

# Venezuela frees dozens of political prisoners, human rights group says

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*Since 8 January families have been spending the night outside the El Rodeo jail in Zamora*

A leading Venezuelan human rights group says at least 80 political prisoners have been released under pressure from the US.

Alfredo Romero, head of Foro Penal, said his group was verifying the identities of those freed from prisons across the country on Saturday - and more releases were likely to take place.

It is the latest batch of detainees released since the US [seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro](#) in a raid, and took him to New York to stand trial on drug-trafficking charges earlier this month.

On Friday Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodríguez said more than 600 prisoners had been freed - but Foro Penal says this figure has been inflated.

Romero announced the releases on social media. He also posted an image of Foro Penal colleague Kennedy Tejeda who he said had been held in Tocarón prison, west of the capital Caracas since August 2024.

In a post on X, Foro Penal lawyer Gonzalo Himiob said the number of releases could rise above 80 "as we proceed with verification".

Previously, Foro Penal said that many of those freed in recent weeks [have not had the charges against them dropped](#).

This has left them in legal limbo and they have been barred from speaking in public, the group said.

Before this weekend's developments, the group had confirmed the release of just 156 political prisoners since 8 January.

Some domestic opposition figures and at least five Spanish nationals are among those confirmed to have been freed so far.

Separately, Rodriguez said she was due to have a call on Monday with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, to ask the UN to verify the lists of those released so far.

Human rights groups and activists have long accused the government of using detentions to muzzle critics. The Venezuelan government has denied holding political prisoners, insisting they were arrested for criminal activity.

Many were detained after the 2024 presidential election, when Maduro claimed victory despite opponents and many countries disputing the results.

[Venezuela](#)