

**NOAM CHOMSKY**

TO SUPPORTERS OF HUMAN JUSTICE, IN VENEZUELA AND WORLDWIDE  
JUDGE MARIA LOURDES AFIUNI HAS SUFFERED ENOUGH

CAMBRIDGE, JULY 3 2011

With this public letter I want to express my open support for the liberty of Judge Maria Lourdes Afiuni, detained in Venezuela since December 2009. In November of last year I was informed of her situation by the Latin American Initiative of Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University. Ever since, I have been directly involved in mediation efforts with the Venezuelan government, with the purpose of releasing her from prison through a gesture of clemency by President Chávez.

Judge Afiuni had my sympathy and solidarity from the very beginning. The way she was detained, the inadequate conditions of her imprisonment, the degrading treatment she suffered in the Instituto Nacional de Orientación Femenina, the dramatic erosion of her health and the cruelty displayed against her, all duly documented, left me greatly worried about her physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as about her personal safety. Those reasons motivated me in December 2010 to address, jointly with the Carr Center, a petition for an official pardon from the President in the context of the yearly presidential amnesties.

In January I received with relief the news that Venezuela's Attorney General had suggested house arrest for Judge Afiuni given her fragile health condition, which ended up with an emergency surgery. Being in her house with her family and with adequate medical attention has been without doubt a significant improvement of her situation.

However, Judge Afiuni has suffered enough. She has been subject to acts of violence and humiliations to undermine her human dignity. I am convinced that she must be set free, not only due to her physical and psychological health conditions, but in conformance with the human dignity the Bolivarian Revolution presents as a goal. In times of worldwide cries for freedom, the detention of María Lourdes Afiuni stands out as a glaring exception that should be remedied quickly, for the sake of justice and human rights generally, and for affirming an honorable role for Venezuela in these struggles.

For the above reasons I want Venezuelans to be aware of my total solidarity with Judge Afiuni, while I affirm my unwavering commitment with the efforts advanced by the Carr Center in Harvard University to release her from imprisonment. At the same time, I shall keep high hopes that President Chávez will consider a humanitarian act that will end the judge's detention.



Noam Chomsky