

Venezuelan Death Squads Have Killed An Estimated 831 People, Many Who Dared To Protest The Regime



Back in February Reuters [reported on murders](#) being carried out in Venezuela's slums by a special police force known as the FAES. Wednesday the AFP published a follow-up on this story that reveals the death toll has climbed [to over 800](#).

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Ariza is one of hundreds of residents who have been killed by the Special Action Forces (FAES) in what their loved ones and advocacy groups have told AFP were "executions."

These accusations have made it all the way to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet.

After meeting with relatives of victims in June in Caracas, Bachelet called for the disbanding of the FAES, an elite unit created in 2017 by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to “fight crime.”

Since 2018, the non-governmental human rights group Cofavic has recorded 831 “executions” carried out by FAES members, based on information from relatives and its own observations on the ground.

Surviving relatives of FAES victims say that the real purpose of the group is to “sending these assassins to intimidate people and make sure no one rises up to contest the violations of our rights.” They aren’t even subtle about it. As you can see in the image above, they’ve adopted the Punisher’s logo as their official symbol. But this isn’t a comic book and the people they are murdering are very real.

In May, 21-year-old Luis Ariza was pulled out of his own house and shot while his wife and family were kept inside so they couldn’t see what was happening. According to the official FAES report, Ariza was shot because he fired a gun at a police station and was wanted for murder. But the giveaway is the fact that back in 2017 Ariza spent three months in detention after being arrested at an anti-Maduro protest. Many of the victims of the FAES have had some [connection to protests](#):

The FAES have added a new, terrifying layer of intimidation and violence. Originally created by Nicolas Maduro in 2017 to crack down on “organised crime and terrorism”, they have mutated into his enforcers, crushing dissent in the poor barrios where loyalty to the Socialist government has dissolved...

Often, families say, victims had done no more than attend a protest. One prominent dissident Chavista told me that they, and the national intelligence service SEBIN, were “hitmen on the orders of the government to carry out terrorism of the state”.

That’s the right word for this kind of politically motivated violence: Terrorism. The murders aren’t aimed at valuable members of the opposition. On the contrary, they seem somewhat random. And they aren’t numerous enough to really decimate the ranks of the anti-Maduro movement. But they are enough to

instill fear in the slums that anyone who dares to speak up could be next.

It's not just the FAES that is cracking down on government opposition. The AFP story also contains this incredible statistic: "According to official data, 17,849 people died from 2016 through May 2019 in cases involving "resisting authorities." For comparison purposes, that more than all the murders that occurred in the United States in 2018. The US has nearly 10 times the population of Venezuela.

The AFP published a video supplementing this story (in Spanish) but it can't be embedded. You can [watch it here](#).

Source:

<https://hotair.com/archives/john-s-2/2019/11/07/venezuelan-death-squads-killed-estimated-831-people-many-dared-protest-regime/>

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