



# Democratization

Year 2, Issue 9

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# Fernando Albán is a martyr for democracy<sup>1</sup>

Juan Miguel Matheus

In these difficult circumstances, it is my responsibility to present the Agreement in condemnation of the kidnapping, torture and murder of councilor Fernando Albán. Listen carefully: in condemnation of the kidnapping, torture, and murder of councilor Fernando Albán.

I shall start by alluding to Fernando, trying to make my words convey the man he was: Fernando was born in Caracas in 1962, when the civil Republic was taking its first steps. It could be said that Fernando is the son of democracy. With his effort, with his personal commitment, he knew how to take advantage of a system of liberties that was progressing. He became a competent professional, proven at the service of Venezuela. Fernando was a son, he was a husband, he was a friend. He lived his whole life in the face of God and every decision he made bearing others in mind.

It is providential, then, that on the day he was assassinated, the parable of the Good Samaritan was read at Mass, because

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1 Presentation of the Draft Agreement rejecting the death of the political prisoner, Fernando Albán, in the SEBIN dungeons, and requesting an impartial and independent investigation, with international participation. *National Assembly*. Ordinary Session of Tuesday, October 9, 2018.

Fernando lived his entire life according to that passage of the Gospel.

He always stopped to reach out to those who needed him most and that is why today we can say with certainty, the certainty that faith gives us, that Fernando is in Our Father's house. He was received by his dearest Blessed Mother and he found himself face to face with his venerated Nazarene of Saint Paul.

Now, it is time to tell the story of what happened, to tell the truth about the events that took place in the dungeons of the SEBIN. The SEBIN (National Intelligence Bolivarian Service) kidnapped Fernando Albán last Friday. He went missing for more than 24 hours, until Saturday morning. Fernando called his wife and revealed his location –that is, the place where he was murdered– and told her that he would be charged with treason against the Nation and the alleged assassination of Nicolás Maduro. He also told her that they pressured him vilely, strongly, to give false testimonies and incriminate Julio Borges and other leaders of *Primero Justicia* in regards to the farce of this alleged assassination.

He was transferred to court on Sunday, but the hearing was not held. On Monday, while waiting in the Palace of Justice, we received the news of his murder in the voice of the usurper of the Attorney General's Office: Tarek William Saab. In a disrespectful and inhumane manner, he stated at a press conference that our friend, a faithful Christian, had taken his own life.

But the truth is that he was tortured on a Sunday night in three different ways. Let the truth be known: They tortured him by mechanical asphyxiation, throwing a bag over his face. They tortured him by immersion, dunking him in a barrel of water with the intention of drowning him. And they tortured him with

electricity. Fernando Albán was tortured in such three ways which led him to losing his life. He died while being tortured.

On this matter we must say three things: first, fellow parliamentarians, the kidnapping, torture and murder of Fernando Albán are framed within a strategy of destruction and annihilation of the *Primero Justicia* party and of all the democratic dissidence in Venezuela.

Our party and others, the party of Fernando Albán and others, have become one of the main obstacles to prevent the autocratic and dictatorial rebalancing of Nicolás Maduro and that is why they seek perverse ways to harm us, to destroy us.

But, listen well, Mr. Maduro, Mr. Jorge Rodríguez, and every member who cooperates with the dictatorship to try to annihilate dissidence: We are not afraid and we are not going to back down! We are going to free Venezuela in honor of Fernando Albán and of all those who have suffered in this regime of dictatorial disgrace!

Second, the kidnapping, torture and murder of Fernando Albán is the crystallization of one of the vilest traits of totalitarianism, that is, the desire to dominate and manipulate the conscience. They killed Fernando because he was unable to give testimony against his conscience, and since they could not obtain it, they ended his life. After assassinating him, they staged it as a suicide, seeking to defeat him, defeat his conscience. They threw the lifeless body from the tenth floor of the SEBIN headquarters in Plaza Venezuela. That is the truth.

We should do well to remember that Joseph Stalin did the same. Stalin threw those who dissented from the roofs of the KGB buildings. It is Marxism, totalitarianism as a structure of evil that devours the human condition without any restraint of conscience.

But the bad news for you, Mr. Maduro, is that by assassinating Fernando Albán you lost. Today, Fernando is free and happy, he enjoys the greatest of gifts: eternal life in heavenly reality. On the other hand, Mr. Maduro and his accomplices are prisoners of evil and slaves of their own miseries. While Fernando lives on, your soul lies dead.

Third, and most important, we must categorically deny the regime's version of the facts. It was not a suicide, it was a homicide! Fernando was a man of faith, a faithful Christian and would never have tried to commit suicide. Fernando was open to hope and transcendent realities. For this reason, he would never, listen carefully, he would never have made an attempt on his own life, and that is why we ask the media not to lend themselves to misrepresent the truth, not to fall for the regime's lies.

We urgently appeal to the international community to more strongly condemn this atrocity. We are grateful for the solidarity of the free world, for human solidarity, for embracing Venezuela. Thank you, thank you, thank you! We are eternally grateful and we ask you to continue promoting measures that condemn these atrocities and to continue restricting the dictatorship's capacity for international action. A regime of this nature should have no place in the international order. It is a problem for the free world.

To all the democratic forces, thank you for your support towards *Primero Justicia*, thank you for your solidarity towards us and towards the country in the midst of the pain and suffering caused during these bitter hours. It is a moment of true unity, to come together in a shared vision of the totalitarian nature of this regime.

The Bolivarian Revolution is not a traditional military dictatorship, it is a totalitarian regime with the dictatorial

solidarity of Cuba, Russia, China, and the autocratic powers of the world. Thus, it has no democratic stronghold that allows for it to be open to a frank and fruitful dialogue.

We must unite so all of us, civil society, political parties and the people of Venezuela, can promote the urgent and necessary change that will open the doors to a transition and allow us to rebuild this country in peace, in forgiveness, in reconciliation.

To those who take part in the evil dictatorship, we say: you still have time to regain your conscience. This National Assembly and the democratic forces that live in it have their arms open, ready to forgive and reconcile.

Today, *Primero Justicia* offers God its suffering so that this country can heal, so that this country will never experience this bitterness again. We ask you to release your consciences and to understand that in the future you will not be able to claim that you were following higher orders.

At last, a message to the militants of *Primero Justicia*, the vigilantes from all over the country, and those who share life in the democratic struggle in other party ranks, our brothers, our allies, a very special message for each one of you: We have the duty to follow through with heads held high. They chase, kidnap, murder us because they fear us. We will see democracy. We will rebuild this country from its ashes. We will heal our wounds and we will live in peace. They, evil, Marxism, will not have triumphed, listen carefully, because hate is forbidden to us and so is revenge. This must become a mandate for our people.

We demand justice, we raise our voices and we are not afraid! We are free, free from hatred, free from human misery. The real

Juan Miguel Matheus

prisoners are in the Palace of Miraflores, but they have little left and they know it.

Fernando Albán's blood emanates freedom and democracy.  
Rest in peace, Fernando, because your sacrifice will not be in vain.  
Rest in peace, dear Fernando, and we will honor your memory.

# Conclusions

The purpose of this ninth edition is to provide the reader with tools to help them understand the political, electoral and Human Rights circumstances in Venezuela. Paola Bautista de Alemán, Juan Miguel Matheus and Ángel Medina Deivis offer three perspectives regarding the concepts of freedom of conscience, anthropological damage and suffrage in Venezuela.

As a conclusion, and as a way to entice political debate, we will highlight a single idea from each article:

1. Torture, kidnapping and murder are a clear demonstration of totalitarianism and have the intention of manipulating the conscience of the human being and degrading him until his soul is broken. The soul is the most important part of the being. They failed to break Fernando Albán and, in the process, ended his life. They ended his earthly life, but his soul was left intact. Fernando Albán held on to his freedom of conscience until the last minute. This makes him eternally and forever free.
2. The language of Venezuelan suffering: Paola Bautista de Alemán delves into this term found in a testimony of the post-totalitarian reality of the Soviet Union, and relates it to the report on Venezuela of the United Nations' Independent International Fact-finding Mission. The author, rather than theoretically explaining this term, refers to it in an elaboration of the consequences and damage that Venezuelan society is experiencing as a result of the actions of totalitarianism. Along these lines, the author also refers to three realities that worsen the consequences and



that could increase the damage: first, that the perpetrators of torture, forced disappearances and repression are themselves Venezuelans; secondly, that dissident military personnel and their families are the most affected by cruel treatment and violence by their peers; and thirdly, that the most humble sectors suffer this barbarism much more without being able to raise their voices. The article, rather than posing a theoretical dissertation, poses a question: What is the extent of the anthropological damage that Venezuelans are suffering? And with this, she recalls and debates the term developed by the Cuban author Dagoberto Valdés in order to be able to delve into how the dignity of Venezuelan society is, feels and acts.

3. Suffrage in Venezuela has lost value as a citizen's instrument to decide and provoke political change. Voting is an essential characteristic of democracy. However, this is not a *carte blanche* that means that every country where elections are held is democratic. On the contrary, for voting to really be a democratic tool, it must take place in a context of transparency, with impartial arbitrators and with clear rules respected by political actors. This is not the current case in the country. In Venezuela, conditions for a transparent electoral process must be demanded and built, where the results are truly respected and representative of the clamor of the citizens. Without these conditions, the electoral processes will simply be a tool for the totalitarian regime to establish itself and stay in power.

This edition concludes with these three ideas. We hope that these articles contribute to the political understanding of Venezuela and stimulate the debates of the current crossroad in the country.