

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 50th SESSION

Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

29-30 June 2022

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**, acknowledged that Venezuela had done some progress in the implementation of previous recommendations made by the Office, in particular those related to justice, police and detention. She encouraged the authorities to take further steps to promote long-term structural changes in the country and called to continue their investigation into the case of the death of former councilman Fernando Albán. Similarly, she urged for independent, comprehensive and timely investigations with due process guarantees that lead to accountability of all perpetrators. In the spirit of current cooperation, she also expressed that the Office expects to be granted access to judicial hearings. She voiced concern over the links between some of the magistrates and political parties in the country and the need to strengthen judicial independence and separation of powers.

The High Commissioner remains concerned about the conditions of detention in centres of detention previously administered by Intelligence Services (Helicoide and Boleita). She urged that those arbitrarily detained regain full liberty, in particular, those whose detention was deemed arbitrary by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. She further highlighted that the restrictions to civic and democratic space in Venezuela must stop as well as the use of anti-terrorism and organized crime legislation against the legitimate work of human rights defenders and media workers. She welcomed the creation of some spaces for dialogue with civil society, including high-level meetings between the authorities and *Foro Cívico*, a group of civil society organizations. She reiterated her support for a Venezuelan-led dialogue between the Government and the opposition. Finally, she said that challenges persist for the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights in the country and the country must redouble actions to ensure that no one is left behind. She urged that all available resources be oriented to address gaps in critical services and infrastructure, such as health centres.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (Country Concerned) expressed concern over the selectivity and politicisation of this initiative. The country welcomed the recognition of Venezuela's efforts and progress in the human rights system, and in particular in the administration of justice. However, it mentioned that the imposition of UCMs was not referred to, dismissing the terrible impact they have had on all the rights of the Venezuelan people. It further argued that the U.S. Government and its allies continue to commit crimes against humanity by resorting to these which negative consequences must be addressed and punished. UCMs aim to destroy the economy and destabilise the country's democracy. On the other hand, the country continues to fight impunity and strengthen the justice system. The country does not acknowledge the High Commissioner's concern about alleged restrictions to the democratic space since the country has held 29 elections in the last 23 years, with broad political participation. Finally, the country reiterated its willingness to continue cooperating with the Council and its mechanisms.

Interactive Dialogue

Some countries and States' organisations such as the **EU, OAS, U.S., Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Canada, Guatemala, Paraguay, Brazil, and Chile** commended the work of the High Commissioner in the country. They further condemned the continued persecution of political opponents, the restrictions on civic space, the silencing of dissenting voices, and the lack of effective action to ensure the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers remains. They underscored the need for continued human rights monitoring of regional and local council elections. They also highlighted the only way out of the ongoing crisis being through a Venezuelan-led political negotiations leading to

credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections. Some speakers called for all involved parties to resume negotiations as soon as possible. In particular, the **U.S.** urged Venezuela to the unconditional release of all persons unjustly detained, including wrongfully detained U.S. nationals. **Saudi Arabia** called for constructive dialogue and cooperation with the concerned state, and assistance in building its capacities. **South Sudan** expressed that the UPR mechanism would be a more appropriate way to address human rights matters in the country.

Other countries such the **China, Syria, Cuba, Russia, Belarus, Eritrea,** and **Algeria** commended Venezuela's implementation of human rights recommendations and efforts as well as the country's cooperation with the Office. Most of the countries highlighted their opposition to this initiative. They expressed their rejection to the politically motivated resolution that promotes interventionist actions against the country. Most condemned the UCMs which affect the full realisation of human rights in the country as well as the sanctions imposed by the U.S., the EU and their satellites to overthrow the country's authorities under human rights pretexts. Finally, they remarked the importance of the principles of non-interference, respect for the country's sovereignty and self-determination.

Most **NGOs** welcomed the work of the Office and further expressed concern over continuing impunity for serious human right violations and international crimes, including possible crimes against humanity in Venezuela, as well as authorities' refusal to implement recommendations. The crisis continues with severe consequences for the most vulnerable people, including the violation of civil liberties and restrictions on the freedom and circulation of information. In addition, they expressed concern over the country's judicial independence and judicial impartiality since most of the newly appointees in the judiciary are closely linked to political parties and others are active members of the military or former members of the ruling party. Other NGOs condemned the increasing attacks against human rights defenders and the criminalization of their work. An NGO highlighted the negative impact of UCMs on the enjoyment of all human rights since these measures have suffocated the country's economy, hindering access to medical supplies and food, fundamentally impacting the lives of women and girls.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (46 country delegations):

Venezuela (Country Concerned), European Union, Organization of American States (OAS), Ecuador, Switzerland, Cuba, Germany, Spain, France, Canada, Paraguay, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Colombia, Russian Federation, China, Uruguay, DPRK, Argentina, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Syrian Arab Republic, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Belarus, Sri Lanka, Georgia, Bolivia, Sweden, Burundi, Yemen, United States, Chile, South Sudan, Cambodia, Australia, Iran, Ireland, Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Brazil, Algeria, Eritrea.

NGOs and other observers that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):

Le Centre pour les droits civils et politiques (Centre for Civil and Political Rights – CCPR), International Service for Human Rights, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, World Organisation Against Torture, International Commission of Jurists, Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, Women's International Democratic Federation, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation.

To watch full meeting refer to UN Web TV, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).