. José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez has been sanctioned by the United States, Canada, and the European Union, among other countries, for preventing the entry of humanitarian aid at the Venezuelan border in February 2019 and for his involvement in serious human rights violations.[266]

Table 8:
Biographical data of José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez as of 5 June 2023

DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL ACTIONS (DAET) (PNB)

Name: José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez

Identification number: V-14.444.352

Date and place of birth : 17/10/1979, Sucre, Libertador

Rank: Major Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Continente "Revolutionary" Collective	Leader of the "colectivo" (Catia and 23 De Enero, Caracas)	2014
Intelligence Directorate (SEBIN)	Commissary	2014
Caracas Police / Municipal Police of Libertador	Accredited official	2014
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Head of Operations, FAES Táchira – Head of FAES Táchira	2018
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Assistant Director of the Special Action Forces (FAES)	2019
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Director of the Special Action Forces (FAES)	05/2019-12/2020
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Director of the Special Action Forces, Caracas (FAES-Caracas)	12/2020-07/2022
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET-PNB)	Director of the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration.

b) General Commissary Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, DAET Consultant until January 2023, Deputy Director of the DAET until July 2023. Current Assistant Director of the DAET.

101. Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos was born in Venezuela on 3 July 1970.[267] He joined the State security agencies in 2007, as a member of the Directorate of Intelligence Services (DISIP), which in 2009 was renamed the SEBIN.[268]

102. In the SEBIN, Calderón Chirinos was Director of the Strategic Investigations Directorate.[269] In October 2018 he was removed from his post by then Director of the SEBIN, General Manuel Ricardo Cristopher Figuera, due to a large number of allegations of ill-treatment and torture of detainees at the El Helicoide detention centre.[270]

https://www.instagram.com/p/CvOpFIIuHsd/?img_index=1; Instagram post, Rubén Santiago - Comandante General de la PNB [@ruben_santiago_s], 27 July 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CvOSJQjorSi/?img_index=3; El Estímulo, Crímenes sin Castigo: El último vuelo de Emtrasur, 10 August 2023. Available at: https://elestimulo.com/opinion/2023-08-10/crimenes-sin-castigo-el-ultimo-vuelo-de-emtrasur/.

266 Vendata, Consultation José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez. Available at: https://vendata.org/site/sanciones/; Analítica, Ocho países se adhieren a las sanciones de la Unión Europea contra el madurismo, 19 March 2021. Available at: https://www.analitica.com/actualidad-internacional/ocho-paises-se-adhieren-a-las-sanciones-de-la-union-europea-contra-el-madurismo/.

267 Dateas, Consultation Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, (2023). Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/calderon-chirinos-carlos-alberto-220365.

268 Interview ASND8491; A/HCR/51/CRP.3, para. 378.

269 AHRC45CRP.11SP, para. 488.

270 A/HRC/45/33, para. 12; A/HRC/51/CRP. 3, para. 379. See also Monitoreamos, ¿Quién es Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, el "policía malo" que dirigía las torturas en el SEBIN de El Helicoide, 21 September 2022. Available at: https://monitoreamos.com/venezuela/quien-es-carlos-alberto-calderon-chirinos-el-policia-malo-que-dirigia-las-torturas-en-el-sebin-de-el-helicoide.

103. In its 2022 report, the mission concluded that during his command of the SEBIN's Strategic Investigations Directorate, Calderón Chirinos was alleged to have issued orders to his subordinates to perpetrate acts of torture against detainees at El Helicoide.[271] The mission stated that it had reasonable grounds to believe that if his subordinates refused, Calderón Chirinos beat them to instil respect, leading officials to carry out orders and apply electric shocks or put plastic bags over detainees' heads to extract information from them.[272] The mission also found that Calderón Chirinos engaged in extortion[273] and disobeyed orders to release or transfer detainees.[274]

104. A source interviewed by the mission, who worked under Calderón Chirinos in the SEBIN's Strategic Investigations Directorate, claimed to have received orders during the 2014, 2017 and 2019 protests to arrest a minimum number of detainees per day, regardless of who they were.[275] To carry out these orders, brigades of the Strategic Investigations Directorate went out to arrest people who were at the *guarimbas* (protests). The source indicated that detainees were tortured by means of beatings, insertion of pieces of wood in the anus and electric shocks to the genitals to make them incriminate themselves as members of subversive groups participating in the protests or to obtain information on who was leading the protests.[276]

105. The same source indicated that, following orders from Calderón Chirinos, persons detained in El Helicoide for political reasons or for common crimes were placed in cells that were permanently illuminated with white light, with the air conditioning at a very low temperature and where they were made to drink hot water to make them sick. Once the detainees requested medical attention, they were transferred to the infirmary of El Helicoide where they were injected with medication to make them even sicker.[277] In the case of those detained in the cells of the SEBIN headquarters in Plaza Venezuela known as *La Tumba* ("The Tomb"), they were beaten, by order of Calderón Chirinos, with sheets and padded gloves with the intention of hurting and stunning the victims without leaving visible marks on their bodies.[278]

106. The source interviewed by the mission also indicated that the brigades of SEBIN's Strategic Investigations Directorate participated in so-called "cleansing operations", in which both previously identified targets, and innocent people who were in the places where these operations took place, were killed.[279] In those operations, Calderón Chirinos ordered the agents to plant evidence, such as drugs or weapons, in order to incriminate the targets or to portray that the officers had acted in legitimate self-defence.[280]

107. In April 2019, the then Director of the SEBIN, Cristopher Figuera - who had dismissed Calderón - went into exile after joining Operation *Libertad* ("Liberty") led by Juan Guaidó.[281] President Maduro appointed Chief General Gustavo González López as the new Director of the SEBIN,[282] who, in turn, reinstated Calderón Chirinos in the SEBIN as Director of the Strategic Investigations Directorate at El Helicoide.[283] The mission's 2020 and 2022 reports established that acts of torture were committed at the El Helicoide detention centre.[284]

[271] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, paras. 303 and 371.
[272] Ibid, paras 303 and 371.
[273] Ibid, paras. 337, 340 and 361.
[274] Ibid, para. 380.
[275] Interview OOIV070.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.
[281] A/HRC/45/CRP.11/SP, para. 106.
[282] Infobae, Gustavo González López, el hombre de Diosdado Cabello que vuelve a controlar el Servicio de Inteligencia chavista, 1 May 2019. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2019/05/01/gustavo-gonzalez-lopez-el-hombre-de-diosdado-cabello-que-vuelve-a-controlar-el-servicio-de-inteligencia-chavista/.
[283] Interview OOIV070.
[284] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, pp. 99-103; A/HRC/45/CRP.11 paras. 280 and 287.

Calderón Chirinos remained in the SEBIN until 2020,[285] participating in joint operations with other security agencies.[286]

108. According to a source interviewed by the mission, in 2021 Calderón Chirinos joined the PNB as a legal consultant to the FAES units and, from 2022 onwards, as a consultant to the different divisions of the DAET.[287] Calderón Chirinos participated in several working groups of the State security forces as a representative of the DAET.[288] Subsequently, Calderón Chirinos became Deputy Director of the DAET[289] and Director General of the Police Service of the Vice-Ministry of the Integrated Police System (VISIPOL).[290] Another source interviewed by the mission reported that in 2023 Calderón Chirinos was appointed Assistant Director of the DAET,[291] his last position of which the mission is aware.

109. Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos has been sanctioned by the European Union,[292] the United States,[293] the United Kingdom, Switzerland and France[294] for his involvement in acts of torture and other serious human rights violations.[295]

[285] A/HRC/51/CRP.3 para 378. Monitoreamos, ¿Quién es Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, el "policía malo" que dirigía las torturas en el SEBIN de El Helicoide, 21 September 2022. Available at: https://monitoreamos.com/venezuela/quien-es-carlos-alberto-calderon-chirinos-el-policia-malo-que-dirigia-las-torturas-en-el-sebin-de-el-helicoide.

[286] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 382, 408, 409, 439, 521, 691; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 290.

[287] Interview OOIV053.

[288] Tweet by José García Pinto [@garciapintojose], 14 September 2022. Available at: https://twitter.com/garciapintojose/status/1570129269778530304/photo/1.

[289] Instagram post by Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos [calderoncarlos.g], 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/calderoncarlos.g/?hl=es-la.

[290] Ministry of Interior, Vice-Ministry of the Integrated Police System, 22 August 2023. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/?page_id=100.

[291] Interview OOIV071; El estímulo, Crímenes sin Castigo: El último vuelo de Emtrasur, 10 August 2023. Available at: https://elestimulo.com/opinion/2023-08-10/crimenes-sin-castigo-el-ultimo-vuelo-de-emtrasur/.

[292] Vendata, Consultation Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, 1 August 2023. Available at: https://vendata.org/site/sanciones/.

[293] US Department of the Treasury, Treasury Takes Steps to Harmonize International Sanctions Efforts Against Venezuelan Officials, 5 November 2019. Available at: https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm825

[294] Open Sanctions, Consultation Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, 1 August 2023. Available at: https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-LT3c8gRfLPmXBhcwozRGJH/.

[295] Vendata, Consultation Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://vendata.org/site/sanciones/; Analítica, Ocho países se adhieren a las sanciones de la Unión Europea contra el madurismo, 19 March 2021. Available at: https://www.analitica.com/actualidad-internacional/ocho-paises-se-adhieren-a-las-sanciones-de-la-union-europea-contra-el-madurismo/.

Table 9:
Biographical data of Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos as of 5 June 2023

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL ACTIONS (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos

Identification number: V-10.352.300

Date and place of birth : 03/07/1970, San Agustín, Libertador

Rank: General Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Directorate for Intelligence and Prevention Services (DISIP)	Official	2007
Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN)	Director of the Strategic Investigations Directorate / Director of El Helicoide	2014-10/2018
Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN)	Director of the Strategic Investigations Directorate / Director of El Helicoide	05/2019-2020
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Legal Consultant for the Special Action Forces (FAES)	2021
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Consultant for the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)	07/2022
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)	Deputy Director of the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)	2023

Source: Mission's own elaboration

c) *Chief Commissary Leonel Alberto García Rivas, Assistant Director of the DAET until January 2023. Deputy Director of the DAET until July 2023. Current Head of the Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE) of the DAET.*

110. Leonel Alberto García Rivas was born in Venezuela on 24 May 1983.[296] In December 2020,[297] as part of the transition from the FAES to the new DAET, García was appointed Assistant Director of the Strategic Intelligence Directorate (DIE)[298] of the PNB, to which the regional FAES were attached. When the DAET was created in July 2022, García was its first Assistant Director.[299] According to a source with access to internal PNB information interviewed by the mission, in 2023 García became Deputy Director of this Directorate. Then, in July 2023, he was named Director of Strategic Intelligence (DIE).[300]

[296] Dateas, Consultation Leonel Alberto García Rivas, (2023). Available at: https://www.dateas.com/fr/persona_venezuela/garcia-rivas-leonel-alberto-686073

[297] Tal Cual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, December 28, 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet/

[298] Proiuris, Un enroque de dependencias permitiría actuación encubierta de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://www.proiuris.org/?p=63830; TalCual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet; Runrun.es, Denuncian operación maquillaje por cambio de nombre regional de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://runrun.es/noticias/432332/denuncian-operacion-maquillaje-por-cambio-de-nombre-regional-de-las-faes/

[299] Interview OOIV053.

[300] Interview OOIV053; Interview OOIV071; El Estímulo, Crímenes sin Castigo: El último vuelo de Emtrasur, 10 August 2023. Available at: https://elestimulo.com/opinion/2023-08-10/crimenes-sin-castigo-el-ultimo-vuelo-de-emtrasur/

Table 10:
Biographical data of Leonel Alberto García Rivas as of 5 June 2023

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL ACTIONS (DAET)(PNB)

Name: Leonel Alberto García Rivas

Identification number: V-16.877.525

Date and place of birth : 24/05/1983, Sucre, El Libertador

Rank: Chief Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Member	2015
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Assistant Director of the Intelligence and Strategy Directorate (DIE)	12/2020
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Assistant Director	07/2022
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Deputy Director	2023

Source: Mission's own elaboration

d) Chief Commissary Florencio Ramón Escalona, Head of Operations of the DAET.

111. Florencio Ramón Escalona (alias "Terminator" and "Rambo") was born in Venezuela on 27 October 1962.[301] He belonged to the Caracas Metropolitan Police where he was investigated for the murder of Enrique Pan Dávila, which occurred in Caracas on 17 July 1992.[302] The mission has no further information on the outcome of the judicial process.

112. According to open sources, Escalona was involved in the so-called "Massacre of the Anaucos", which occurred on 6 January 1995, in which three people were killed.[303] At the time he was known as "Terminator" and "Rambo".[304]

113. On 15 January 2018, while he was Chief Supervisor of the FAES, Escalona participated in the operation to capture the CICPC pilot Óscar Pérez[305] in El Junquito, when he was wounded in the left forearm by a gunshot wound.[306]

114. In December 2021 Escalona was appointed Head of Operations of the FAES and in 2022 he served as Head of Operations of the General Directorate of Operations and Tactical Actions (DGOAT). Under this position, he worked with the DCDO, the UOTE and the

[301] Dateas, Consultation Florencio Ramón Escalona, 1 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/escalona-florencio-ramon-716362.

[302] On 17 July 1992, in the Eurobuilding Hotel located in the Chuao urbanization in the city of Caracas, Enrique Pan Dávila was killed in a confrontation with Metropolitan Police officers. See Supreme Court of Justice (Chamber of Criminal Procdure), decree No. 612-100500, file No. 97-1972, 10 May 2022. Available at: http://historico.tsj.gob.ve/decisiones/scp/mayo/612-100500-971972.HTM.

[301] El cooperante, El "Rambo": El PNB herido en operativo de Óscar Pérez conocido por violar DDHH, 16 January 2018. Available at: https://elcooperante.com/el-rambo-el-pnb-herido-en-operativo-de-oscar-perez-conocido-por-violaciones-a-los-ddhh/.

[304] Venezuela al día, La joyita del PNB fue herido operativo Oscar Pérez DDHH, 16 January 2018. Available at: https://venezuelaaldia.com/2018/01/16/la-joyita-del-pnb-fue-herido-operativo-oscar-perez-ddhh/.

[305] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 935; YouTube video, Luigino Bracci Roa, Situation in Venezuela. Diosdado Cabello da detalles inéditos sobre operación donde murió Oscar Pérez en El Junquito, 17 January 2018. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyDbcqMlzGo.

[306] 800 Noticias, FOTO | Acta del FAES confirma deceso de Óscar Pérez y 8 policías heridos, 15 January 2018. Available at: https://800noticias.com/foto-acta-del-faes-confirma-deceso-de-oscar-perez-y-8-policias-heridos.

Motorised Commando group in different operations involving the FAES.[307] After the creation of the DAET in July 2022, Escalona was appointed Head of Operations of the DAET and, according to a source interviewed by the mission, he still holds this position.[308]

Table 11:
Biographical data of Florencio Ramón Escalona as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF OPERATIONS OF THE DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL ACTIONS (DAET)(PNB)

Name: Florencio Ramón Escalona

Identification number: V-6.105.377

Date and place of birth : 27/10/1962, Sucre, Libertador

Rank: Chief Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Caracas Metropolitan Police	Official	1992
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Migration officer for the Caracas Metropolitan Police	04/2011
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES-DCDO)	Chief Supervisor	2018
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Head of Operations (FAES Caracas)	12/2020
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Head of Operations / Directorate General Operations and Tactical Actions (DGOAT)	2022
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Head of Operations (DAET)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration.

3. Heads of Divisions

a) *General Commissary Ronny Fernando González Montesinos, Head of the Criminal Investigations Division (DIP)*

115. Ronny González Montesinos was born in Venezuela on 14 May 1974. In 1995 he was an officer of the DISIP (subsequently the SEBIN).[309] In 2011, with the rank of Assistant Commissary, he was part of the Unified Regional Command of Extortion and Kidnapping under the Counterintelligence Directorate of the SEBIN.[310] Between 2014 and 2019 he served as Coordinator of Field Investigations of the Strategic Investigations Directorate of the SEBIN,[311] a period in which the largest number of human rights violations by this intelligence service occurred.[312]

116. González Montesinos was identified by the mission in its 2022 report as one of the main perpetrators of human rights violations, as was Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, under whose command he worked at El Helicoide. The mission found reasonable grounds to believe that González Montesinos gave orders to his subordinates to carry out intelligence work against real or perceived opponent to the Government, to then arbitrarily detained them, and that he was directly involved in the execution of these actions.[313] The mission also found that González Montesinos failed to comply with orders to release or transfer detainees to other

[307] Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 25 March 2022, Available at: https://www.facebook.com/231509720527789/posts/1668424216836325/?locale=ms_MY; *Con El Mazo Dando*, Comisario Escalona: PNB cuenta con funcionarios capacitados para la protección del pueblo, 25 March 2022. Available at: https://mazo4f.com/comisario-escalona-pnb-cuenta-con-funcionarios-capacitados-para-la-proteccion-del-pueblo .

[308] Interview OOIV071.

[309] PODEROPEDIA, Consultation Ronny González Montesinos, 1 August 2023. Available at: https://poderopediave.org/persona/ronny-gonzalez-montesinos/.

[310] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1990.

[311] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 365.

[312] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1982-1983.

[313] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, paras. 369, 370.

detention centres. Sources interviewed by the mission pointed to González Montesinos as a direct participant in torture at El Helicoide.[314]

117. In May 2020, González Montesinos held the rank of General Commissary within the SEBIN and was assigned to the FAES of the PNB as Director of the Counterintelligence Division. From that position, on 3 May 2020 he led the FAES personnel who responded to Operation *Gedeón*[315] carried out in the city of Macuto, La Guaira State, in which four people were arrested and at least six died.[316] In December 2020, González Montesinos was appointed Director of the DIE, which became responsible for the regional FAES.[317] In July 2022, once the DAET was created, González Montesinos was appointed head of the DIP and, according to a source interviewed by the mission, this is the last known position he held.[318]

Table 12:
Biographical data of Ronny Gonzalez Montesinos as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Ronny Fernando González Montesinos

Date of birth: 14/05/1974

Rank: General Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Directorate for Intelligence and Prevention Services (DISIP)	Official	1995
Unified Regional Command of Extortion and Kidnapping (SEBIN)	Assistant Commissary	2011
Strategic Investigations Directorate (SEBIN)	Field Investigations Coordinator	2014-2019
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (DIE)(FAES)	Deputy Director of the Strategic Intelligence Directorate	2020
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (DIE)(FAES)	Director of the Strategic Intelligence Directorate	12/2020
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)	Head of the Criminal Investigations Division	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

b) Chief Inspector, Fray Jesús García Pérez, Head of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE)

118. Fray Jesús García Pérez was born in Venezuela on 18 October 1988.[319] He belonged to the FAES where he was a member of the UOTE, and trainer of its officials.[320] García Pérez

[314] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 369-377.
[315] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 368.
[316] Document MMDC003, Record of Criminal Investigation; A/HRC/48/CRP.5, Box 13.
[317] Proiuris, Un enroque de dependencias permitiría actuación encubierta de las FAES, 28 December 2020. Available at https://www.proiuris.org/?p=63830; Tal Cual, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet.
[318] Interview OOIV053.
[319] Dateas, Consultation 18.684.650, (2023). Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/garcia-perez-frany-jesus-14676846
[320] Instagram post by Unidad de Operaciones Tacticas Especiales-Comando por Venezuela [@uote_por_venezuela], 4 November 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CV3J5a2p9qy/?hl=es; Idem, Instagram, 23 September 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CULOzwypZUb/?hl=es; Instagram post by C/M Miguel Domínguez R [@migueldominguez08], 29 September 2021. Available at:

also participated in different operations carried out by the PNB. With the creation of the DAET in July 2022, he was appointed Head of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE)[321] with which he has participated in at least Operations *Trueno* ("Thunder") IV[322] and VII.[323] According to the mission's information, he is currently still in that position.

119. On 3 May 2023, Fray Jesús García Pérez was decorated for his participation in Operation *Negro Primero* ("The First Black", in reference to Venezuelan war hero Pedro Camejo), in response to Operation *Gedeón*, which, according to the Executive, was intended to destabilise the peace and security of the national territory.[324] He was also a special guest on the 429th programme of *Con El Mazo Dando*, hosted by Diosdado Cabello, who acknowledged the UOTE and its commander.[325]

Table 13:
Biographical data of Fray Jesús García Pérez as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE SPECIAL TACTICAL OPERATIONS UNIT (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Fray Jesús García Pérez

Identification number: V-18.684.650

Date and place of birth: 18/10/1988, Lagunillas, Zulia

Rank: Chief Inspector

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Official	2015
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Member of Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE) –FAES Trainer	12/2019
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE) – Trainer	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

https://www.instagram.com/p/CUaPZ7HgIsJ/?hl=es; Instagram post by C/M Miguel Domínguez R [@migueldominguez08], 26 January 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CKhNPZPhgXM/?img_index=5.

321 Interview OOIV053; Instagram post by Unidad de Operaciones Tácticas Especiales-Comando por Venezuela [@uote_por_venezuela], 6 May 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cr6TZexgptO/?hl=es

322 Instagram post by National Bolivarian Police, [@pnbvzla], 13 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cid2_dnLpV8/.

323 Instagram post by CPNB DIP [@dipcpnb.official], 1 October 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/CjLTyfbo8gv/.

324 ALNAVÍO, Chavismo condecora a militares que repelieron "Operación Gedeón", 3 May 2023. Available at: https://alnavio.es/chavismo-condecora-a-militares-que-repelieron-operacion-gedeon/; CEOFANB, CJ Nicolás Maduro Moros condecoró a efectivos que participaron en la "Operación Negro Primero" Aplastamiento del Enemigo. Available at: https://ceofanb.mil.ve/cj-nicolas-maduro-moros-condecoro-a-efectivos-que-participaron-en-la-operacion-negro-primero-aplastamiento-del-enemigo/.

325 Instagram post by Unidad de Operaciones Tácticas Especiales-Comando por Venezuela [@uote_por_venezuela], 6 May 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cr6TZexgptO/?hl=ess.

c) *Chief Commissary Wilmer Antonio Velázquez Rodríguez, Head of the Motorised Division until July 2023. Current Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division.*

120. Wilmer Antonio Velázquez Rodríguez was born in Venezuela on 16 February 1983.[326] In June 2022, when he held the rank of Chief Commissary, he was appointed Head of the Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery of the PNB.[327]

121. After the creation of the DAET in July 2022, in August of the same year he was appointed Head of its Motorised Division and was decorated by the Director of the PNB with the Police Cross, first class.[328] On 9 July 2023, Velázquez Rodríguez was appointed Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division of the DAET,[329] a position he currently holds.

Table 14:
Biographical data of Wilmer Antonio Velásquez Rodríguez as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE MOTORISED DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Wilmer Antonio Velásquez Rodríguez

Identification number: V-17.211.954

Date and place of birth: 16/02/1983, Caroní, Bolívar State

Rank: Chief Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Head of Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery	06/2022
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Motorised Division	08/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

d) *General Commissary[330] Richar Contreras Fernández, Head of the Division Against Organised Crime (DCDO)*

122. According to various sources, Richar Contreras belonged to FAES since 2019, becoming its Assistant Director.[331] In December 2020, after the dissolution of the regional FAES, Contreras joined the FAES in Caracas, maintaining the position of Assistant Director.[332]

123. Contreras was simultaneously Assistant Director of the FAES and Director of the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO).[333] According to media reports, he was

[326] Dateas, Consultation Wilmer Antonio Velásquez Rodriguez, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/velasquez-rodriguez-wilmer-antonio-4192076.
[327] Instagram post by Wilmer Velasquez [@wilmervelazquez21], 21 June 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CfFr7V8tnK7/.
[328] Instagram post by Wilmer Velasquez [@wilmervelazquez21], 4 August 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg2SMTRJRbr/.
[329] Instagram post by Wilmer Velasquez [@wilmervelazquez21], 9 July 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cue9TWWAE7t/.
[330] Instagram post by Richar Contreras [@richarcontrerasf], 3 August 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/richarcontrerasf/.
[331] Ibid; Interview OOIV053.
[332] Tal Cual Digital, Provea denuncia "operación maquillaje" en las FAES para evadir petición de Bachelet, 28 December 2020. Available at: https://talcualdigital.com/provea-denuncia-operacion-maquillaje-en-las-faes-para-evadir-peticion-de-bachelet/.
[333] Ibid; Interview OOIV053.

involved in abuses in the context of security operations during this period.[334] From within the DCDO, Contreras led Operation *Gran Cacique Indio Guaicaipuro* II, which was carried out in February 2022 in Aragua State[335] and in which Carlos Revette, alias "El Koki", was killed.[336] Contreras's intervention in this operation was documented in an audio recording by an official of the DCDO.[337] In July 2022, when the DAET was created, the DCDO was changed from a Directorate to a Division and Contreras was appointed Head of the Division against Organised Crime (DCDO),[338] a position he currently holds.

Table 15:
Biographical data of Richar Contreras as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE DIVISION AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Richar Contreras

Identification number: (information not available)

Date and place of birth: (information not available)

Rank: General Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	FAES Assistant Director	2019
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	FAES-Caracas Assistant Director	12/2020
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Director of the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO)	2021
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Division Against Organised Crime (DCDO)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

d) Captain Gustavo Alejandro Ron Espejo, Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division.

124. Captain Ron Espejo was a cadet at the Military Academy in 2008.[339] On 1 January 2009 he achieved the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Bolivarian National Army.[340] In January 2022 he served as Assistant Director of the National Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-Extortion Directorate of the PNB.[341] On 16 July of that year, National Police Day, the

[334] Interview OOIV053. See El diario, Sustitución de las FAES por la DCDO, una "operación maquillaje", 27 May 2021. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2021/05/27/sustitucion-faes-por-dcdo-operacion-maquillaje/.

[335] Monitor de víctimas, Operaciones Trueno: las OLP de 2022, 31 December 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/.

[336] El Diario, Ultimaron a Carlos Revette, alias El Koki, en el estado Aragua, 8 February 2022. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2022/02/08/koki-asesinaron-enfrentamiento/; YouTube video, Punto de Corte | PDCTV, Audio del operativo contra alias "El Koki", 9 February 2022. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWsie4DamSM.

[337] Runrun.es, #MonitorDeVictimas Operaciones Trueno: las OLP de 2022, 31 December 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/.

[338] Instagram post by Richar Contreras [@richarcontrerasf], 2 August 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/richarcontrerasf/.

[339] See list of military academy cadets sworn in as active members of the disclosure society: 7 September 2008. Available at: https://pregonbolivariano.wordpress.com/.

[340] See list of military academy cadets; Ministry of Defence, Resolution No. 8952, 5 December 2008, Official Gazette No. 39.074, 5 December 2008. Available at: http://virtual.urbe.edu/gacetas/39074.pdf.

[341] Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 12 January 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1616796268665787&id=231509720527789&locale=ms_MY.

Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division was created as part of the strengthening of the *Gran Misión Cuadrante de Paz* ("Great Peace Quadrant Mission").[342]

125. On 27 July 2022, when the DAET was created, Ron Espejo was appointed Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division of this Directorate,[343] a position he held until June 2023. The mission is unaware of his current position.

Table 16:
Biographical data of Gustavo Alejandro Ron Espejo as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE STRATEGIC VEHICLE PATROL DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Gustavo Alejandro Ron Espejo

Identification number: V-14.991.540

Date and place of birth: (information not available)

Rank: Captain

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Army (ENB)	Military Academy Cadet	2008
Bolivarian National Army (ENB)	Second Lieutenant of the Bolivarian National Army	01/2009
Bolivarian National Army (ENB)	Lieutenant	12/2012
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Assisant Director, National Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-extortion Directorate	01/2022
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

e) General Commissary Isrrael José Mendoza Rea, Head of Canine Division (K9)

126. Isrrael José Mendoza Rea was born in Venezuela on 27 April 1966.[344] In 2004 he belonged to the Canine Division of the Miranda State Police,[345] where he was an instructor and trainer of PNB canines.[346] On 16 July 2022, the Minister of the Interior and Sectoral Vice-President for Citizen Security and Peace, Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, announced the activation of the PNB's K9 Canine Unit and presented it with the symbolic banner.[347] When the DAET was created at the end of the same month, Mendoza Rea was appointed Head of the Canine Division (DIV-K9) of this Directorate,[348] a position he currently holds.

342 Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 28 July 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/231509720527789/posts/1760969480915131/?locale=ms_MY.

343 Instagram post by FAES NOTICIAS [@faesnoticias], 5 January 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CnCYIGHulj4/.

344 Dateas, Consultation Isrrael José Mendoza Rea, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/mendoza-rea-isrrael-jose-9926546.

345 Tribunal Tercero de Control de Los Teques, Case No. 3C-42055-04, 31 December 2004. Available at: http://miranda.tsj.gob.ve/DECISIONES/2004/DICIEMBRE/61-31-3C-42055-04-3C-42055-04.HTML.

346 Tweet by Isrrael Mendoza Rea [@PK9Isrrael], 5 March 2019. Available at: https://twitter.com/PK9Isrrael/with_replies; Ministry of Interior, Journal No. 40, July 2022. Available at: http://www.mpprijp.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Periodico-N%C2%B0-40.pdf.

347 Tweet, Dirección General de Derechos Humanos del Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Interiores, Justicia y Paz [@DDDHHMIJ], 18 July 2022. Available at: https://twitter.com/DDHHMIJ/status/1549126254762377216.

348 Instagram post by Ruben Santiago [ruben_santiago_s], 5 August 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg4U6b6uZpI/.

Table 17:
Biographical Data of Isrrael José Mendoza Rea as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE CANINE DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Isrrael José Mendoza Rea

Identification number: V-6.868.258

Date and place of birth: 27/04/1966, Guarenas – Miranda State

Rank: General Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unit	Position	Date
Miranda State Police	Canine Division, Miranda State	2004
Miranda State Police	Director of the Police Canine Training Centre	2008
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Head of Canine Unit (K9)	18/07/2022
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Head of Canine Unit (K9)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

f) Coronel Elio Abraham Malpica González, Head of the Anti-Drug Division (DCD)

127. Elio Abraham Malpica González was born in Venezuela on 1 March 1967.[349] He was appointed Director of the National Anti-Drug Directorate (DNA) of the PNB.[350] The DNA was initially established in Caracas, later expanding to the state level. In July 2022, with the creation of the DAET, the DNA was absorbed by the latter and renamed the Anti-Drug Division (DCD).[351] A source with inside knowledge of the PNB interviewed by the mission confirmed that Elio Malpica González was ratified as Head of the Division, a position he continues to hold.[352]

[349] Dateas, Consultation Elio Abraham Malpica González, (2023). Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/malpica-gonzalez-elio-abraham-16508543.

[350] Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 21 August 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/Cuerpo-de-Polic%C3%ADa-Nacional-Bolivariana-231509720527789/videos/repost-cpnbdaet-with-letrepost-la-divisi%C3%B3n-contra-drogas-de-nuestra-polic%C3%ADa-naci/620559749430544/?_rdr.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Ibid., Interview OOIV071.

Table 18:
Biographical data of Elio Abraham Malpica Gonzalez as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE ANTI-DRUG DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Nombres y Apellidos: Elio Abraham Malpica González

Identification number: V-7.116.204

Date and place of birth: 01/03/1967, Atures – Amazonas State

Rank: Coronel

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Guard (GNB)	Official	2010
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	National Anti-Drug Director (DNA)	05/2019
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Anti-Drug Division (DCD)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

g) Major Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega, Head of the Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE) until June 2023. Current Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE)

128. Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega was born in Venezuela on 14 July 1984.[353] In 2012 he served as First Lieutenant in the GNB. On 30 June 2015 he was promoted to the rank of Captain.[354] According to open sources, the National Director of the PNB, Elio Estrada Paredes, appointed Captain Tarazona Ortega[355] to head the DIP of the FAES, the directorate in charge of the PNB's Centre for the Control and Protection of Detainees located in Boleíta.[356]

129. Following the restructuring of the PNB[357] and the creation of the DAET in July 2022, Tarazona Ortega was appointed Head of the Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE),[358] and according to a source interviewed by the mission, in June 2023 he was appointed Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE) of the DAET.[359]

[353] Dateas, Consultation Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/tarazona-ortega-pedro-rafael-1276904.

[354] Ministry of Defence, Resolution No. 10324 of 30 June 2015. Available at: http://www.guardia.mil.ve/web/wp-content/uploads/ascensos/cap_comando.pdf.

[355] El Nacional, Descontento en al PNB por cambio para evitar alzamientos, 9 May 2019. Available at: https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/sucesos/descontento-pnb-por-cambios-para-evitar-alzamientos_281862/.

[356] Interview OOIV053; Instagram post by Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega [@tarazona84], 19 July 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CRhQ4q8h_MU/?hl=es; Diario El Vistazo, Privados de libertad de la PNB de Boleíta entregaron los cuerpos de los fallecidos en el motín, 4 September 2019. Available at: https://diarioelvistazo.com/privados-libertad-la-pnb-boleita-entregaron-los-cuerpos-los-fallecidos-motin/; National Assembly, Comisión de Política Interior promueve medidas cautelares para reclusos de la Zona 7, 17 June 2021. Available at: https://www.asambleanacional.gob.ve/noticias/comision-de-politica-interior-promueve-medidas-cautelares-para-reclusos-de-la-zona-7.

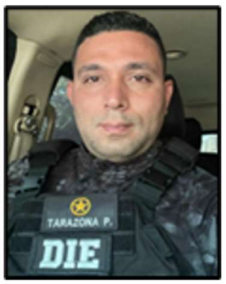
[357] Decree No. 4.582, Official Gazette No. 42.105 of 31 April 2021.

[358] Instagram post by Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega [@tarazona84], 9 August 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/ChDPeMYuCPQ/?hl=es.

[359] Interview OOIV071; Instagram post by the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion [@dcseoficial], 2 August 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CvcsT2pAFQZ/?ref=birchtree.me.

Table 19:
Biographical data of Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)



Name: Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega

Identification number: V- 16.358.520

Date and place of birth: 14/07/1984, El Valle, Libertador

Rank: Major

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Guard (GNB)	Official	2012
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Director of the Criminal Investigations Directorate (DIP)	05/2019
Strategic and Tactical Actions Directorate (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

h) Chief Commissary Romer Muñoz, Head of the Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery (DCHRV)

130. According to open sources, Romer Muñoz belonged to the FAES in 2017. Subsequently, in 2019, he served as Assistant Director of the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DIP),[360] also holding the position of Assistant Director of the PNB's Centre for the Control and Protection of Detainees located in Boleíta.[361]

131. In May 2021, Muñoz was decorated by the Head of the FANB's REDI Capital, Major General Wistohor Chourio, and by the PNB Commander General, for his "valuable" participation in the operation *Recuperación de la Dignidad Nacional* ("Recovery of National Dignity"), carried out on 30 April 2019 at the Altamira distributor on the Gran Cacique Guaicaipuro highway.[362] According to a source interviewed by the mission, Romer Muñoz has served since February 2023 as Head of the Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery (DCHRV) of the DAET.[363]

[360] La Patilla, PNB y Cicpc allan sin órdenes judiciales en sectores populares del municipio de Chacao, 19 June 2017. Available at: https://www.lapatilla.com/2017/06/19/pnb-y-cicpc-allanan-sin-ordenes-judiciales-en-sectores-populares-del-municipio-chacao/; Scribd, Asignación Patrulla Chery, 23 October 2020. Available at: https://es.scribd.com/document/555818761/Asignacion-Patrulla-Chery#; Facebook post by Observatorio Venezolano de Seguridad Ciudadana, 13 July 2021. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/OVSMij/videos/_repost-mijpvenezuela_-ya-descargastes-la-aplicaci%C3%B3n-cuadrantes-de-pazsub-direct/4561842550515088/; Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, June 2, 2022. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/100064493840614/videos/el-director-dipcpnboficial-de-la-pnbvzla-mayor-tarazona84-en-compa%C3%B1%C3%ADa-del-sub-di/764370637905276/.

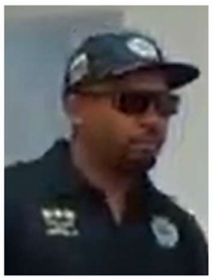
[361] Diario El Vistazo, Privados de libertad de la PNB de Boleíta entregaron los cuerpos de los fallecidos en el motín, 4 September 2019. Available at: https://diarioelvistazo.com/privados-libertad-la-pnb-boleita-entregaron-los-cuerpos-los-fallecidos-motin/; National Assembly, Comisión de Política Interior promueve medidas cautelares para reclusos de la Zona 7, 17 June 2021. Available at: https://www.asambleanacional.gob.ve/noticias/comision-de-politica-interior-promueve-medidas-cautelares-para-reclusos-de-la-zona-7.

[362] Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 5 May 2021. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0yS6rV9wVhBQCfbYLSSaXadFLpzBm2vfgxLKfAfmHTC419ZDQ28ZR6yRwGJGWo4a3l&id=231509720527789&__tn__=-R.

[363] Interview OOIV071.

Table 20:
Biographical data of Romer Muñoz as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE DIVISION AGAINST VEHICLE THEFT AND ROBBERY (DAET) (PNB)



Name: Romer Muñoz

Identification number: (information not available)

Date and place of birth: (information not available)

Rank: Chief Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)	Member of Special Action Forces (FAES)	2017
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)(FAES)	Assistant Director Criminal Investigations Directorate (DIP)	2019
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery Division	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

i) General Commissary Didier Rojas, Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE) until June 2023

132. According to open sources, starting in January 2023 General Commissary Didier Rojas served as Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE),[364] a position he held until June 2023 when he was replaced by Major Pedro Rafael Tarazona Ortega.[365] The mission has no information on his current position.

Table 21:
Biographical data of Didier Rojas as of 5 June 2023

HEAD OF THE DIVISION AGAINST KIDNAPPING AND EXTORSION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Didier Rojas

Identification number: (information not available)

Date and place of birth: (information not available)

Rank: General Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE)	01/2023

Source: Mission's own elaboration

364 Interview OOIV071; Instagram post by the DCSE [@dcseofficial], 13 January 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CnYNZuJtxcR/?img_index=2; Instagram post by the DCSE [@dcseofficial], 1 May 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CruLKDWojjL/?img_index=2.

365 Interview OOIV071; Instagram post by the Division against Kidnapping and Extortion [@dcseoficial], 2 August 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CvcsT2pAFQZ/?ref=birchtree.me.

4. Other officials

a) Commissary Gustavo García, Second Commander of the Motorised Division of the DAET

133. According to a source interviewed by the mission with inside knowledge of the PNB, Gustavo García was a member of the FAES in 2021,[366] where he served as Head of the western region Eje Zulia.[367] He also belonged to the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO), exercising supervisory functions in the area of operations. According to open sources, the Directorate was implicated in various human rights violations.[368] With the creation of the DAET in July 2022, the PNB Motorised Brigade became the Motorised Division,[369] and Gustavo García was appointed Second Commander of this Division which participated in Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") IV.[370] Currently, according to information obtained by the mission, García continues in this Division.

Table 22:
Biographical data of Gustavo Garcia as of 5 June 2023

SECOND COMMANDER OF THE MOTORISED DIVISION (DAET) (PNB)

Name: Gustavo García

Identification number: (information not available)

Date and place of birth: (information not available)

Rank: Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Head of the western region of Zulia (FAES)	01/2021
Bolivarian National Police (PNB) (FAES)	Member of the Directorate Against Organised Crime (DCDO)	05/2021
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Second Commander of the Motorised Division	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

366 Interview OOIV053; Instagram post by Gustavo García [@Comisariogarciagustavo], 17 May 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CO_nlGbBSOe/.

367 Instagram post by Gustavo García [@Comisariogarciagustavo], 10 January 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ4v8tpgbNf/; Instagram post by Gustavo García [Comisariogarciagustavo], 12 January 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CJ9jikZAMfm/.

368 Caleidoscopio Humano, Entre julio y septiembre se registraron 372 ejecuciones extrajudiciales, 24 October 2021. Available at: https://caleidohumano.org/entre-julio-y-septiembre-se-registraron-372-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales/; El diario, Sustitución de las FAES por la DCDO, una "operación maquillaje", 27 May 2021. Available at: https://eldiario.com/2021/05/27/sustitucion-faes-por-dcdo-operacion-maquillaje/; Instagram post by Gustavo García [@Comisariogarciagustavo], 2 May 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/COZaZjrBbC7/?img_index=1.

369 Venezolana de Televisión, Inauguran Dirección de Acciones Estratégicas y Tácticas de la Policía Nacional Bolivariana, 27 July 2022. Available at: https://www.vtv.gob.ve/direccion-acciones-estrategicas-tacticas-policia-nacional-bolivariana/.

370 Instagram post by Gustavo García [Comisariogarciagustavo]. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/comisariogarcia g ustavo/; Instagram post by Gustavo García [Comisariogarciagustavo], 11 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CiYL4FbOeCV/%20%20%20Scribd,%20Nominca%20G200007338%20SERVICIO%20BOLIVARIANO%20DE%20INTELIGENCIA%20NACIONAL/?img_index=1.

b) Commissary Williams Giovanny Mieres Aponte, Member of the Unit Against Terrorism and Subversion of the DCDO

134. Williams Giovanny Mieres Aponte[371] was born in Venezuela on 2 December 1976.[372] In 2003 he belonged to the Immediate Action Division of the DISIP,[373] which in 2009 was renamed the SEBIN.[374] Mieres moved to the SEBIN where, according to an open source, he claimed to have received orders from Diosdado Cabello.[375] In 2014, Mieres served as Head of the SEBIN Territorial Base in Valle de la Pascua.[376] In 2022 he was a member of the DCDO's Division Against Terrorism and Subversion (DCTS).[377] With the restructuring of the police at the end of July of the same year and the creation of the DAET, the Division was renamed the Unit Against Terrorism and Subversion (UCTS), attached to the DCDO of the DAET, the unit where he currently works.[378] The brigade has been questioned for threatening and arbitrarily detaining relatives of people who have made harsh statements against Venezuelan Government officials.[379]

[371] Scribd, Nominca G200007338 Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional, (2017). Available at: https://es.scribd.com/document/346507432/Nominca-G200007338-SERVICIO-BOLIVARIANO-DE-INTELIGENCIA-NACIONAL#.

[372] Dateas, Consultation Williams Giovanny Mieres Aponte, 22 August 2023. Available at: https://www.dateas.com/es/persona_venezuela/mieres-aponte-williams-giovanny-467268.

[373] Ministry of Interior, AGEV/No.41, 23 January 2012. Available at: https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/diaz-pe%C3%B1a/alefest.pdf.

[374] A/HRC/51/CRP.3, para. 378.

[375] Newsbeezer, La nueva Policía Antiterrorista de Venezuela agredió a la familia y vecinos de un campesino que denunció a Maduro ante la ONU, 8 March 2023. Available at: https://newsbeezer.com/venezula/la-nueva-policia-antiterrorista-de-venezuela-agredio-a-la-familia-y-vecinos-de-un-campesino-que-denuncio-a-maduro-ante-la-onu/.

[376] Primera emisión, Detenido trabajador de CORPOELEC por hurto de bombillos ahorradores, 9 June 2016. Available at: https://www.primeraemision.com/detenido-trabajador-corpoelec-hurto-bombillos-ahorradores; Facebook post by Pueblo Serio, 11 December 2014. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/244912678871024/posts/despues-pretenden-ser-inocentes-como-el-caso-saime-inti-en-la-mira-sebin-detuvo-/962101670485451/.

[377] Noti Pascua, Capturaron supuesto traficante de combustible en La Pascua, 25 May 2022. Available at: https://notipascua.com/capturaron-supuesto-traficante-de-combustible-en-la-pascua/.

[378] Interview OOIV053; Infobae, La nueva Policía de Terrorismo venezolana arremetió contra la familia y vecinos de un finquero que denunció a Maduro ante la ONU, 8 March 2023. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/venezuela/2023/03/08/la-nueva-policia-de-terrorismo-venezolana-arremetio-contra-la-familia-y-vecinos-de-un-finquero-que-denuncio-a-maduro-ante-la-onu/.

[379] Infobae, La nueva Policía de Terrorismo venezolana arremetió contra la familia y vecinos de un finquero que denunció a Maduro ante la ONU, 8 March 2023. Available at: https://www.infobae.com/venezuela/2023/03/08/la-nueva-policia-de-terrorismo-venezolana-arremetio-contra-la-familia-y-vecinos-de-un-finquero-que-denuncio-a-maduro-ante-la-onu/.

Table 23:
Biographical data of William Giovanny Mieres Aponte as of 5 June 2023

MEMBER OF THE UNIT AGAINST TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION (UCTS)(DCDO) - (DAET)(PNB)

Name: Williams Giovanny Mieres Aponte

Identification number: V-12.997.808

Date and place of birth: 02/12/1976, San Pedro, Libertador

Rank: Commissary

Unit: Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)

Institution: Bolivarian National Police (PNB)

Positions held

Unidad	Position	Date
Directorate for Intelligence and Prevention Services (DISIP)	Member of the Immediate Action Division	2003
Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN)	Official	2009
Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN)	Head of the *Valle de la Pascua* Territorial Base	2014
Bolivarian National Police (PNB)(FAES)	Member of the Division Against Terrorism and Subversion (DCTS) (DCDO)	2022
Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET)(PNB)	Member of the Unit Against Terrorism and Subversion (UCTS) (DCDO)	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

135. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that, despite its repeated recommendations and those made by other international human rights mechanisms, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has not taken effective measures to dismantle the security structures which, in the past, were involved in serious human rights violations and crimes. These facts were previously documented by the mission in the context of both targeted repression and security operations against criminality.

136. In the case of the FAES, its functions, command and personnel were taken over by the DAET, a new police "super-directorate" created and strengthened in the context of the 2022 PNB reform. Indeed, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that there was no actual dissolution of the FAES, but rather it was transformed into a new entity: the DAET.

137. In the process of transition between the two bodies, several commanders and operational personnel have been transferred, including officials who were identified by the mission for their involvement in human rights violations and crimes against humanity documented in the mission's previous reports, which should be investigated by the competent authorities. The following table illustrates the transition of officials from the FAES and other security forces to the DAET, and reflects the positions held so far, or in some cases until 5 June 2023.

Table 24:
Transition of officials from the FAES and other security forces to the DAET

SECURITY FORCES				
OFFICER	**GNB**	**SEBIN**	**FAES**	**DAET**
		Member of the Intelligence Directorate	Director	Director
Major Commissary José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez		2014	06/2019	07/2022
		Director of the Strategic Investigations Directorate; Director of El Helicoide	Legal Consultant	Deputy Director
General Commissary Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos		06/2019	2021	2023
			Assistant Director of the Intelligence and Strategy Directorate (DIE)	Assistant Director
Chief Commissary Leonel Alberto García Rivas			12/2020	07/2022
			Head of Operations (FAES Caracas)	Head of Operations
Chief Commissary Florencio Ramón Escalona			12/2020	07/2022
		Field Investigations Coordinator of the Strategic Investigations Directorate	Director of the Strategic Intelligence Directorate (DIE)	Head of the Criminal Investigations Division (DIP)
General Commissary Ronny González Montesinos		2014	12/2020	07/2022
			Member of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE) – Trainer	Head of the Special Tactical Operations Unit (UOTE) – Trainer
Chief Inspector Fray Jesús García Pérez			12/2019	07/2022
				Head of the Motorised Division
Chief Commissary Wilmer Velásquez Rodríguez				08/2022
			Assistant Director	Head of the Division Against Organised Crime (DCDO)
General Commissary Richar Contreras			2019	07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

Table 24 (cont.):
Transition of officers from FAES and other security forces to the DAET

SECURITY FORCES				
OFFICER	**GNB**	**SEBIN**	**FAES**	**DAET**
Captain Gustavo Ron Espejo				Head of the Strategic Vehicle Patrol Division 07/2022
General Commissary Isrrael Mendoza Rea				Head of the Canine Division (DIV-K9) 07/2022
Coronel Elio A. Malpica González	Member 2010			Head of the Anti-Drug Division (DCD) 07/2022
Major Pedro R. Tarazona Ortega	Member 2012		Director of the Criminal Investigations Directorate (DIP) 05/2019	Head of the Strategic Intelligence Division (DIE) 07/2022
Chief Commissary Romer Muñoz			Assistant Director of the Criminal Investigations Directorate (DIP) 2019	Head of the Division Against Vehicle Theft and Robbery (DCHRV) 07/2022
General Commissary Didier Rojas				Head of the Division Against Kidnapping and Extortion (DCSE) 01/2023
Commissary Gustavo García			Head of the western region of Zulia 01/2021	Second Commander of the Motorised Division 07/2022
Commissary Williams Mieres Aponte		Head of the *Valle de la Pascua* Territorial Base 2014		Member of the Unit Against Terrorism and Subversion (UCTS- DCDO) 07/2022

Source: Mission's own elaboration

138. Ten of these individuals were part of the FAES and four - José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, Ronny González Montesinos and Williams Mieres Aponte – belonged previously to SEBIN, an agency also linked to serious human rights violations and crimes.[380] The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, Director of the DAET and current Assistant Director of the

[380] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 1978-1991.

PNB; Carlos Alberto Calderón Chirinos, former Deputy Director and current Assistant Director of the DAET; and Ronny González Montesinos, Head of the Criminal Investigations Division of the DAET, were involved in human rights violations and crimes against humanity documented in the mission's previous reports. Both Calderón Chirinos and González Montesinos, who were linked to SEBIN's Directorate of Strategic Investigations, were responsible for ordering their subordinates to carry out acts of torture while they were in charge of that Directorate in El Helicoide, as well as for participating in arbitrary detentions and extortion against detainees.[381]

139. Instead of being investigated for their alleged responsibility in human rights violations and crimes and, if appropriate, punished, these persons have been decorated and promoted by the Government, achieving positions of greater responsibility and relevance. In the case of Major Commissary José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, in addition to currently holding the position of Director of the DAET, according to the latest information available to the mission, he was appointed Assistant Director of the PNB in July 2023.[382] In the case of General Commissary Alberto Calderón Chirinos, along with his responsibility as Director General of the Police Service of the Vice-Ministry of the Integrated Police System (VISIPOL), according to a source consulted by the mission, he is currently serving as Assistant Director of the DAET.[383] This is also the case of Ronny González Montesinos, who since July 2022 has been the Head of the Criminal Investigations Division of the DAET, according to a source interviewed by the mission.[384]

140. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that, along with senior and mid-level commanders, some of the FAES operational personnel also became part of the various divisions of the DAET. Some of the directorates previously linked to the FAES - the DCDO, the DIE,[385] the DIP and the UOTE[386] - became an integral part of the DAET, even keeping their acronyms and logos.

141. The conversion of the former FAES into the DAET did not entail a change in the way its components and personnel operated, either in the framework of security operations against organized crime or in the framework of the selective repression of real or perceived opponents. In the case of security operations, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe

[381] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 488 ("SEBIN officers from the Strategic Investigations Directorate, under the leadership of Commissioner Carlos Calderón Chirinos, were involved in the arbitrary arrests and detentions, and in the torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment"). A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1990 ("The Director of Strategic Investigations [of the SEBIN] was Carlos Calderón Chirinos until November 2018 … . Commissioner Ronny González … also held [a] high-level position within the Directorate of Strategic Investigations under Carlos Calderón Chirinos.")

[382] Interview OOIV071; Instagram post by the Unidad de Operaciones Tácticas Especiales [@uote_por_venezuela], 28 July 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CvOpFIIuHsd/?img_index=1; Instagram post by Rubén Santiago – General Commander of the PNB [@ruben_santiago_s], 27 July 2023. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CvOSJQjorSi/?img_index=3; El Estímulo, Crímenes sin Castigo: El último vuelo de Emtrasur, 10 August 2023. Available at: https://elestimulo.com/opinion/2023-08-10/crimenes-sin-castigo-el-ultimo-vuelo-de-emtrasur/.

[383] Interview OOIV071; El Estímulo, Crímenes sin Castigo: El último vuelo de Emtrasur, 10 August 2023. Available at: https://elestimulo.com/opinion/2023-08-10/crimenes-sin-castigo-el-ultimo-vuelo-de-emtrasur/.

[384] Interview OOIV053.

[385] See Photograph of FAES-DIE logo, Monitor de víctimas, FAES mataron a fugado sindicado de asesinar dos PNB, 17 October 2019. Available at: https://monitordevictimas.com/ejecucion-2/faes-mataron-a-fugado-sindicado-de-asesinar-dos-pnb/; Aporrea, A juicio seis efectivos de las FAES-PNB por muerte de un policía y otro hombre en Guarenas, 28 October 2019. Available at: https://www.aporrea.org/ddhh/n348324.html.

[386] Instagram post by Unidad de Operaciones Tacticas Especiales [@uote_por_venezuela], 29 September 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CUbUE2oIPoy/?hl=es; Facebook post by the Bolivarian National Police Corps, 20 July 2020. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/231509720527789/photos/pcb.1217281171950634/1217281065283978/?type=3&theater; Instagram post by C/M Miguel Domínguez R [@migueldominguez08], 4 January 2021. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CJpEITLBSvw/?img_index=1; Instagram post by Fray García [@fraygarcia], 15 November 2019. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/B44UAMUDhPu/.

that the modus operandi of the Operations *Trueno* ("Thunder") coincides, in general terms, with the modus operandi of the OLP/OLHP and the FAES operations against crime. These are large-scale joint or mixed operations, with hybrid civilian-military command, involving different security agencies.

142. Along with the DAET divisions, some PNB directorates and other security agencies, including the FANB, the GNB - and within it, the CONAS -, the CICPC and SEBIN, were part of other operatives. In the first two operations, Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") I and Operation *Trueno* ("Thunder") II, security agents, including officers from the DCDO, the DIE and the DIP, actually presented themselves as agents of the FAES.[387] The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that Interior Minister Remigio Ceballos played an important role in the planning and strategic direction of the *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations.[388]

143. In the case of selective repression, in its 2020 and 2022 reports, the mission found that: (i) the FAES participated, together with other security forces such as the SEBIN and the DGCIM, in arbitrary detentions;[389] (ii) that the FAES arbitrarily detained individuals and then handed them over to the SEBIN, which detained them in El Helicoide, and, in some cases, tortured them;[390] and that (iii) the FAES participated in cases of short-term enforced disappearances.[391] Some of these violations and crimes continued to be perpetrated by the FAES before its final dissolution in July 2022 and by components of the current DAET, including arbitrary detentions,[392] short-term enforced disappearances,[393] as well as torture and ill-treatment,[394] including sexual violence, as described in the other conference room paper on restrictions to civic space accompanying the mission's report[395].

144. Following the creation of the DAET, officials of this Directorate have also been involved in at least one case investigated by the mission, of arbitrary detention and torture of a trade unionist who was accused of being a terrorist and having connections with trade union leaders and opposition political leaders.[396] The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that, despite the change, the modus operandi of the PNB units and directorates that became divisions of the DAET has not changed.

145. The PNB, including the DAET, and other entities such as the CICPC, the GOES and the SEBIN, are substantively under the direction of the current Interior Minister, Admiral Remigio Ceballos Ichaso, which implies an important level of coordination between these entities. Remigio Ceballos, Minister of Interior since August 2021, played a key role in the transition between the FAES and the DAET. In its 2020 report, the mission linked Remigio Ceballos, who at the time was Second Strategic Commander of the FANB's Strategic

[387] Efecto Cocuyo, "Operación Trueno" en Guárico viola derechos humanos, denuncia ONG, 26 May 2022. Available at: https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/operacion-trueno-en-guarico-viola-derechos-humanos-denuncia-ong/#google_vignette

[388] YouTube video, Notiraya Digital (@notiyaradigital5076), Ministro Remigio Ceballos dio detalles de fuerte Operativo de Seguridad en YARACUY, 4 May 2022. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ay4UthbcQjQ/; Instagram post by Guárico State Police [@poliguarico15], 5 September 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CiIgxTqLEwL/; Instagram post by Commissioner General Pedro Velasco [@pedro_vecicpc], 4 May 2022. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CdKJOkWsor4/. See also El Siglo, "Operación Trueno" en su primera fase desarticuló al "Tren del Llano", 26 April 2022. Available at: https://elsiglo.com.ve/2022/04/26/operacion-trueno-primera-fase-desarticulo-tren-del-llano/; Runrunes, Monitor de víctimas: Operaciones Trueno. Las OLP de 2022. Available at: https://runrun.es/monitor-de-victimas/491695/monitordevictimas-operaciones-trueno-las-olp-de-2022/.

[389] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, paras. 271, 439; A/HRC/51/CRP.3, paras. 80, 290.

[390] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 521.

[391] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 447.

[392] See the cases of Carla Da Silva, Karen Hernández, Javier Tarazona, Rafael Tarazona, Omar de Dios García, Jhonny Romero, Néstor Astudillo, Emilio Negrín, Alonso Meléndez in the Conference Room Paper Restrictions on Civic Space, Chapter III.

[393] *Ibid.*

[394] *Ibid.*

[395] *Ibid.*

[396] *Ibid.*

Operational Command (CEOFANB), to different military operations in which violations and crimes took place, including the Barlovento security operation in October 2016,[397] *Plan República* of May 2018,[398] and the repression of the military uprising in Cotiza in January 2019.[399]

146. Like the OLP/OLPH and the FAES operations, the *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations, in which the DAET and its divisions played a predominant role, were accompanied by numerous public allegations of human rights violations and crimes, such as extrajudicial executions and other arbitrary deprivations of life, torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, arbitrary detentions and short-term enforced disappearances. The media reported that at least 72 people died and 345 people were detained as a result of the seven *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations.[400]

147. These figures attest to the large scale and high lethality rate of these operations. Allegations of persistent violations and crimes, whose patterns substantially coincide with those previously documented by the mission - including extrajudicial executions of persons who did not resist arrest as a way of demonstrating "results" in the fight against criminality[401] - deserve to be thoroughly investigated.

148. The *Trueno* ("Thunder") Operations represent one part of a broader pattern of security plans and operations aimed at combating criminality within the security framework defined by the 2018 *Gran Misión Cuadrante de Paz* ("Great Peace Quadrant Mission"). Several other recent security plans and operations (such as Operations *Gran Cacique Indio Guaicaipuru* I and II, in July 2021 and February 2022 respectively) continue to have a significant death toll.

149. Although these have declined in recent years, the number of deaths by State security forces remains high: between 824[402] and 1240 people[403] in 2022, depending on the sources, which would represent a decrease of 41%[404] and 47%[405] respectively compared to the figures collected in the previous year. Despite the decrease in the number of deaths in security operations, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, according to the organization Monitor Fuerza Letal, continued to have the highest rate of deaths by security forces in Latin America in 2022 (between 6 and 9.5 civilians per 100,000 inhabitants).[406]

150. In its 2020 report, the mission concluded that it had reasonable grounds to believe that since at least 2014 State security forces had engaged in human rights violations and crimes against humanity as part of a State policy to combat criminality, including extrajudicial executions of alleged "criminals".[407] The migration of commanders and operational personnel from the former FAES to the current DAET; the similarity of the modus operandi between past security operations and more recent operations; the alleged contributions of high-ranking Government officials to these operations, as well as the persistence of high lethality rates in the actions of the security forces, are factors that seem to indicate the continuity of this policy. This possible continuity needs to be further investigated.

151. Such an investigation should include all PNB commanders, including Interior Minister Remigio Ceballos Ichaso and Commanders Elio Ramón Estrada Paredes, Rubén

397 A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 1168.
398 A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 799.
399 A/HRC/45/CRP11, para. 869.
400 A/HRC/45/CRP11, para. 2088(b).
401 A/HRC/45/CRP11, para. 2039.
402 Lupa por la Vida, Resumen informe anual 2022. Available at: https://lupaporlavida.org/resumen-informe-anual-2022/.
403 OVV, Informe Anual de Violencia 2022, 29 December 2022. Available at: https://observatoriodeviolencia.org.ve/news/informe-anual-de-violencia-2022/
404 Lupa por la Vida, Annual Report 2023. Available at: https://provea.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/lupa2021-1-1.pdf.
405 OVV, Informe Anual de Violencia 2021, 28 December 2021. Available at: https://observatoriodeviolencia.org.ve/news/informe-anual-de-violencia-2021/.
406 Monitor Fuerza Letal, Monitor of Use of Lethal Force in Latin America and the Caribbean, A Comparative Study of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela (2022), p. 13. Available at: https://www.monitorfuerzaletal.com/docs/MonitorFuerzaLetal_2022_verA.pdf.
407 A/HRC/45/CRP.11, para. 2088(b).

Darío Santiago Servigna and José Miguel Domínguez Ramírez, for allegations of human rights violations and crimes committed by all components of the Bolivarian National Police from 2014 to the present. These investigations should lead to respective sanctions and removal from office of the relevant PNB senior commanders, including those of the DAET and its divisions, in order to ensure the non-repetition of these practices.

B. Recommendations

1. Recommendations to the Government

152. The mission recommends the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to:

Accountability and justice for victims

a) Conduct prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigations into human rights violations and crimes committed in the context of security operations and targeted repression against real or perceived opponents of the Government, in particular against those identified in this conference room paper, in line with international human rights norms and standards.

b) Guarantee that investigations conducted cover both direct and indirect perpetrators and accomplices, at all levels of the chain of command, with respect to all violations and crimes documented in all of the mission's reports, including the 2023 report, and the respective conference room papers.

c) Guarantee that direct and indirect victims receive adequate reparations taking into account the gender dimensions of the harm they have suffered, and receive effective protection measures.

Security framework

d) Ensure that security forces are regulated by laws that clearly describe their powers, establish oversight mechanisms and comply with international human rights standards. Ensure that these laws are strictly enforced.[408]

e) Guarantee that security plans and policies clearly establish that the human rights of suspects and all persons present during security operations must be respected by issuing precise orders on the objective of the operation.[409]

f) Train security forces on human rights standards, including the different divisions of the DAET involved in security operations, especially on specific areas of concern such as extrajudicial killings, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and sexual and gender-based violence.[410]

g) Cease large-scale security operations, as well as joint military-police operations, such as those carried out during Operations *Trueno* ("Thunder"), to prevent violations and crimes.[411]

Extrajudicial killings

h) Collect and publicly disseminate reliable and disaggregated official statistics on arbitrary deprivations of life attributable to State security forces, in order to contribute to the analysis of patterns of abuses, the identification and investigation of specific police units, officials and individuals involved.[412]

[408] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 41.
[409] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 42.
[410] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 43.
[411] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 44.
[412] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 45.

i) Issue immediate directives from the top level of the Executive for the police forces, in particular the DAET, to put an end to extrajudicial killings, as well as police cover-ups.[413]

j) Consider establishing a prosecutorial unit within the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate crimes of extrajudicial killings by the police, as well as police cover-ups.[414]

k) Guarantee that the activities of the police, and in particular any specialised entities such as the DAET and its divisions, are required to continuously record the activities of their officials, as well as establish the use of body cameras in the execution of their duties.[415]

Reform of the DAET

l) Reform the DAET and attached divisions, including its senior and middle command, and establish an independent oversight mechanism to ensure real, effective and lasting change in its practices.

m) Conduct a vetting process for personnel attached to the DAET at all levels, including its senior and middle command, to ensure that none of these individuals have been involved in violations and crimes as documented by the mission, and initiate relevant investigations to ensure that these individuals are held accountable in accordance with international human rights standards.

n) Suspend members of the DAET while they are investigated in relation to their alleged responsibility for violations and crimes.

o) Prevent persons allegedly responsible for violations and crimes from being eligible for promotions, decorations, new public posts and other benefits.

2. Recommendations to the international community

153. States should consider taking legal action against individuals responsible for the violations and crimes identified in this conference room paper and in previous mission reports, in accordance with their national legislation and applicable international principles.

154. States, in the framework of bilateral and multilateral dialogue and negotiations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, should take into account whether the Government has implemented effective measures to guarantee the necessary changes in the leadership and performance of its security forces, especially in the entities considered in this conference room paper.

155. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court should take into account in its investigation possible crimes against humanity committed in the context of the targeted repression of real or perceived opponents to the Government, and in the context of security operations, including the individuals identified in this conference room paper, in particular those with medium and high levels of responsibility.

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[413] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 46.
[414] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 47.
[415] A/HRC/45/CRP.11, recommendation 49.