

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2023

The Honorable Anthony J. Blinken
Secretary
U.S. State Department
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We are writing regarding an urgent situation in which an American citizen, Mr. Eyvin Hernandez, is being wrongfully detained by the Venezuelan government. Mr. Hernandez is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law and has served the public honorably as a Los Angeles County Public Defender for 16 years.

This matter was brought to our attention by the Dean of the UCLA School of Law, Mr. Russell Korobkin, who was informed by a large contingent of UCLA Law alumni who emphasized what they perceived to be the wrongful aspects of Mr. Hernandez's detainment. As this group explains, Mr. Hernandez was visiting Colombia in March of 2022 when he drove a friend to the Colombia-Venezuela border control point near Cucuta so that she could get her passport stamped. Mr. Hernandez, who had no intention of entering Venezuela, was then held and interrogated by Venezuelan authorities. After explaining that he did not wish to enter Venezuela and requesting to be allowed to return to Colombia, Mr. Hernandez was arrested, hooded, and taken to a high-security military prison where he is being held today.

As you know, Mr. Hernandez is still being wrongfully detained. The UCLA School of Law, together with a large number of Alumni and others advocating for Mr. Hernandez's safe return, point to the terrible conditions in which Mr. Hernandez is being held, and are very concerned about his mental and physical well-being after having to endure detention for over 19 months.

We have recently met with Mr. Hernandez's brother and others advocating for his release. According to this group, there are currently negotiations regarding Mr. Hernandez's potential release. Importantly, they describe what they perceive as signs of a slight thaw in communications between the U.S. and Venezuela happening at the current moment. We strongly urge U.S. officials to work in any way they can in this current moment to secure his release. Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your correspondence.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Nanette Barragán
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress