

PUNISHED ZULIA

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LIVES IN DARK AGONY

SPECIAL EDITION



■ LIVES LOST
IN THE MIDST OF
BLACKOUTS

■ "I DON'T EAT MEAT
OR FISH ANYMORE
BECAUSE OF THE
BLACKOUTS"

■ WAYÚU FAMILIES
ESCAPE TO AVOID
LIVING IN DARKNESS

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CONTEXT

ZULIA STATE

Zulia, a border region in the northwest of the country, is a state strongly affected by the very serious economic, social, cultural and environmental rights crisis in Venezuela. For years, its inhabitants have faced adverse conditions ranging from power cuts that last several days and challenges in securing food, medicine and drinking water to restrictions on fuel supply and the almost non-existent public transportation service, in spite of being a region with significant oil reserves.

The nationwide power cuts that happened last March significantly worsened the quality of life for people in Zulia. Until April 2019, residents of Zulia spent between 18 and 20 hours without electricity a day. During the first blackout, from March 7 to 12, 101 hours went by without electricity supply. During the second, from March 25 to 28, Zulia spent 62 hours in the dark. And during the third, from March 29 to April 2, power went out for 99 hours.

These power system failures led to other services being suspended, such as piped water supply to households and health centres and distribution of gasoline and gas. Fixed and mobile telephony and banking services collapsed and the sale and preservation of food and medicines were severely compromised.

The high temperatures in the region have forced people, including children and the elderly, to sleep outside their homes. Mosquitoes and insecurity are the main threats at bedtime.

The power outages have resulted in increased deficiencies in drinking water supply to households. People are compelled to search for the vital liquid in community wells, squares and water points. The water they drink is remarkably murky and often unfit

for human consumption. People report that it has become usual to buy water cisterns in dollars, due to the absence of cash in local currency and the high prices.

In addition, domestic gas supply cuts in many areas of the state have forced families to cook outside their homes with firewood.

The electricity crisis worsened in 2019 and altered the everyday life of the population. In April, the governor of Zulia announced that the daily power cuts in the region would be between four and six hours a day. However, people complain

that the power rationing schedule is not being met and that several days can go by before the service is restored.

The prolonged power outages have led to children and adolescents being unable to attend school. For example, they only had one week of classes in March. The working day is also affected. Companies have had to suspend their activities or adjust their schedules.

Mobility in the state is also severely affected. People spend four to 24 hours in long lines to fuel their vehicles. Public transportation routes are becoming smaller and smaller. In most cases, people travel on foot or in trucks known as “kennels”.

Representatives of the business sector have reported the loss of millions due to food spoilage, given that it is impossible to keep it refrigerated, as well as material damage resulting from acts of violence not adequately contained by security officials.

A large number of people have taken to the streets to express their discontent at the shortcomings of public services and to demand that the State guarantee their rights, which have been violated for years.

ZULIA BEARS THE BRUNT OF POWER RATIONING

By Luis Alvarenga

Venezuelans have suffered serious human rights violations since the first national power failure occurred on March 7. Although the vital public service was partially re-established in the country, the story has been different in the state of Zulia.

In the west of the country, Zulia is the most populous state in Venezuela. It is known for its scorching heat but also for its once powerful livestock, agricultural and, of course, oil production. However, for some years now the region has also been the object of frequent power cuts, and since March the situation has worsened.

Workers of the state company Termozulia¹, responsible for producing and distributing electricity in the state, claimed that before the blackout on March 7 the local system was working at only 15% of its capacity. It could not make up for the lack of energy coming from the Simón Bolívar Hydroelectric Plant (commonly known as “El Guri”) located in the southeast of the country. In other words, the electricity that the people in Zulia use must cross the entire country in order to reach their homes.

Given that the entire electricity system is collapsed, Zulia bears the brunt of it because it is last in line of the National Interconnected System,” stated a former employee of Corpoelec, the state-owned power company in Venezuela².

Later, on March 25, a second national power outage occurred. Although in some parts of the country the supply had been partially restored, in Zulia this had not happened. Venezuelan media spread the complaints that citizens posted on social networks when mobile coverage had not yet collapsed.

Twitter users reported that some of the affected localities were Catatumbo, the municipality Francisco Javier Pulgar, Machiques and Ciudad Ojeda. “Eight days without power, since Monday 25 at 1:35 pm,” wrote one woman³.

Rubén Turtulici, a resident of Maracaibo, reported that the city has been without electricity for up to 120 hours (5 days). This also results in the suspension of water supply, which has lasted for up to 2 weeks.



↑ © 2019 © Panorama

We spent 120 consecutive hours without electricity. Currently there is no drinking water supply.

There has been no water for 2 weeks and when there was, it only lasted half a day because it comes by gravity,” he said.

Many people have expressed their discontent with the situation and have demanded a solution to the crisis from the authorities, but they have been repressed by state security forces.

¹ 1 Diario Panorama: “El parque termoeléctrico del Zulia falló en la crisis” [The Zulia thermal power station failed in the crisis]. <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/El-parque-termoelectrico-delZulia-fallo-en-la-crisis-20190317-0005.html> (Spanish only).

² Idem.

³ Diario El Nacional: “Algunas zonas del estado Zulia tienen ocho días sin luz” [Some parts of Zulia state have eight days without power] http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/servicios/algunas-zonas-delestado-zulia-tienen-ocho-dias-sin-luz_277250 (Spanish only).



↑ 2019 © Panorama

“

In a demonstration in Maracaibo I saw the regional police of the state of Zulia and the Bolivarian National Guard firing tear gas directly at the people who were peacefully on the street protesting the failures in the services, most of whom were elderly people. The repression was not to disperse the demonstration, they had no mercy. The police rounded them up... it was a disaster.”

In these demonstrations, State Security officials assaulted journalist Elsy García, a radio announcer for Voz Estéreo 88.9 FM. She was impacted by a tear gas bomb while working in Maracaibo⁴.

SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

The power outage led to serious consequences that aggravated the already terrible situation suffered by Venezuelans: water shortages have worsened (90% of Maracaibo, the capital of Zulia, has had no water since March 27th⁵), the scarce food that they had in fridges and freezers spoiled, and the gas supply was suspended and families had to cook with firewood.

⁴ Espacio Público: “Hieren a periodista de la Voz Estéreo 88.9 FM en Maracaibo” [Voz Estéreo 88.9 FM Journalist Hurt in Maracaibo]. http://espaciopublico.org/hieren-a-periodista-de-la-voz-estereo88-9-fm-en-maracaibo/#.XKlgANJKjc_s?platform=hootsuite (Spanish only).

⁵ Crónica uno: “En el Zulia la crisis se acentúa y los comercios vacían la mercancía por temores” [In Zulia the crisis is worsening and shops are withdrawing goods out of fear]. <http://cronica.uno/en-el-zulia-crisis-se-acentua-y-comercios-vacian-mercancia-por-temores/> (Spanish only).

“

None of my appliances or electronic devices have broken down, but food did spoil. I didn't have much because we can't keep it refrigerated due to the lack of electricity. We have to go out every day to see what we can find and buy it in bolivars or dollars.”

Furthermore, hundreds of shops were looted in Maracaibo⁶, where the material damage caused by these violent acts added to the damage already suffered as a consequence of the blackouts and the fluctuations in electricity supply.

Faced with the relentless heat, the residents of Zulia had to sleep outside their homes⁷. This exposed them to insecurity and diseases transmitted by mosquitoes and other animals, as well as to the complication of chronic conditions, in a country with an 85% shortage of medicines and medical supplies⁸ and that the lack of adequate responses by the authorities has turned into one of the most violent and insecure countries in the world⁹.

⁶ Diario 2001: “Ola de saqueos en el Zulia tras cinco días sin servicio eléctrico (+Fotos y videos)” [Wave of looting in Zulia after five days without power (+Photos and videos)] <http://www.2001.com.ve/en-la-agenda/203432/ola-de-saqueos-en-el-zulia-tras-cinco-dias-sin-servicio-electrico---fotos-y-videos-.html> (Spanish only).

⁷ Diario El Nacional: “Zulianos descansan en colchonetas en la calle durante los apagones” [Zulians rest on mattresses in the street during blackouts] http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/sociedad/zulianos-descansan-colchonetas-calle-dura-durante-los-apagones_278248 (Spanish only).

⁸ Amnesty International Venezuela: Emergency Exit <http://www.amnistiaonline.org/SalidaEmergencia/Default/Negar/>

⁹ Amnesty International: This is no way to live <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR5389752018ENGLISH.PDF>

There were no police officers on the streets to protect people during the blackouts.

In fact, in my community, the “collectives” (groups of armed people who defend the interests of the government) threatened to people if they protested ”.

In the country with the largest oil reserves and in the vicinity of one of the world's largest refineries, fuels are also scarce in the state of Zulia. Lines of several blocks under the beating sun are constantly seen in Maracaibo¹⁰.

The lines for fueling vehicles are endless. You can wait in line for up to 24 hours, because few gas stations have power plants and the others work only when there is electricity. People sleep in line waiting for the stations to open and, in the short time that they work, fill up on gas. Those who can't stand in line because they work or have other occupations have to resort to resold gasoline, which could cost up to 5 dollars per 5 liters of fuel,” Turtulici explains.

This fuel shortage, caused by the blackouts and the drop in oil production and refining, impacts the public transportation service in the country. In Maracaibo, buses are almost non-existent and those who venture to go around the city suffer an ordeal.

¹⁰ Diario Panorama: “Hasta doce horas puede tardar un ciudadano en surtir combustible en Zulia” [It can take up to twelve hours for a citizen to refuel in Zulia] <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/Hasta-doce-horas-puede-tardar-un-ciudadano-en-surtir-combustible-enZulia-20190406-0026.html> (Spanish only).

¹¹ Diario Panorama: “Omar Prieto: Bloques diarios de energía eléctrica serán de 4 a 6 horas” [Omar Prieto: Daily blocks of power supply will last from 4 to 6 hours] <https://www.panorama.com.ve/ciudad/Omar-Prieto-Bloquesdiarios-de-energia-electrica-seran-de-4-a-6-horas-20190404-0029.html> (Spanish only).

¹² Correo del Orinoco: “Gobernador del Zulia afirmó que Maracaibo está energizada en 30%” [Governor of Zulia claimed that Maracaibo is powered at 30%] <http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/gobernador-delzulia-afirmo-que-maracaibo-esta-energizada-en-30/> (Spanish only).

There's no public transportation in a city of more than 3 million people. We have to get on trucks like cattle and that if you can find them. That's why people walk to run their errands and only every now and then you see a bus.”

LATE AND INADEQUATE RESPONSES

Days after the second national power outage, Venezuelan authorities announced a rationing scheme for the whole country. The governor of the state of Zulia, Omar Prieto, said that in the state there would only be power for four or six hours a day¹¹. However, he noted that only 30% of the East and West coasts of Lake Maracaibo have had electricity (unstably)¹².

My community is located within a power grid where we have 4 to 6 hours of electricity a day. For the rest, we are talking about 18 to 20 hours without supply and without knowing when we will have it again.”

“We also do not have telephone service from the state-owned company (Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela, Cantv), the mobile signal is very weak and it goes out every time that there is a power cut. This means that we do not know anything about what's going on, we can't access social media to find out. Nothing.”

In the case of hospitals, the governor ordered portable power plants that are not being used by businesses or public institutions to be taken and installed in health care facilities.

ZULIA 2019

POWER FAILURES

FIRST NATIONAL BLACKOUT
FROM MARCH 7 TO AT LEAST 12

101

HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY

SECOND NATIONAL BLACKOUT
FROM MARCH 25 TO 28

62

HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY AS A MINIMUM

THIRD NATIONAL BLACKOUT
FROM MARCH 29 TO APRIL 2

99

HOURS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY AS A MINIMUM

FROM APRIL 3 TO 9, ZULIANS SPENT
AN AVERAGE OF 18 TO 20 HOURS A DAY
WITHOUT ELECTRICITY.

FROM 9 TO 10 APRIL, ZULIA SPENT
18 HOURS WITHOUT POWER SUPPLY.

“Where there is a power plant that is not in use, it is the responsibility of the mayors to get them and install them in hospitals,”¹³ was the governor’s order, even though all the medical centers in the country should have their own emergency power plants.

However, Turtulici warns about the serious situation of hospitals in the Zulian capital, where the lack of electricity prevents effective treatment of even the most basic illnesses.

“

My wife works in a hospital that has a power plant but no medical supplies. The patients have to buy everything and when they go to the pharmacy they cannot pay because there is no electricity and, therefore, the point of sale to pay with card does not work, they only accept cash. Patients die because of lack of supplies,” Turtulici stresses.

Venezuela is the country with the highest inflation rate in the world. According to international organizations and the National Assembly, the annual inflation rate has surpassed one million percent.

In addition, it has changed currency twice in less than 20 years to remove zeros from the ever-increasing numbers. However, these measures have been insufficient to allow people to purchase products, as the shortage of cash and its low denomination is crushed by inflation.

The situation of Zulians is one of the most serious in Venezuela, a country that before the blackouts was already going through a severe human rights crisis that is now worsening.

It is urgent that the Venezuelan authorities take concrete measures to guarantee the human rights of all people in the country in the short, medium and long term, as even a lack of electricity can cost lives.

¹³ Versión Final: “Prieto ordena a alcaldes “decomisar” plantas eléctricas sin uso para instalarlas en hospitales” [Prieto orders mayors to “confiscate” unused power plants to install them in hospitals] <http://versionfinal.com.ve/ciudad/prietoordena-a-alcaldes-decomisar-plantas-electricas-sin-uso-para-instalarlas-en-hospitales/> (Spanish only).

LIVES LOST IN THE MIDST OF BLACKOUTS

By **Gabriela Buada**

Zulia is the hottest state in the region, but in over six years of electrical emergency

it has become a hell that takes lives in every prolonged blackout.

The energy collapse in Venezuela has caused one of the worst moments of the human rights crisis. Preventable deaths, children not being able to go to school, internal displacement and the exacerbation of forced migration are just a few of the struggles citizens must deal with, from the first time the power went out at the same time all over the country.

In the state of Zulia¹, the energy collapse occurred as a result of the general crisis in Venezuela since 2013, which is also the biggest in history. However, the situation worsened after an alleged theft of cables that left all of Maracaibo (the country's second most important municipality)² and its surroundings without electricity in 2017. Since then, short and long term blackouts have been reported. These also cause the suspension of water supply, failures in telephone coverage and Internet access, among other basic services.

DISEASES WORSENING IN THE DARK

Milagros Urdaneta is the mother of a 20-year-old young man with hemophilia A, a disease her son has had since he was 6 months old.

The lack of electricity in the state has only increased the chances of my child becoming part of the preventable death toll in the country at any time," says the anguished mother as she explains that the young man is not going to school and cannot move because he has no treatment.



↑ Leonel Enrique López

¹ El Impulso: "En 2013 se han registrado 534 apagones" [There have been 534 blackouts in 2013] <https://www.elimpulso.com/2013/06/18/en-2013-se-han-registrado-534-apagones/> (Spanish only).

² BBC: "¿Cómo pasó Maracaibo de ser la ciudad más fría a la más caliente de Venezuela?" [How did Maracaibo go from being the coldest city in Venezuela to the hottest?] <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-36467735> (Spanish only).



↑  Leonel Enrique López

³ Cinfasalud: “Una enfermedad que impide a la sangre coagular correctamente” [A disease that prevents blood from clotting properly] <https://www.cinfasalud.com/areasdesalud/sintomasyenfermedades/enfermedadessangre/hemofilia/> Consulta del 14.04 al 30.04.19 (Spanish only).

Hemophilia is an inherited bleeding disorder in which the blood does not coagulate properly. This can cause spontaneous bleeding after surgery or injury.³ The lifelong treatment consists in replacing the missing clotting factor so that the blood can clot properly. This treatment must be kept well refrigerated because it loses its effectiveness if heated. para una vida digna.

“

There's no treatment, with or without electricity. Hospitals have told us that the clotting factor has not been purchased since 2015. Now not only do we live in fear every time my son has a hemorrhage or when he suffers severe pain that leaves him paralyzed in bed, without being able to walk, but we have to manage when there is no electricity, which is most of the time. We have to deal with high temperatures and dark nights with insects.”

Mrs. Urdaneta remarks that electricity is vital, an essential service to live with dignity , and that people with chronic illness in Zulia state are vulnerable without it.

“All of this is unfair. We are forced to live in this situation and I don't even know what to say to my son to explain the reason for the hasty deterioration of his quality of life. There are no words to explain so much suffering.”

Luis García's life is no different, since he also has severe hemophilia A. The weakening of his knees prevents him from moving.

“

I am always looking forward to the end of this situation, so we can go back to enjoying all the rights that we once had. The rights we achieved through struggle. I regret that many people have died because of the medicine shortage and that those of us who are still alive are more likely to die given these long power outages.”

DARKNESS AND DEATHS

According to the World Health Organization, one out of five adults has high blood pressure, a disorder that underlies nearly half of all deaths from stroke or heart disease. Complications of hypertension cause 9.4 million deaths worldwide each year. In Zulia, due to the electricity crisis, the hypertensives are even more at risk of death.

Érika Seiler has always lived in Maracaibo. She has had high blood pressure for more than six years. Today she is forced to survive temperatures of more than 40 degrees Celsius.

In addition to the fact that I suffer from high blood pressure, I am asthmatic, and if we add to that the huge electricity problem, the fear of something serious happening to me increases. I don't find the medicines I need. Since we are in economic crisis, they have to be bought in Colombia and their prices render them unaffordable. Now, with this power issue, it is impossible to have them".

The absence of transportation forces Zulians to walk for miles to buy food and medicines. Many cannot refrigerate them and only buy what they can consume during the day.

Zulia suffers daily 18-hour power rationing. At night we must take the mattresses out to the porch and sleep outside the house. My daughter, my son-in-law and a 4-year-old baby live with me. This is one more thing for me to worry about, because my granddaughter is too young."

I live in the Parroquia Bolívar. Every day I babysit my granddaughter because she doesn't have school because of the electricity problem. I also keep an eye out for the water supply because that's another serious problem. We haven't had water for over two months, waiting for the supply company to send cisterns. The Community Council says that there won't be water for "opposition supporters" and of course that we are, because we are opposed to living in misery," she said, explaining that her life changed drastically since the blackouts became worse.

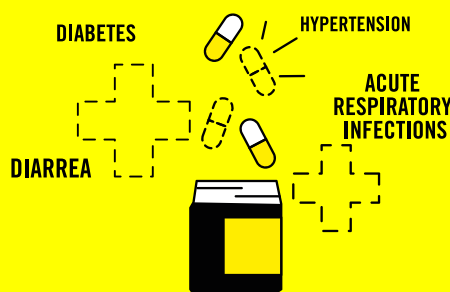
IN THE ABYSS OF DARKNESS

Undoubtedly, life for Zulians is not dignified. Basic services collapsed quickly and power failures turned normal human routines into a silent tragedy.

Zulians can no longer buy foods such as meat, fruit, cheese or vegetables because they spoil. They live from day to day. They don't sleep and when they manage to, the power goes out again.

It is urgent that the competent authorities work to guarantee the human rights of these people. Dignified living can only be achieved through the access to and use of basic services and the appropriate conditions they provide to meet basic needs.

THE SHORTAGE OF MEDICINES TO TREAT



EXCEEDS 60%

Source: Codhez. General situation of human rights in Zulia 2018.

THE BLACKOUTS 'ROULETTE' LEAVES ZULIA IN LIMBO

By **Andrea Salas**

Yamilex Álvarez had been asleep for eleven days in an induced coma. On March 25, just as the Coromoto Hospital medical team was about to extubate her, Maracaibo, the capital of the state of Zulia, was left in the shadows by the second general blackout that affected the whole country. Without the possibility of turning on the scanner to assess the progress of the surgery in which her brain tumor was removed, her awakening was postponed and complications ensued.

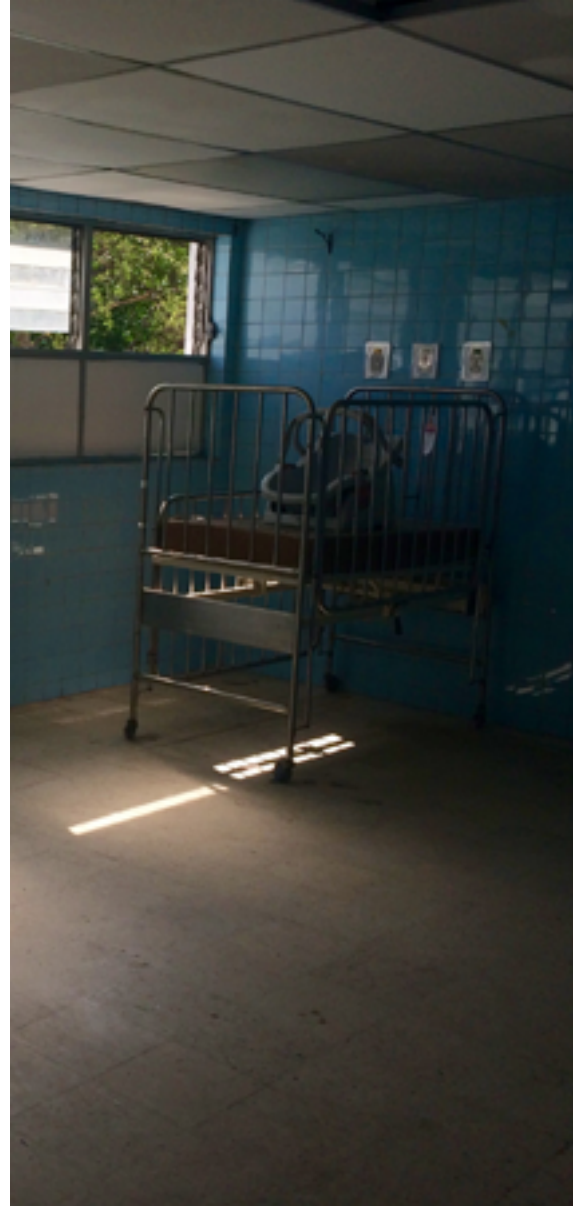
“

She had lung bleeding from spending more time intubated than she had to and the only option was tracheostomy (...) When she finally came out of intensive care it was very exasperating because the power plant supplied only the most important areas, such as the pavilions, the ICU, the Burn Unit and Pediatrics. The room was dark. That first night we had to push the bed into the hallway to feel a little air coming through the windows. It's the hardest thing we've ever had to face.” This is how her daughter Brenda Piñeiro narrates the chronicle of a nightmarish recovery.

Days with no end and sleepless nights. The mission of this 44-year-old patient's family is titanic: to keep blowing air in her direction and bathing her as often as necessary. Although she has already been discharged, after three months in hospital, the ordeal continues because in the oil-producing state the collapse of the electrical supply worsens with excessive daily rationing, while in the rest of the country there are only momentary outages and Caracas is excluded from the so-called energy management plan.

Excessive sweating, hypotension and nausea are the symptoms shown by Yamilex, who endures, almost naked, the long days without electricity in a suffocating weather that can reach 40 degrees Celsius.

Like her, the rest of the Zulians survive the chaos that renders daily life null and void, with power cuts that range from 6 hours to more than five days, as happened to the town of Machiques de Perijá in the middle of Holy Week.



↑  © Amnesty International

The residents of Jobo Alto, a community in Maracaibo, report that the power is cut for up to three days and returned only for a fleeting 20 minutes.

“**We are tired of the abuse. We closed the road to protest and the Guard repressed us,” Derwin Áñez said.**

Rest, a basic need, took a back seat for the citizens who walk the streets like automatons, with dark circles under their eyes revealing the bustle to which they have been subjected since last March 7, when the first national blackout, which lasted over 100 hours, took place.

Carlos Telles, 29, sweeps the roof of his house every night. That is now his family's bedroom. With a small portable lamp, he projects a bit of light into this space that gives them a little more breeze. From the El Potente sector, on the south of Maracaibo, he says:

What we're going through is very distressing.

Sometimes I feel like I'll go crazy from

overthinking. Children suffer; my 6-month-old

nephew cries a lot. Zulia doesn't deserve to be

treated like this."

The mosquitoes accompany them on nightly appointments, when falling asleep becomes a utopia for most. It is almost a collective insomnia, set in the new blackout beds: house fronts, balconies, patios and even public sidewalks. Wherever, people seek to rest their discomfort.

The consequences of this martyrdom are as long as the wait for those who yearn to return to normality. A very painful one befell Antonio González, who in a few months will be a century old. His niece, Roxana Moreno, claims that until recently he was very active, but his new routine of walking to the bathroom probing the walls took its toll: his head was broken in a fall. On the University Avenue, where he lives, they cut electrical power every day at 8:00 p.m. with the punctuality of a Swiss clock. It always returns at dawn.

SOUTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL 50 HOURS OFF

The power cuts seriously affect the health system and neglect a vulnerable sector of the population: the ill. Although the regional and local authorities insist that they have provided the health centres with power plants since the first mega blackout, the fact is that many of them do not work and, as a result, priority services remain compromised.

This May 1, at 8:00 a.m., a new power failure left several sectors of southern Maracaibo in darkness, including Los Haticos, where the Southern General Hospital is located. There, the explosion of an underground cable resulted in 50 hours of chaos for the medical personnel who struggled to preserve the lives of their patients with medieval methods.

A nursing supervisor, who preferred to remain anonymous, denounces that the emergency rooms closed and the blood bank stopped working. "The only areas that were lit were the Respiratory Care Unit and Cardiology, where a group of patients were crammed together, others were discharged, but many were taken away by their relatives. In the hospitalization ward, they were left to their own devices."

As an outcome of the contingency, hemodialysis treatments were cancelled. Fortunately, at the time, the ICU was closed as it was being sterilized. The director of the hospital, Alfredo Mogollón, stated in a press release that no deaths were registered due to the event and that two people who relied on ventilators were transferred to the University Hospital of Maracaibo (Servicio Autónomo Hospital Universitario de Maracaibo, Sahum).

The president of the Zulia branch of the Venezuelan Society of Surgery, Américo Espina, reports that the power plant of the Southern General Hospital — the second most important in the region — remains out of order, just like the ones in the Adolfo Pons and the Chiquinquirá hospitals. As for the Sahum's, they "function with limitations". On the contrary, in the Central Hospital, the operation is optimal. The doctor warns that elective procedures are suspended; only emergencies enter the operating room.



The congressman Juan Carlos Velasco claims that:

“

85% of the operating rooms remain out of service and that, sometimes, the medical staff has no other option but to “complete surgeries using cell phones”. In the ICU, “doctors, nurses and even family members have to provide mechanical ventilation” to patients when there is a blackout.

“Health in Zulia is in agony,” he stresses, while pointing out that people bring private plants to medical centers to supply critical areas.

On top of that, “the laboratories are paralyzed due to a lack of calibration”. Not to mention the proliferation of hospital-acquired diseases derived from inappropriate HVAC.

Proof of these allegations is the case of Josselyn Guillén:

“

My 5-year-old girl had a fever and severe ear pain during one of the general blackouts. I took her to the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security (Instituto Venezolano de los Seguros Sociales, Ivss) in Sabaneta and she was attended with cell phone lights. To be able to diagnose her, I took her to a private clinic for lab tests. Luckily, everything went well.”

A similar case is that of Amada Ruiz, who spent more than 300 dollars in a single day to treat the diarrhea and vomiting that his two-year-old son developed during the blackout. “It was nerve-wracking. Almost all the pharmacies were closed and we had to pay for the medicines in dollars.”

For their part, those with kidney disease suffer the worst consequences of the situation: their treatments depend on the availability of power. Luis Carrasquero, only 22 years old, has missed several sessions at the Zulia Nephrological Center in Maracaibo.

“

In April, he didn’t dialyze for six days in a row. He felt terrible; his blood pressure was very high from too much water retention, his belly was bloated, he drowned a lot... The worst thing is that we would run to the emergency rooms and they wouldn’t even have oxygen. They were sleepless days and nights. I felt a mixture of sadness, anger and frustration at not being able to help him,” recalls his wife Maybelín Torres.

Despite the fact that the Governor’s Office provided a power plant, the difficulty of procuring diesel oil is the new obstacle faced by the 41 kidney patients who live in the area. Their procedures were reduced to half the time required: two hours instead of four “so that everyone gets a chance,” which private institutions charge at \$50.

Domestic discomfort is the complaint of Luis Acosta, one of the 138 patients of the Western Dialysis Centre (Centro de Diálisis de Occidente, CDO) in Maracaibo. “The heat is fatal” and, since he can only drink half a liter of water a day, he tries to fight the high temperatures and “cheat” thirst with an ice cube.

During the power cuts, the 65-year-old dips his feet in buckets of water or gets completely wet, clothes and everything, to cool off when he feels like he’s “burning inside.” After a sigh, he dreams aloud of coming home and turning on the air conditioner.

“I DON’T EAT MEAT OR FISH ANYMORE BECAUSE OF THE BLACKOUTS”

FOUR

By Andrea Salas

Since March, Eleiza Campos has adapted her diet to the uncertainty of a service that she does not know how long will last, much less when it will return.

“Many times, trusting in the rationing scheme, we buy food and then it spoils because the power doesn’t come back all day. That’s why meat and fish don’t exist in my fridge. My diet has been reduced to canned foods. Mostly I make basic salads of vegetables and fruits that don’t spoil easily and don’t need refrigeration,” she says.

Nutritionist Nayerlin Acosta points out that this situation affects mainly the most vulnerable groups: children and the elderly. For everyone, she explains, it is essential to eat “the three main nutrients to carry out physical activities: carbohydrates, proteins and fats”.

However, the outages force people to eat only the first group and, in certain cases, low quality proteins such as cheese. The specialist warns that canned food consumption can affect people with high blood pressure because of its sodium content.

“Not consuming the necessary proteins, in the long term, leads to malnutrition from the first degrees to the most severe forms, which could result in death.”

“I COOK WITH FIREWOOD BECAUSE I CAN’T REFILL THE GAS CYLINDER”

In María Concepción Palacios, a slum in Maracaibo, there is no piped gas supply. One of the innumerable consequences of the power cuts is the delay in filling domestic cylinders. They can take up to 15 days to be delivered.

Luis Dagand uses a rudimentary alternative to face this deficiency:

“

I cook with firewood, especially the grains. I also have a small electric oven, but it is not an option because the power goes out for long periods of time”.

As if that were not enough, a critical issue that adds more weight to the cross that the residents of the state bear is the water crisis, which has been going on for more than a year and has worsened in this scenario.

The fluctuations in electrical power have damaged much of the equipment of the distribution system of Hidrolago, the company in charge of providing water to the western state. Insufficient pumping only supplies selected communities, but most people manage to get water from squares, mains, distributors, churches and even the edges of streams.

Wherever you go, you can see people wandering around with water bottles. On foot or by car, they seek a solution to the issue of drinking water, which the State provides very sparingly.

8 OUT OF 10  **HOUSEHOLDS**

IN MARACAIBO REPORT THAT BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS ARE HAVING A POOR DIET.

Source: Codhez. General situation of human rights in Zulia 2018.

Some areas of the municipalities of Santa Rita, Cabimas and Maracaibo have over a year of 'drought'. This leads to the digging of wells in home backyards or on roads to draw flowing water.

"The pipes are dry. We haven't had water supply for over a year. Basic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and doing the laundry are very complicated. We are saved because a neighbor has supply and he helps us." This is the story of Alexis González, a resident of San Pedro in Maracaibo.

A WHOLE DAY TO FILL UP ON GASOLINE

Having fuel has become an odyssey in the region. Overcrowded and almost motionless, long lines of vehicles border the gas stations. Under the beating sun, users must wait four, six, ten, 12 and even 20 hours to fill up on gasoline.

“

Yoleida Suarez, resident of Zulia, complains because “the guards dare to close the gas stations to do their dirty business. They say the gas ran out, but they sell it to those who pay them.” At 60 years old and exposed to insecurity, she has spent more than half a day in line.

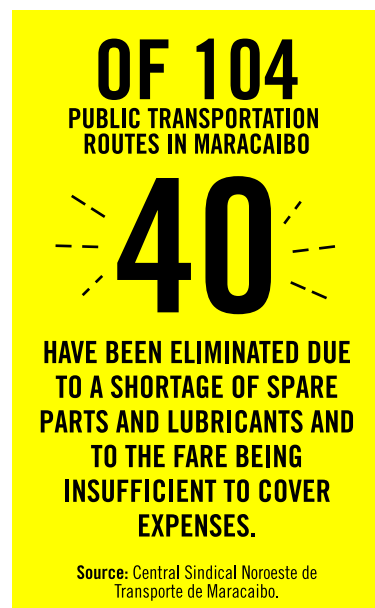
If it is a massive outage, most gas stations cease to operate, as only 71 have power plants. Even then, the plants must “rest” for 60 minutes every four hours.

In addition, the fuel is rationed at 30 liters per vehicle and many resellers take advantage to offer the same amount for \$10 or \$15, illegally.

On the drivers' side, there is a common complaint: the VIP lines, hosted by security officers who charge for everything.

NO TELEPHONY OR INTERNET

Venezuela, especially Zulia, took a leap into the past. The possibilities of communication compete with those of the Stone Age. “No signal”, “network unavailable”, “calls not allowed” and “text message not sent” are just some of the notifications that stop people every time they try to start a conversation over the phone.



Rosana Suárez is a Digitel client, but in her area, in southern Maracaibo, the network is down in the mornings. She was forced to buy a Movistar SIM card to escape the isolation that affected her for several weeks.

In addition, Internet access via cellular data and local telephone services is limited. The president of the Venezuelan Observatory of Public Services (Observatorio Venezolano de Servicios Públicos, Ovsp) claims that Zulia is one of the most affected states in terms of connectivity.

The root of the problem lies in the fact that half of all cellular phone towers “rely on backup power systems. They can last up to four hours, but many companies, due to financial constraints, have been limited in the investments they can make in infrastructure.”

Therefore, card payments are affected. This delays purchases at any store, given the shortage of cash.

PREGNANCY COULD MEAN DEATH IN ZULIA STATE

FIVE

By **Gabriela Buada**

It is no longer about damaged household appliances, insects lurking in the dark or high temperatures impossible to control, but about lives put in imminent danger of death. Carrying a pregnancy to term in Zulia state, in the midst of prolonged blackouts, is like living in a war camp.

Fabiana is 30 years old and 33 weeks pregnant. She lives in Maracaibo, capital of the state of Zulia, and says that, among the rashes and discomfort caused by the high temperatures to which she is exposed due to the lack of electricity, there have been times during her pregnancy that she has felt that the living conditions are inhumane and that life is unfair.

To be without electricity for a prolonged period of time is a burden that everyone needs to escape from and that many cannot, as is the case for those who live in this region of the country.

I have two daughters, ages two and three and a half. I despair of knowing that my daughters' quality of life is rapidly deteriorating. They no longer behave as they did before and I am concerned that after my delivery this may be harmful to the adaptation to the new baby."

As she feels the baby move in her womb, she has to deal with her daughters' hyperactivity: they jump, scream and run and they have panic attacks, and when the power comes back all of this becomes euphoria. "My eldest daughter's sleep has been disturbed; she doesn't sleep and says she's afraid of everything and that makes her irritable. The blackouts have also affected the emotional stability of the youngest."

This pregnant woman is really concerned about the birth of her child in the midst of this context that she is living in Maracaibo.

"I'm worried about the C-section. I don't even want to imagine that the electricity fails, that the power plant doesn't start."¹

¹ El Nacional: "Tres personas murieron en el Hospital Universitario de Maracaibo por apagón" [Three people died in the University Hospital of Maracaibo due to blackout] http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/sucesos/tres-personas-murieron-hospitaluniversitario-maracaibo-por-apagon_275207 (Spanish only).

NO TRANSPORTATION, NO QUALITY OF LIFE

"I live in La Paragua and thank God I work close. I come and go on foot or I get a ride to fulfill my duties until I get my leave. I have stopped sleeping, not only because of the heat and the mosquitoes, but also because the electricity comes at 3 a.m. and I have to get up to charge the electronic devices and do the laundry and fill bottles and buckets if there is water supply".

Fabiana works in a school in the mornings and in the afternoons at home as a corrector. She has two jobs because no Venezuelan has enough money to live on and in this way she can guarantee her daughters a healthy growth, at least day by day.

To keep my second job I have had to sacrifice rest, sleep and comfort. When the power goes out, I get stressed because all the corrections I have to make accumulate, so I make the most of my time by doing things that don't need electricity, such as fetching water, cooking or taking care of my daughters.


Fabiana, like many Venezuelans, demands that the authorities do their job and meet the needs of the population. “The authorities must do their job and look for ways to guarantee the functioning of basic services. We don’t want any more lies.”

FORCED MIGRATION AS AN OPTION TO GIVE LIFE

Maria Fernanda’s story is no different than that of many women who decide to give birth in another country for her safety and that of her baby. This is her second pregnancy and even though her eldest son will stay in Venezuela with his grandmother and his aunt, this woman is hurt that the only safe option for having her child is to be away from her family for some time.

“We are four women and the only man in the house is my 12-year-old son. I must leave him in Venezuela looking after the house and helping out, at least for 3 months. I managed to gather the money for the birth in Cúcuta, Colombia, and the decision is made.”

At first I had many doubts, but after the national blackout I made the decision to leave. The hospitals collapsed and the plants didn’t work. It’s my life and my baby’s life that are at stake. I don’t want to die and I don’t want my baby to die either.”



This tragedy has been going on for years, but it has worsened in the last months. “We don’t sleep well, we don’t eat well² . It completely changed our lives and I am a single mother. I have to find the best way to deliver my son safe and sound, with nothing happening to either of us.”

LIFE OR DEATH

Zulia continues to shut down completely. People don’t know how to adapt to new routines, those that involve being paralyzed because there’s nothing else to do.

² El Pitazo: “La tragedia de Zulia: Sin luz, sin agua y sin soluciones” [The tragedy of Zulia: No power, no water and no solutions] <https://elpitazo.net/cronicas/la-tragedia-de-zulia-sinluz-sin-agua-ysinsoluciones/> (Spanish only).



↑ © El Estímulo

“Our life was paralyzed. I worked at the Centro Delicias Norte, the place was completely looted³, and although we were not fired, we had to agree not to receive our salary³ while the merchandise was being restocked. I have had to work magic since then. I babysit and teach the neighborhood children because most of them don’t have classes and the schools don’t open all week. Everything is done at half speed, while we have electricity.”

Life in Zulia is terrible from any perspective. Heartbreaking testimonies of women sorting out ways to live with dignity and dreaming that their children never go through that suffering. Routine is unbearable.

It’s inhuman to spend over 20 hours in a row without electricity. My blood pressure is always low. This is my 28th week and I could work and be active, but my lab tests show that I have anemia and I am retaining fluid. It’s all because of worry and that it is impossible for me to get medicines and have a balanced diet,” María Fernanda said.

94%

OF THE PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN ZULIA ARE AT RISK OF CLOSING DUE TO SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES, RESIGNATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DETERIORATION.

Source: Codhez. General situation of human rights in Zulia 2018.

“In this state almost everything is paid in foreign currency, the bolivar ceased to exist a long time ago. My son is not eating well, neither is my mother. My sister and I financially support the household but now I am unemployed and it is difficult. I have had to sell all kinds of things in order to survive.”

The commercial sector has been reduced. Hundreds of companies and businesses have been forced to close their doors by the conditions to which they are being subjected. María Fernanda plans to return after giving birth but says that if she sees any job opportunities in Colombia, she will not.

The demands made by Zulians to the local authorities and the Venezuelan government are infinite. The deterioration in the quality of life of citizens is more than evident and women are especially vulnerable. The mere fact that migration is exacerbated by the search for opportunities and even to give life safely, makes it evident that the policies implemented are insufficient and not observed. Humanitarian space must be created and giving attention to the different sectors of the Venezuelan population must be a priority. Preventable deaths must stop and human rights must be guaranteed⁴.

³ Efecto Cocuyo: “Saqueados al menos 460 establecimientos en Zulia, reporta Fedecáramas” [At least 460 establishments looted in Zulia, Fedecáramas reports] <http://efectococuyo.com/economia/saqueados-al-menos-460-establecimientos-en-zulia-reportafede-caramas-apagon/> Consulta del 20.04 al 06.05.19 (Spanish only).

⁴ Tal Cual: “¿En qué consiste la ayuda humanitaria para Venezuela?” [What is the humanitarian aid for Venezuela?] <https://talcualdigital.com/index.php/2019/02/04/en-que-consiste-la-ayuda-humanitaria-para-venezuela/> Consulta del 20.04 al 06.05.19 (Spanish only).

“WE HAVE TO TAKE SHELTER WHEN THERE’S NO POWER BECAUSE THERE’S A LOT OF SHOOTING”

By Luis Alvarenga

Luisa Pozo is a 64-year-old Zulia resident who worries about how at night the living conditions worsen, remembering that she has to sleep outside her home, that there is no drinking water, that she does not know when the power will come back and, to top it all, that insecurity is unleashed.

The plight of people living in Zulia state, Venezuela, worsens when the night takes over the cities due to constant power cuts, rationing of basic services and shortages of food and medicine, as well as the poor performance of security forces in the region and the insecurity that takes over the streets of Maracaibo.

Pozo described what happens in her community when night falls and there is no electricity in one of the most dangerous states:

“

Last night I heard more than 20 gunshots. In order to protect ourselves when there is no power, we have to close ourselves in, because one can hear many shots coming from all sides, some closer and others farther away.”

Amnesty International notes in the report “This is no way to live” that by 2017 the homicide rate in Venezuela was estimated at 89 per 100,000 inhabitants. These deaths “tend to occur in the poorest and most densely populated urban areas,” the document adds.

“Violence in Venezuela is the responsibility of the state because of its failure to investigate and punish those responsible. This creates a climate of impunity that neither ensures reparation for the victims nor guarantees non-repetition. In addition, the lack of official information makes decision making on public policy – ensuring that the reality of the situation is taken into account and that international standards are adhered to in matters of public security – more problematic,” the report points out.

“When? Never!” is the police presence that Pozo testifies to during the almost permanent power cuts in Zulia.

“SERVICES THAT DON’T WORK

“

This power rationing is unprecedented. This is the first time in all my years that this has happened. It’s horrible! Because on top of that there’s no water, there’s no power, it’s hot, there’s no food,” Pozo said.

The situation in the capital of the country’s most populous state, which has important oil reserves –the main source of income for a country that has been in a strong economic crisis for several years –, darkens at the thought of how people manage to survive.

With only 4 or 6 hours of electricity per day, according to the rationing scheme announced by the governor, people in Zulia must hurry to be able to do in that time what it takes to survive the other 20 or 22 hours in the dark.

These include preserving food, washing clothes, cleaning, and buying basic goods (when telephone and internet service allow points of sale terminals to function).

“

Most of my food went bad, just like my TV, fridge and air conditioner.”


EVERY WEEK
45 NEW
HIV CASES ARE REGISTERED
IN ZULIA

90% OF THEM ARE
IN THE AIDS
STAGE

AND ACCESS TO HIV
SPECIALIZED CONSULTATION
IS PRECARIOUS

Source: Codhez. General situation of human rights in Zulia 2018.



↑  © Amnesty International

Every day, people in Maracaibo must go out to see what they can find (and afford) to eat that day. Thinking that food can be saved for the next day is impossible: there is no electricity and the scorching heat spoils everything quickly.

HEALTH ON THE EDGE

“

“The garbage has been outside for many months and the worms are going to reach us inside the house. There are too many flies and mosquitoes,” says Pozo to exemplify the neglect in garbage collection in the state.

This neglect has serious health consequences, and people cannot receive medical treatment because hospitals do not have supplies, there is a severe shortage of medicines – Amnesty International points out on the webpage Emergency Exit that it reaches 90% – and the highest inflation in the world makes buying what is necessary a luxury.


“

There is no medicine and no medical attention either because there is no power. People have to go from place to place to see where there is electricity .”

To date there are no official figures on how many people have died as a result of problems caused by power outages, nor is there any data on the extent of the material damage caused.

For this reason, it is urgent that the authorities take it upon themselves to immediately solve the serious situation that people are going through in Venezuela. It is responsibility of the state to guarantee the universal right to life, to access to clean water and to all basic services, as well as to health and to a dignified life.



↑  © Amnesty International | Laura Rangel

4 OUT OF 10 PEOPLE
IN ZULIA

**DO NOT GET PIPED
WATER SUPPLY**

**IN THEIR HOMES AND MUST RESORT
TO CISTERNS, WELLS OR
WATER POINTS.**

Source: Codhez. General situation of human rights in Zulia 2018.

WAYÚU FAMILIES ESCAPE TO AVOID LIVING IN DARKNESS

By **Gabriela Buada**

YAMILE IPUANA, A WAYÚU WOMAN, TELLS HOW SHE NO LONGER HAS ANY FAMILY IN VENEZUELA AFTER THE NATIONAL BLACKOUT.

She wishes with her heart and soul to be reunited with her family, her culture and her customs, even if it is in another country. For now, she can only wait and finish her handicrafts in order to try to sell them and also manage to flee, to anywhere, because “life in Venezuela is no longer life”.

Prolonged power outages are nothing new and many indigenous people, whose communities have been historically ignored, have decided to migrate in search of a better life.

“

The Wayuu communities live in absolute misery, without being able to light a light bulb, clean their houses, eat or perform any action to meet their most basic needs in La Guajira, Zulia. After the national blackout, the days are not the same and the situation is unsustainable¹.”

¹ Aleteia: “Venezuela: Por apagones e inseguridad, los actos de Semana Santa en Zulia se adelantan” [Venezuela: Due to blackouts and insecurity, Holy Week events in Zulia are brought forward] <https://es.aleteia.org/2019/04/17/venezuela-por-apagones-e-inseguridadlos-actos-de-semana-santa-en-zulia-se-adelantan/> (Spanish only).



↑ © Human Rights Committee of La Guajira

A FAMILY WITHOUT A FIXED COURSE

Yamile's husband, his two sisters and his three children fled Venezuela for good after the blackout.

“

José decided to stay in Maicao, Colombia. Before, he used to work there for a week and then come back. This time, he arrived just when we were in total darkness, he was robbed of all the food he brought with him at the border and two days later he decided that he had to leave and take the whole family with him.”

“

Everyone's gone to work, even my two children will have to do something for a living. Here, they could not finish the school year because the school never reopened, so that's why I didn't think it was a bad idea.”

Yamile is 32 years old. She is a Wayúu woman who holds on to her cultural roots and who has always dreamed of having her rights, her culture and her origin respected. She says that she never thought she could stay alone in Venezuela and that now she has to sell everything she has and work as hard as she can so that she can also leave in search of a brighter future.

“I have no idea if I will go to Maicao² or to Valledupar in Colombia, or if I will be reunited with my family when I get there because we can’t communicate. Since the power outages are so prolonged, it is impossible to make a call or send a text message. My youngest child (13) has only called me twice since he left. He told me that while he was in Valledupar working in market stalls with his aunt, my husband stayed in Maicao with the girl (15) and their other aunt, Danira”.

“

Without plans and without dreams, this family fractured, just like many others have because, even if they haven’t left Venezuela after the terrible power failures that leave them without electricity for at least three days in a row, they have to travel all over the country to try to survive.”



² Proyecto Migración: La desesperanza wayúu camina de Venezuela a Maicao [en línea] [Migration Project: Wayúu despair walks from Venezuela to Maicao] <https://migravenezuela.com/web/articulo/la-desesperanza-wayúu-camina-de-venezuela-a-maicao/> (Spanish only).



MAICAO IS THE DESTINATION OF MOST

The forced migration of the Wayúu community is not something new. Despite it being the most numerous ethnic group in Venezuela, the few who remain in the country eventually choose to leave due to the human rights crisis that worsened in 2019 and that, after the blackouts, puts them at risk of illness and death because they are denied a dignified life.³

“There are disease outbreaks. There are no medicines, there’s nothing to eat. The trees don’t even give fruit anymore, the plants are dry and the bats come out at all hours because it’s very dark. I have to travel many miles every day to sell at least one handicraft. The social programs are not provided to us.

We don’t even have the CLAP box to eat anymore,” says Yamile, explaining that her family had to leave in order to survive.

Yamile must make some money before leaving because it is becoming more difficult to migrate to Colombia without a plan. Her family has not been registered, they live in shelters and what they earn working, washing cars, shining shoes or running errands is only enough to survive the day. Sometimes they only have enough to eat.

They say that at least they can eat and here you can’t even do that. They are right. My daughter was already losing a lot of weight; I think she was malnourished but I couldn’t take her to any hospital. Everything became more difficult for us during the blackout and my husband despaired at the pitiful state we were in those days,” she said, her voice breaking.

Yamile expects to move to Caracas in the next few days to be able to sell her handicrafts and make enough money to go to Colombia in July. She dreams of the moment when she can embrace her children, but she avoids wishful thinking because she may not see them again for a long time.

³ Actual.yes: “Los wayúu del Zulia se mudan a Maicao” [The Wayúu people of Zulia move to Maicao] <http://actual.yes/los-wayúu-del-zulia-se-mudan-a-maicao/> (Spanish only).



INDIGENOUS CULTURE VANISHES DUE TO RIGHTS CRISIS

Countless pleas have been made to the Venezuelan authorities to allow the opening of a humanitarian space. Indigenous peoples are the most affected by the crisis and their rights are constantly violated. Their culture and history are also being threatened by oblivion and by the absence of effective public policies that care for and respect their significant contribution to the country’s history.

The Colombian government must continue to have an open-door policy for Venezuelan migrants, especially indigenous migrants⁴. It is urgent to integrate them in order to meet their basic needs. Even if it is challenging, greater efforts must be made to protect these people, most of whom arrive with severe malnutrition, infectious diseases and in a state of extreme poverty⁵. It is necessary to preserve indigenous culture in the world and in Venezuela it has not been a priority for many years.

⁴ El Nuevo Siglo: “Desafíos en La Guajira ante llegada de venezolanos” [Challenges in La Guajira as Venezuelans arrive] <http://m.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/02-2019-los-desafios-en-la-guajira-ante-la-llegada-de-migran-tes-venezolanos> (Spanish only).

⁵ Proyecto Migración Youtube: “Reporte Guajira, la frontera olvidada” [Report: Guajira, the forgotten border] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4XlRrTd8&feature=youtu.be> (Spanish only).

PETITIONS



- The Venezuelan government must guarantee the supply of basic services, such as drinking water and electricity, on a continuous and affordable basis for all people in Venezuela without discrimination of any kind.
- The authorities must recognize the serious economic, social, cultural and environmental rights crisis suffered by people in Venezuela and, with urgency, promote public policies that address and halt human rights violations.
- In line with international human rights standards, the authorities must guarantee that humanitarian aid arrives and that the most vulnerable populations are being reached, especially in terms of access to health care and food.
- During power failures, or failures of any other basic service, the authorities must guarantee that:
 1. Health centers are fully operational and that the lives of people who need medical attention are not put at risk.
 2. People with chronic illnesses can continue their treatment in a timely manner.
 3. People have continuous, affordable and safe access to drinking water.
 4. People can procure food and medicine without being limited by the availability of cash or electronic money.
 5. People can stock up on fuel, such as gasoline and gas, to ensure their transportation and food preparation.
 6. There are security forces guaranteeing peace in the affected areas.
 7. The needs of historically discriminated populations, such as indigenous people, are met with special plans to reduce the consequences of the crisis.
 8. The rights of children and adolescents are guaranteed, especially those related to access to education, food and medicine.
 9. The right to peaceful protest is guaranteed to those who demand the restitution of basic services.
 10. Communication professionals are not assaulted for making coverages that expose the rights crisis.

WHO WE ARE

Amnesty International, founded in 1961 and present in more than 150 countries and territories, is a global movement of more than 7 million people. We are independent of any government, political ideology or religion.

We work all around the world to fight human rights violations and to change the laws that sometimes try to legitimize them.

Our vision is of a world in which all people enjoy all the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

Our mission is to carry out research and take action focused on preventing and ending serious human rights violations.

Our principles are international solidarity, effective action on behalf of specific victims, universal coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

“

**FACED WITH GRAVE
HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS,
SHORTAGES OF
MEDICINES AND FOOD
AND GENERALIZED
VIOLENCE IN
VENEZUELA, THERE IS
AN URGENT HUNGER
FOR JUSTICE.**

ERIKA GUEVARA ROSAS,
AMERICAS DIRECTOR AT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



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