

43° session of the Human Rights Council
General debate item 4
Human Rights situation in Venezuela
Joint Statement
10 March 2020

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 55 countries.

We thank the High Commissioner for her oral update on Venezuela.

We remain alarmed by the systematic violations and abuses of human rights and the dire humanitarian situation. Daily life is now a matter of survival. Nearly 5 million people have left Venezuela, with the vast majority staying within the region. Despite the help and support of host communities, they face many difficulties.

Access to basic amenities, such as electricity, fuel, water, healthcare and social services grows increasingly scarce. 9.3 million Venezuelans – one-third of the population suffer from food insecurity and are in need of assistance. In this regard, we reiterate the need for safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

Indigenous communities, particularly those in the *Arco Minero* region, face extreme adversity, with many forced to abandon their traditional territories and way of life.

We are deeply concerned by the systematic undermining of public institutions in Venezuela, in clear violation of the rule of law and democratic principles. This includes the use of force, repression and intimidation against members of the National Assembly, the incorporation of armed civilians as a component of the military, and attempts to increase control over public universities. The

heightened rhetoric targeting civil society organisations is worrisome and further reduces an already diminished civic space.

The human suffering in Venezuela is rooted in years of misadministration, systematic corruption and deepening authoritarianism. Other States did not cause the thousands of extrajudicial killings, the numerous arbitrary detentions, and the widespread use of torture. They did not cause the torture and death of Captain Acosta, nor the killing of Municipal Councilor Alban, and are not responsible for the arbitrary detention of union leader Rubén González, Judge Afiuni, or National Assembly Members Caro, Marrero and Requesens, among many others. Other States also did not commit the violent acts against Guaidó, peaceful protesters and journalists on February 29 in Barquisimeto.

We reiterate the need to ensure respect for human rights and the urgency in finding a peaceful and democratic solution to this crisis, which is only possible through free, fair and credible presidential elections through impartial electoral institutions, with international observers, media freedom, and the political participation of all Venezuelans. As a Council member, Venezuela must uphold the highest human rights standards. We urge Venezuela to cooperate fully with the Council and its mechanisms, including full engagement with the Fact-finding Mission and with special procedures mandate holders, as well as to implement the recommendations made by High Commissioner and engage genuinely and constructively with her Office.

We remain committed to seeking full accountability for human rights violations and abuses, as well as the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela.