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[The Violation of Human Rights in Venezuela and Cuba](#)

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A [report](#) (PDF) released today by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemns in well documented form the growing violation of human rights under the regime of Hugo Chavez. The 302-page study is yet another confirmation of the multitude of ways in which individuals, NGOs, union leaders, politicians, activists, businessmen, students, judges, the media and others who disagree with Venezuelan government policies are targeted by the government and its supporters through intimidation, arbitrary use of administrative and criminal law, and sometimes violence and homicide.

Among the many cases it documents, the report describes how the government last year shut down a publicity campaign in defense of private property run by our colleagues at the free-market think tank [CEDICE](#). The government claimed that it did so to safeguard public order and the mental health of the population.

Particularly interesting is that the commission issuing this report (produced in December but for some reason only made public today) is part of the Organization of American States, which has proven itself useless at best and counterproductive at worst, in the face of blatant rights violations by the Venezuelan and other populist Latin American governments in the last decade. Will the same OAS that invited Cuba to rejoin the organization last year now debate the new report or will it and its head, Mr. Insulza, remain silent as they have for so many years?

Meanwhile in Cuba, the country Chavez holds as a model, political prisoner [Orlando Zapata Tamayo](#) died yesterday after going on a hunger strike, suffering beatings and having been denied water by prison authorities for 18 days. The mistreatment led to kidney failure. According to [Cuba Archive](#), an NGO that documents deaths attributable to the Cuban regime, Zapata “was then held naked over a powerful air conditioner and developed pneumonia.” What will the Permanent Council of the OAS have to say about that?

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