



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 46th SESSION

Interactive dialogue on oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ([res. 45/20](#))

(11 March 2021)

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet:

The High Commissioner (HC) **acknowledged positive steps taken by the Government of Venezuela** and expressed that the OHCHR will continue to **provide technical assistance**. Nevertheless, she pointed out that **extra-judicial executions** continue in the context of security operations and that prompt and independent investigations to ensure **accountability**, must be put in motion immediately. Furthermore, concerns were focused on Venezuelan people's **lack of access to basic services** like medical assistance, water, gas, food, and petrol, further limited by the adverse effects of the pandemic. Emphasis was also made over the **situation of food insecurity** in the country and the **death of Venezuelan migrants in the Caribbean Sea in 2020**.

Moreover, the High Commissioner referred to reports of **people dying in detention centers** due to malnutrition, tuberculosis, and other diseases and called for the **release of those arbitrarily detained**. She highlighted that **humanitarian assistance is key** but that she was overly concerned over the **restrictions imposed on NGOs' ability to operate**. She also condemned the shrinking of the civic space in Venezuela, including the **oppression and harassment of journalists, human rights defenders, union leaders and supporters of the opposition, specifically the elected members of the 2015 National Assembly**.

Finally, the High Commissioner called for the Venezuelan authorities' obligation to protect fundamental freedoms and ensure conditions for meaningful participation in public life, including dissenting voices. She mentioned the OHCHR **will continue supporting an inclusive dialogue** with the country in order to address the root causes of the current challenges.

Delegation of Venezuela (speaking as the State concerned)

Venezuela emphasized that this oral update, mandated by [Resolution 45/20](#), **was drafted by a small group of countries** that have an extensive history of human rights violations and that use these opportunities to create distractions over their own grave human rights situation. Venezuela, therefore, **categorically rejected of resolution against sovereign countries** and more when they do not have the consent of the State concerned. It highlighted that the Council must be aimed at **guaranteeing universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the examination of human rights issues, and at eliminating all politicization**.

Venezuela **will respond to the HC oral update in detailed response in due course**. However, the country rejects the **unverified information used by the HC** which is fueled by the **transnational media campaigns against the country**. Dialogue is under way between the OHCHR and representatives of the State, especially **directors of the Venezuelan police to guarantee technical support** in the strengthening of their work in the area of human rights.

Regarding the concerns of the HC on **basic services provision, the disappearance of migrants and the depreciation of wage**, they **recalled the report by Ms. Alena Douhan** on which it was established the **adverse impact of unilateral coercive measures**. Hence, the **humanitarian issues** in the country result from the **"perverse effects of the illegal sanctions"** imposed by the **US and its allies** which constitutes in **itself a crime against humanity**. A multiform aggression has been carried out against Venezuela including **assassination attempts and military aggression attempts**. Therefore, Venezuela called for the HC to **condemn the sanctions that undermine the right to development of Venezuelan people**.

Finally, it was mentioned that even with the provocations caused by this, as President Nicolas Maduro said, **Venezuela will continue cooperating with the Office as it is producing recognized results**. The Office in Venezuela will continue **to receive the full support and cooperation, always following the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in State's internal affairs**.



Interactive Dialogue - To watch full recording of the Interactive Dialogue, refer to [UN Web TV](#)

Albania, Georgia, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and the Peru (On behalf of 55 countries)¹ commended the oral update and expressed their concerns over the social, economic and political crisis in Venezuela which include **attacks against civil society members, human rights defenders, harassment against journalists, political repression through public authorities abuse against opposition and pacific protestors**. These countries encouraged **democratic solutions to guarantee political stability**.

Brazil, European Union, Japan, Peru (On behalf of 55 countries) and Albania called out the past election in 2020 as it was **held without a national agreement on electoral conditions and failed to comply with the international standards**. **Brazil** specifically rejected President Maduro's attempt to control the National Assembly.

Brazil and the European Union, called for Venezuela to accept country visits by the **special procedures including the UN Special Rapporteurs on Arbitrary Detentions, Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Extrajudicial executions, Independence of Judges and Lawyers and Torture, among others**. **United Kingdom** mentioned that vaccine distribution within Venezuela must be **depoliticized** and that **United Kingdom sanctions are targeted only against individuals**. **Argentina** and the **European Union** highlighted the importance of the **cooperation with the Office** and called for the full implementation of the HC's recommendations.

Belarus, Russian Federation, Iran Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Cuba, China, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea welcomed the constructive engagement of the Venezuelan government and condemned the brutal impact of unilateral imposed sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights in the country. Along with the **Syrian Arab republic and Bolivia**, they rejected **politically motivated country specific mandates** that are established without the consent of the concerned State and are in contradiction of the principles of **objectivity and non-selectivity**. UPR is the appropriate mechanism. All highlighted the values of **sovereignty and non-interference**. **Iran** mentioned that [A/HRC/RES/45/2](#) should be **appreciated as a good sign of enhanced cooperation and capacity building from the Venezuelan government** to further the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (25 country delegations):

Albania, Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Ecuador, European Union, Georgia, Iran, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, Peru, Peru (On behalf of a Group of 55 countries), Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom, China, Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, Spain, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):

Amnesty International, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Center for justice and international law, Fundación Latino americana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, Ingenieurs du Monde, International Commission of Jurists, United Nations Watch, Asociacion HazteOir.org, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), Advocated for Human Rights.

The majority of NGO representatives condemned the grave human rights violations **including arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force and torture by security forces**, repression against journalists and human rights defenders, and extrajudicial executions. They called for the Venezuelan government to facilitate **country visits by Special Procedures**. They further elaborated that amidst the pandemic and the restrictions imposed to control, there has been an **increase in food insecurity, malnutrition of children and pregnant women, and chronic non-communicable diseases**. Also, that **political considerations** appear to be a driving factor in the **COVID-19 vaccine prioritization plan**. Moreover, that **police abuses** have specially been targeting **poor neighborhoods**. Finally, they also called for **free presidential elections**.

Two NGOs highlighted that the **United States, United Kingdom and Portugal** have withheld six billion dollars from Venezuela, which in return has **prevented the acquisition of medicines, treatments and vaccines**. They **recognized the cooperation** of the Venezuelan government with the HC and expressed that **economic sanctions must be lifted**.

¹ Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Panama, Paraguay, Perú, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America.