

Venezuelan Baptist leader released from jail

February 19, 2019

A Venezuelan Baptist youth leader was released from jail Feb. 15 after 24 days of what officials with the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela called his “unjust detention.”

Gregory Pérez, executive secretary of the National Baptist Youth Union, was detained Jan. 23 when the state police rounded up people suspected of participating in a public protest in San Felipe. They were charged with criminal conspiracy, terrorism, use of explosives, obstruction of public roads and resisting arrest.



Soon after Pérez was released, Elijah Brown, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, spoke to a contact in the region who reported Pérez was “at home with his family ... and giving thanks for everyone who prayed for him.”

Pérez and 32 others—including two pastors—were released from custody Feb. 15. However, he is required to make a court appearance every eight days until a hearing about 25 days after his release.

“Our brother in the faith is not a criminal or a terrorist, nor did he even participate in the demonstration that took place on that day,” according to

a statement issued by the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela.

Venezuelan Baptists asserted Pérez was at a communications center in San Felipe responding to emails when the demonstration began outside. When the owner of the business asked all his customers to leave, Pérez sought shelter in the nearby home of friends but was apprehended and taken into custody by the state police.

International appeal for human rights



Elijah Brown

After the arrest, Brown and Parrish Jacome, general secretary of the Union of Baptists in Latin America, wrote and distributed a letter to the governor of Yaracuy State in Venezuela, urging authorities to honor human rights and legal rights.

They asked that charges against Pérez—and others arbitrarily arrested alongside him—be dismissed. They also urged authorities to allow Pérez to be represented by his chosen attorney rather than by a public defender.

Brown called the Feb. 15 release of Pérez and others a “welcome

development and a moment to prayerfully celebrate with Gregory and his family.”

At the same time, he asked for continued prayer regarding the situation. He also invited Baptists worldwide to intercede with governmental authorities on behalf of Perez by writing a letter to the governor of Yaracuy in Venezuela, Lcdo. Julio César Leon Heredia, at gobernador@yaracuy.gob.ve or sending a letter of advocacy to BWA@bwanet.org that BWA will forward it to the relevant offices in Venezuela.

“This is a time for all of us to continue to press with our advocacy and to continue to pray that Gregory will be fully exonerated and allowed to continue his ministry with the youth of Venezuela,” Brown said.