



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 46th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the independent international fact-finding mission
on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
(10 March 2021)

Ms. Marta Valiñas, Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

The Fact-Finding Mission (FMM) in Venezuela was established on 27 September 2019 by resolution [A/HRC/RES/42/25](#) to assess alleged human rights violations committed since 2014. In September 2020, the Mission presented its first report to the Council, detailing cases of **extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, including sexual and gender-based violence**, committed by **Venezuelan State actors since 2014**. The report concluded that some of these violations were committed on a large-scale and amounted to **crimes against humanity**.

The Chairperson emphasized that the **liquidity crisis affecting the UN Secretariat** has delayed contracting the support team so the information that is being provided is still a work in progress. She also highlighted that the FMM has tried to contact the Venezuelan government but **has not received a positive response**.

The Chairperson further emphasized the continued **political climate of exclusion of dissenting voices in Venezuela**, the **repression of political opposition**, the development of **trials “behind closed-doors” against the principles of transparency and due process**, and criminal proceedings that have **caused irreparable harms** to still imprisoned government opposers due to delays in the judicial system.

The Chairperson raised concerns over **individuals detained at military and civilian intelligence sites, cases of torture**, including new allegations about acts of **sexual and gender-based violence against detainees**. Likewise, **new cases of arbitrary detentions in protests** have been recorded involving **journalists and independent press**. As the concept of “internal enemy” broadens, deep concerns refer also to the targeting of individuals and NGOs engaged in humanitarian and human rights work and the systematic harassment towards these organizations.

Finally, the Chairperson said that the FFM will continue its work with regards to **establishing structures, clarifying responsibilities and chains of command for these crimes**, as well as identifying tactics used by State perpetrators to hide or shield themselves from accountability.

Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of (State concerned)

Venezuela highlighted that progress has been achieved in investigations and prosecutions related to human rights violations in the country. Nevertheless, the country emphasized that **unilateral coercive measures** can be considered as **crimes against humanity** as they have led to the current crisis in the country.

Venezuela believed in a constructive dialogue on human rights and **refused the actions of these mechanisms that single out countries** as this “heinous classification” goes against the cooperative purpose of the Human Rights Council. The **FFM presents politicized information with no balance or fairness**, while the statements made were not based on reasonable grounds. The **USA** were using this same argument to wage a war against Venezuela.

The **FFM report was drafted using fake news with anonymous sources posted in social networks** and therefore, social science had been replaced by social media. The money (5.3 million dollars) spent on this initiative had been wasted and could have been better used to buy vaccines.

Venezuela urged the Council to reject this FFM’s mandate **whose outcome is part of the war that is being waged against Venezuela**.

Interactive Dialogue

Several states including the **EU, Germany, Brazil, Portugal, France, Ecuador, Japan, Switzerland, Colombia, Netherlands, Marshall Islands, Denmark, USA, Peru, Spain, UK, Austria, Poland, Iceland, Czech Republic,**



Grave concerns were raised towards increased harassment of human rights defenders, abuses towards independent media and humanitarian actors, the prevailing impunity for past and ongoing violations and abuses, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, cases of political censorship, harassment against NGOs and torture. Furthermore, these countries coincided on that **those responsible must be held accountable** and that Venezuela's government should collaborate with the FFM as they deeply **regret its non-cooperative stance**.

The EU called to free **all political prisoners and for the freedom and safety of all political opponents**, in particular representatives of the opposition parties elected to the National Assembly in 2015. The EU further said that it had imposed additional restrictive measures against 19 leading Venezuelan officials on 22 February 2021 and clarified that **targeted measures are not designed to have adverse humanitarian effects**. Several States made emphasis on their support for the FFM and **recognized the transparency, independence and rigorosity of how the FFM carries its investigations**.

Russian Federation, Iran, DPRK, Belarus, China, Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Syrian Arab Republic supported the Government's efforts in promoting human rights in the country saying that these types of **one-sided and politicized mandates** are hardly conducive to improving the human rights situation in Venezuela. Moreover, that the investigation must be carried out in a **constructive fashion with the consent of the State concerned**.

Burundi and Turkey condemned **unilateral coercive measures** which have had deep negative humanitarian consequences in Venezuela, **called for cooperation and dialogue** and along with **Eritrea** recommended that these matters be **dealt through the UPR**.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (33 country delegations):

Venezuela (country concerned), European Union, Peru (on behalf of Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay), Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Russian Federation, France, Ecuador, Japan, Switzerland, Colombia, Netherlands, Marshall Islands, Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, United States of America, Peru, Spain, Belarus, Austria, China, Syrian Arab Republic, Poland, United Kingdom, Iceland, Nicaragua, Cuba, Czech Republic, Burundi, Turkey, Eritrea.

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

Amnesty International, CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Human Rights Watch, International Bar Association, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), International Service for Human Rights, United Nations Watch, World Organisation Against Torture

The majority of **NGO representatives** condemned the systematic violations in Venezuela regarding **impunity, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions of peaceful protestors, excessive use of force and torture by security forces, criminalization of human rights defenders, lack of judicial independence and NGOs harassment**. They also urged the government of Venezuela to cooperate with the mandate and **implement the FFM's recommendations regarding accountability**. Moreover, they mentioned that the **COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the abuses by the government**. They also called for States to continue **collaborating with this mandate**.

Several NGOs highlighted that they have also **conducted their own research of crimes against humanity** being committed in Venezuela and that their conclusions are the same as that of the FFM's 2020 report.

One NGO disregarded the work of the FFM and **called upon the Council to demand the lifting of the killer unilateral sanctions**.

*Final Remarks were given by **Mr. Francisco Cox**, Member of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.*

To watch full ID with the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, refer to [UN Web TV](#).