



GROUP OF FRIENDS
IN DEFENSE OF THE
CHARTER OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. JOAQUÍN PÉREZ AYESTARÁN,
AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
DURING THE DEBATE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA
ITEM 132, ENTITLED “THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND THE
PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE, WAR CRIMES, ETHNIC CLEANSING
AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”**

New York, 26 June 2023

Mr. President,

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, and, in this context, reaffirms, from the very outset, the commitment of its Member States to the respect, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. Hence, and in line with the provisions of our domestic legislations, as well as with our relevant international obligations, we express our categorical rejection of the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide, while emphasizing the central role of States as guarantors of the safety, security and wellbeing of their respective populations.

Mr. President,

3. The Group of Friends considers the Charter of the United Nations to be a milestone and a true act of faith in the best of humanity. It is the code of conduct that has ruled international relations between States for the past seventy-eight years, based on timeless principles that, in addition to being the basis of international law, remain today as relevant as they were in 1945.
4. We therefore call upon countries to uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, we also believe that ensuring compliance with and strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental to ensuring the realization of the

three pillars of our Organization, as well as to advancing towards the establishment of a more peaceful and prosperous world and a truly just and equitable world order.

5. Against this background, we express our serious concerns at the current and growing threats to the Charter of the United Nations. This includes attempts to advance non-consensual and controversial notions, such as, *inter alia*, the responsibility to protect. Such approaches, coupled, among others, with the growing resort to unilateralism; to claims of non-existent exceptionalism; to attempts to ignore and even replace the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter with a new set of so-called “rules” that – to say the least – remain unknown; threaten to undermine multilateralism and the UN System as a whole.

Mr. President,

6. Much attention has been devoted to the importance of prevention within the General Assembly and the Chambers of other main bodies of our Organization. And, as a matter of fact, by signing the founding Charter of the United Nations, signatory States committed themselves, among others, to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to promote social progress and to ensure respect for fundamental human rights. Therefore, no one should be opposed the ideals of preventing conflicts or the commission of serious crimes under international law.
7. The Group of Friends considers the Charter of the United Nations to be both a milestone and a true act of faith in the best of humanity. Its provisions, which are legally binding on **all** its signatories, contain also the set of cardinal principles on which we have all voluntarily agreed upon to conduct our international relations: sovereign equality of States, self-determination of peoples, refraining from the threat or use of force against the political independence of any State, and non-intervention into the internal affairs of another State.
8. Hence, we cannot overemphasize that, for our Group of Friends, early warning and prevention must fully respect each and every tenet enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as of the norms of international law. In this context, we consider that, instead of pushing for controversial and divisive approaches that have the potential of further increasing tensions and mistrust around the globe, the international community should make greater use of the tools provided by multilateralism and diplomacy for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, and in the interest of jointly addressing common challenges facing us all, insofar as a global community with a shared future.

Mr. President,

9. The notion of the responsibility to protect may have had truly altruistic intentions. However, time and the course of history have shown us its catastrophic consequences when it is selectively invoked, particularly in countries with vast natural resources, and we shall continue to see more of its negative impacts as this notion continues to be used or arguably abused, for the sake of both promoting and justifying interventionist agendas, disguised by alleged humanitarian purposes, that in no way ultimately respond to its claimed intentions. In addition, the definition and scope of this notion, which is highly politicized and has also raised serious and legitimate concerns for a significant number of States, remains pending within the context of a transparent and inclusive intergovernmental process.
10. Almost twenty (20) years after the adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document, doubts still persist and many questions still remain unanswered, especially those raised by developing nations. For instance, if the true and real intention is to protect the population, why don't we start by both promoting and strengthening international solidarity and cooperation in the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality? Why don't we start by addressing the root causes of conflicts? Why don't we focus on dialogue, negotiation, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect? Why don't we join in calling for an end to the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures? Why don't we all call for accountability for the multiple crimes committed on a daily basis in the State of Palestine?
11. It is the lack of answers and, in many cases, the deafening silence to such doubts and concerns, that demonstrates that the responsibility to protect is riddled with double standards and that this notion only seems to serve agendas of a dubious nature promoted by certain governments that only seek to sustain domination through, *inter alia*, the pursuance of neocolonial practices, including the weaponization of human rights, of the economy and the international financial system, particularly against nations that have sovereignly and freely decided to both own their destiny and remain politically independent.

Mr. President,

12. With these reflections, we conclude by reaffirming our determination to preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, while calling on all responsible members of the international community to desist from such practices and to once and for all promote win-win cooperation



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and engage in good faith, in order to effectively honor the aspirations of “We the Peoples of the United Nations”.

I thank you.