

**COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN VENEZUELA**

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**Yaracuy**

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**Report 2019/2021**

In the Central-Western Region of Venezuela, find the Yaracuy state, where his population lives in communities dedicated to agricultural activity, the basis of their sources of livelihood. This state borders the north with Falcón, the northeast with Golfo Triste, the east with Carabobo, the south with Cojedes, and the west with Lara. With 7,100 km<sup>2</sup>, it is one of the smallest in extension. It has 14 autonomous municipalities and 21 parishes, where 666,990 people live<sup>1</sup>. Its main cities are San Felipe, the capital, Yaritagua, Chivacoa, Nirgua, Cocorote, Urachiche, and Aroa.

The Interdisciplinary Group for the Complex Humanitarian Emergency (GIEHC) in the state of Yaracuy, which participated in the preparation of this report, considered that among the most complex problems that affect the population of the state are those related to greater exposure of the inhabitants to discriminatory practices through coercion or coercion for political reasons in access to essential goods and services (food, health, education, water, electricity, gas and public transport), concentrated in urban centers and highly diminished due to its precarious state. The significant decline in agricultural production levels has led to the primary sources of employment being provided by public entities, accentuating people's dependence on government assistance. Demanding rights in this state can have high costs of retaliation against the communities.

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**Relying on buying food offered by government programs exposes people to political abuses and undermines the rights of populations in rural areas.**

1. The population of Yaracuy, who mostly live in rural areas, cannot feed themselves enough<sup>2</sup> More than 70% of people require food. The products they receive in the Local Supply Committees (CLAP) bags only offer 50% of what they need to eat. However, families depend on access to these bags to feed themselves<sup>3</sup> and do not assert their rights to decent livelihoods to obtain sufficient food for fear of being taken away as a form of retaliation.

2. Abusive policies of coercion to make legitimate claims are more accentuated in rural areas. Officials from regional and

local institutions intimidate and harass communities, along with civilian groups that act against people who participate in peaceful demonstrations due to a lack of water, food, fuel, gas, and electricity<sup>4</sup>. Members of Communal Councils and CLAP also act in these policies, in charge of which the control of essential services, such as transportation, is found. On three occasions, a community requested medical attention from the authorities for a peasant man who died due to a lack of response<sup>5</sup> The family wanted to bury him in the municipal cemetery<sup>6</sup>. he family wanted to bury him in the municipal cemetery. Still, the officials did not allow it and called for "the full weight of the law" to be applied to them for committing an alleged crime, without any foundation, in addition to removing the CLAP bags<sup>7</sup>.

3. Most state institutions are located far from communities residing in rural areas. People must walk 3 or 4 hours to seek help from public agencies or file a complaint for situations that violate their rights, which are often not addressed<sup>8</sup>. Rural communities feel helpless in the face of their problems. Many people have fallen into depression because they feel that they can no longer trust institutions. The State's relationship with rural communities is characterized by being hostile. It depends on their authority that people can feed

**Problems of geographical access and hostility in dealing with the requests of the communities generate great helplessness and frustration in rural communities.**

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themselves, move around and even obtain paid work, because local public institutions are the main source of employment in the state.

**People with disabilities, including children and adolescents and those who live alone, do not have support for their accessibility, education and food needs.**

4. There is no updated census of people with disabilities. Many do not have an identity card or certificate of disability. Within the town of Aroa, people with disabilities are limited and need wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, but there is no local government program that responds to this need. In the Bolívar municipality, the María Magdalena Pérez Bracho special school has an enrollment of 46 children, between 3 and 15 years of age, with a special condition, but only between 20 and 23 can attend due to lack of transportation. In 2021, the Mayor's Office assigned a commission to oversee servicing the school's transportation, but

so far, no information has been obtained about these efforts. In addition, people with disabilities who live alone do not receive CLAP food bags because they are considered to have no family responsibilities. Before CLAP existed, in 2016, with the house-to-house food distribution plan, people with disabilities received food directly.

5. Upon the arrival of Covid-19 in Yaracuy, public hospital services were in a severe crisis, even in emergency areas, due to the lack of health personnel and medical supplies. Health centers were not prepared to deal with infections due to the pandemic, but neither were they prepared to care for people with other health problems, including people with chronic conditions such as people with kidney conditions<sup>9</sup>.

**Public hospitals, even in their emergency areas, do not have health personnel or medical supplies**

6. The infrastructure of elementary education schools in Yaracuy state is in great deterioration, because from 2019 to the present there is no State policy to recover it. Until 2020, 80% of educational institutions have severe problems in their physical plants and staff. This situation worsened during 2021. The windows have no glass, the walls are dirty, there are no teaching materials<sup>10</sup>, and none of the schools have a regular water supply. In the call that was made for the return to classes, only 60% of the students responded, because there are no adequate operating and hygiene conditions for school activities, including those necessary for the prevention of COVID.

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**Elementary education schools in Yaracuy are in very poor condition, with deteriorated physical plants, without water, and not enough qualified teaching staff**

7. In addition to the poor physical condition of the schools, there are not enough teaching staff. It is the Mayor's Offices that are making the appointments of the people who are teaching classes, together with the Hugo Chávez Battle Units (UBCH), introducing criteria related to political purposes and without qualification requirements to exercise educational functions. In rural areas, high travel costs fall into the pockets of the teachers themselves who earn too low salaries and must work without sufficient materials, or access to

computers and the Internet. In Yaracuy, cases of depression and suicide have been detected in the education sector because the conditions are deplorable, the teachers face serious problems of malnutrition, and those who manage to eat three meals a day do so because they have a relative abroad who sends them remittances. In the fight for their legitimate demands, the teachers' unions are restricted from entering educational areas and are accused of committing acts of destabilization by holding protests to demand better salaries and working conditions<sup>11</sup> that are generally strongly repressed by the security forces, police and military<sup>12</sup>.

**Union and trade union organizations are frequently hampered, intimidated and repressed for making legitimate demands for the rights of teachers.**

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