



1.5.1. Detention conditions

Sources indicated that detention conditions are 'harsh' and 'deplorable',^{[256](#)} often amounting to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.^{[257](#)} Detainees are reportedly subjected to torture, beatings, and prolonged incommunicado detention.^{[258](#)} The UNFFMV reported that torture methods in detention centres include asphyxiation with plastic bags, beatings, electric shocks to the genitals, and threats of rape, and that tribunals have 'systematically' ignored complaints filed about these abuses.^{[259](#)} In the case of children, detainees are threatened not to speak about prison conditions, and when they do, courts reportedly refuse to hear their cases or conduct investigations.^{[260](#)}

Detention centres are overcrowded, poorly ventilated, and lack access to sunlight, potable water, adequate food, and healthcare.^{[261](#)} In some facilities, detainees receive spoiled food or food containing insects, and water supplies are described as unfit for consumption.^{[262](#)} In 2024, the Venezuelan Observatory of Prisons (OVP, Observatorio Venezolano de Prisiones) documented 105 deaths inside prisons and 40 deaths in police-station detention centres, most linked to lack of medical care and poor health conditions.^{[263](#)} Some detainees have died as a result of torture and medical negligence,^{[264](#)} and autopsy reports are not shared with families.^{[265](#)} According to the OVP, overcrowding in some prisons reaches 200 %.^{[266](#)} In some prisons, *pranes*, criminal bosses who run criminal organisations from within the prisons, charge inmates for a place to sleep,^{[267](#)} with reported amounts starting at 40 USD per month.^{[268](#)} The penal system's lack of a central registry for political detainees leaves some individuals 'disappeared' for weeks or months, and even those with release orders are often kept in custody at the discretion of powerful security officials.^{[269](#)} A leading human rights lawyer consulted by International Crisis Group stated that information on detainees' whereabouts is routinely withheld during jail visits, and some missing prisoners have still not been located.^{[270](#)}

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