

Acceso a la Justicia denounces that mistrust in the Public Ministry fosters impunity.

Citizens' mistrust towards the Public Ministry's capacity to do its job make them abstain to go to it to denounce the crimes of which they are victim, which creates impunity and that impunity fosters bigger mistrust, which in turn produces more impunity. In this perverse circle is trapped the instance in charge of investigating crimes and bringing to courts those responsible for them.

So shows in the report "The Public Ministry in Venezuela: Its performance and citizen's perception (2000-2020)" that Acceso a la Justicia prepared, in which data from the survey on Violence and Police Lethality that the Venezuelan Observatory of Violence (VOV) made between the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020; and which showed that 70% of the people surveyed did not approve of the performance of the organism, versus a 30% that qualify it as "good" or "very good".

These data is similar to that obtain by the Survey on Life Conditions (Encovi by its acronym in Spanish), which since 2014 registered an increase in the negative evaluation of the Public Ministry, especially after 2016 and 2017 when more than half of the people surveyed qualified its performance as "bad" or "very bad". That explains why the same study reveals that in said period the number of Venezuelans victims of crimes that went to the police forces or before the prosecutors to denounced what happened to them but fell. Between 2015 and 2017 the number of those who did not report to the authorities the crimes of which they were subject went from 64% to 69%.

Motivation

In the report another survey the VOV did in 2010 is quoted and in which why people did not denounce was investigated. Of the total of 234 people that were subject of a crime in the twelve months prior to the survey, 65% sustained that they did not denounce because "...authorities do nothing", 15% stated they did not do it due to "...fear to the criminals reprisal" and the remaining 20% for different reasons among which the most underscored was: "They did not know where to file the denounce" and due to "fear of police".

To Acceso a la Justicia this mistrust is attributable to the slowness with which the Public Ministry acts. Thus, in another previous investigation, titled: "Report on the

Performance of the Public Ministry (2000-2018)” it is recalled that since 1999, when the new accusatory criminal system went into force, the organism has been saturated with thousands of cases, and even though in these years it has seen increased its funding (50%) and its personnel (93,7%), this has not translated into results.

The data match others included in other investigation Acceso a la Justicia published recently with the title: Venezuela police service: between reality and perception (2000-2019). In said study it is also reported that the majority of the citizens mistrust police forces and so avoid going to them, even though they have been victims of criminality.

¿And how does this affect you, Venezuelan?

The perverse circle in which the Public Ministry is trapped has deep repercussions on the lives of Venezuelans, since does not but increase the grave flagellum of impunity.

Criminalists and Human Rights activists have warned that the lack of punishment for crimes does not only incite these are repeated but they are so more virulently and even open the doors to citizens seek justice by their own hands.

The endemic impunity explains the exponential increase of phenomena like lynching. Only in 2016 there were 65 of those crimes recorded in the country, number that represented a 650% increase versus the previous year.

The Pubic Ministry is a fundamental organization to the existence of a rule of law and a democratic system, because it is not only the one in charge of bringing to justice those who break the law, but also is responsible of watching courts and police forces respect citizens’ rights.