

United Nations and European Union must ensure the full functioning of international human rights mechanisms for Venezuela

Brussels, October 7, 2025 — The International Human Rights Network Europe (RIDHE) expresses its deep concern over the recent resignation of Francisco Cox and Patricia Tappatá, members of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFM), due to the unprecedented budgetary crisis facing this United Nations Human Rights Council mechanism.

Since its establishment in 2019, the Mission has played an essential and irreplaceable role in the rigorous, objective, and independent documentation of serious human rights violations in Venezuela. Thanks to its work, the international community has been able to identify systematic patterns of repression, trace chains of command, and provide crucial information to international justice efforts, including the investigation carried out by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) into crimes against humanity.

In a country where the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ombudsman lack independence and have been criticized for their inaction in the face of state abuses, the Fact-Finding Mission has become the main mechanism for truth and justice for Venezuelan victims and for thousands of people still seeking justice beyond the country's borders.

A budgetary collapse that puts accountability at risk

According to public information, a liquidity crisis caused by late or missing contributions from countries such as the United States and China has forced the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, to suspend reports, workshops, and other essential activities.

The Human Rights Council itself has reduced the length of its sessions, limiting opportunities for dialogue among states, experts, and civil society on the world's most serious crises.

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) warned that budget cuts to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have been more severe than in other areas of the UN system. Its Executive Director, Phil Lynch, emphasized:

"Historically, the UN human rights pillar has received considerably less funding than development and peace and security, representing only 7% of the UN's regular budget and less than 1% of its total spending. Any cuts would yield minimal savings but would have significant and disproportionate negative consequences for the rights of people worldwide."

By June 2025, the United Nations had received only 13% (\$5.6 billion) of the \$44 billion requested at the end of 2024 to address multiple global crises. It is projected that by 2026 nearly 3,000 jobs will be lost, affecting not only the monitoring of the Venezuelan case but also critical contexts such as Gaza, Myanmar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In their resignation letters, Francisco Cox and Patricia Tappatá expressed concern about the working conditions and growing limitations that threaten the independence and effectiveness of the mandate.

A blow to victims and the international human rights framework

The lack of resources threatening the continuity of the FFM is not merely an administrative problem but a direct blow to victims, organizations that have provided testimony at risk, and the foundational principles of the international human rights protection system.

In addition to the financial crisis, the Mission has faced structural limitations arising from the lack of effective coordination with the OHCHR office in Venezuela. The absence of synergies between the two mechanisms has weakened its response capacity and reduced opportunities to protect victims. This situation must be urgently addressed in any future redesign of the mandate.

An urgent call to the European Union

RIDHE urgently calls on the European Union, particularly the European External Action Service (EEAS) and its Member States, to:

- Actively defend the multilateral human rights system, exercising political leadership in response to the current budgetary crisis threatening the continuity of UN monitoring and investigation mechanisms.
- Provide financial contributions to sustain the OHCHR and Fact-Finding Missions, ensuring bridge or extraordinary funding to guarantee the continuity of mandates in Venezuela and other critical contexts.

- Make strengthening international accountability mechanisms a priority in the implementation of the European Union Global Human Rights and Democracy Strategy (2020–2027) and in international cooperation with Latin America.
- Promote resolutions in the Human Rights Council that ensure the renewal of the FFM mandate with adequate and predictable resources, and that reinforce coordination among UN mechanisms in Venezuela.

The European Union has repeatedly expressed its commitment to the universal values of justice, freedom, and human dignity. Today, that commitment is being tested. Defending international mechanisms that document crimes and protect victims is defending the very heart of international law and the global democratic system.

Without active international mechanisms, democratic transition is impossible

RIDHE deeply regrets that, in the current Venezuelan context—marked by worsening human rights violations, the resurgence of enforced disappearances, and political persecution—mechanisms created to guarantee truth, justice, and reparation face financial obstacles that endanger their existence.

Budget allocations must prioritize countries with severe human rights crises.

We reiterate our recognition of the commitment, ethics, and professionalism of those who were part of the Mission and urge UN Human Rights Council Member States and the European Union to mobilize the necessary resources so that both OHCHR and the FFM can continue to fulfill their mandate in Venezuela without interruptions, cuts, or limitations.

Without active, independent, and strengthened international bodies monitoring human rights, the transition to democracy in Venezuela will be more difficult, slower, and more painful.