



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 INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE IN CONNECTION WITH  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 77/230, ENTITLED “SITUATION  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC”**

*New York, 28 March 2023*

**Mr. President,**

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the members of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, which, from the very outset, stresses that its participation in today's interactive dialogue should in no way be construed as an endorsement of this interactive dialogue, especially bearing in mind that General Assembly resolution 77/230 was neither adopted by consensus, nor does it adhere to the very purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.
2. It is important for us to make this clear from the very beginning, taking into account the fact that, since its establishment, almost two years ago, our Group of Friends has been insisting on the pressing need to ensure compliance with and strict adherence to the tenets of the UN Charter, both in its letter and spirit, as a prerequisite for making global peace and sustainable development a reality for all peoples of the world.
3. In this context, we seize this opportunity to reiterate both our serious concerns on the increasing threats against the Charter of the United Nations and the urgent need to reaffirm and defend its purposes and principles, as a guarantee of peace and balance in the international order, on the basis of a spirit of inclusivity, respect for diversity, national sovereignty, for the legal equality of States, for the peaceful settlement of disputes, for social progress, and for the attainment of human rights, within the framework of a reinvigorated, effective and inclusive multilateralism.

**Mr. President,**

4. The Member States of our Group of Friends attach utmost importance to the promotion and protection of *all* human rights, both individual and collective, without distinction of levels or categories, and also consider that their promotion



and protection are strengthened on the basis of dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with the principles of impartiality, objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization and non-confrontation, and also taking into account the respect for the principle of sovereignty and for all other obligations derived from the Charter of the United Nations, including the obligation to refrain from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State; within a framework of equality and mutual respect among States.

5. In this context, we stress our serious concern at the continued proliferation of unilateral, country-specific mechanisms that purport to conduct an impartial assessment of the human rights situation in specific States, when their real intention is to weaponize human rights against sovereign States and national governments, with the purpose of, among others, meddling into their internal affairs. Such mechanisms neither respond to the true spirit of human rights, nor do they enjoy the consent of the concerned State. These country-specific reports and resolutions are selective, politically-motivated, divisive, and weaken the human rights institutions, and, for this reason, we call for an end to such approaches.
6. In light of this reality, we insist on dialogue, cooperation, engagement and national ownership in every process whose real objective is the strengthening of human rights, both at the national and international levels, while reaffirming our firm determination to continue working in an active and constructive manner to improve the effectiveness and scope of the Universal System of Human Rights. We consider, in this context, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to be the most appropriate mechanism for engaging in such discussions on human rights situations worldwide.

**Mr. President,**

7. In the context of the Syrian Arab Republic, should there be a true interest in addressing human rights of the people of Syria, we must also address the elephant in the room. For the past 40 years, the entire Syrian people have been subjected to the illegal application of a set of unilateral coercive measures, that were even expanded during the worst part of the COVID-19 pandemic, and which have and continue to massively violate all their human rights, while causing great suffering and untold pains, as has been largely recorded, among others, by UN independent experts. The immediate, complete and unconditional lifting of such cruel and illegal measures would be a first step in the right direction towards redressing the human rights in Syria, improving the humanitarian situation and



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alleviating the prolonged suffering of the Syrian people, especially now, in the aftermath in the tragic earthquake that hit the nation last month.

8. Despite all those challenges and obstacles, we note the efforts of the government of the Syrian Arab Republic in this important field and many others, with the purpose of ensuring the wellbeing of its people. We call on the continuation of such efforts, as well as on the need to ensure that they are nationally-owned, while stressing the primary role of the Syrian government and its institutions in this regard.
9. To conclude, the Group of Friends calls for an end to both the politicization and weaponization of human rights for the purpose of advancing narrow and self-serving agendas, as well as to any practice of double standards that undermine human rights and prevent a harmonious environment and progress in this field, while stressing that the continuation of such approaches and practices constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, which has committed us all to both promote respect for and assistance for the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

I thank you, Mr. President.