



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 ON AGENDA ITEM 161, ENTITLED “REPORT  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY”,  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*New York, 06 November 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.
2. We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the honorable Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), while taking note of the Secretary-General’s report contained in document A/78/26, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/114.

**Mr. President,**

3. Our Group of Friends was created in response to the growing threats to the UN Charter; namely, the indiscriminate resort to unilateralism; the persistent attacks against multilateralism; the continued claiming of non-existent exceptionalism; the reiterated attempts to ignore and even replace the purposes and principles contained in the UN Charter, which remain as relevant today as they were in 1945, with a new set of so-called “rules” that have never been discussed in an inclusive or transparent manner; and the continued resort to selective approaches or accommodating interpretations of the provisions of the UN Charter.
4. In this context, we believe that ensuring compliance and strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the UN Charter is critical, on the one hand, for addressing the complex, emerging and common challenges facing humanity today, and, on the other hand, for ensuring the realization of the three pillars of our Organization, as foreseen in its founding Charter.

**Mr. President,**



5. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established for the purpose of addressing, among others, “questions arising in connection with the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America”, as defined in resolution 2819 (XXVI), adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1971.
6. While this Committee has proven its effectiveness in addressing certain issues, particularly those related to ensuring the safety and security of the United Nations Headquarters, many other issues remain unresolved and, in certain cases, have even been exacerbated. These include visa issues and their timely issuance or renewals, including the limitations posed by those of a single-entry nature; the discriminatory secondary screening processes enforced on selected diplomatic agents and their belongings; the issues related to travel and movement restrictions, including on senior heads of delegations during their official visits to the United Nations Headquarters; the issues of banking; and the issues referred to the inviolability of diplomatic properties.
7. For more than four years now, the General Assembly has expressed its demand that, if the above issues – all of which have for years been part of its agenda and for long been routinely included in the annual reports of this Committee – are not resolved “within a reasonable and finite period of time, serious consideration be given to taking action under Section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement”. It has even been very explicitly recommended to the Secretary-General to “seriously consider and take appropriate action under Section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement”.
8. In this context, let us briefly refer to a procedural question on the dynamics of the consultations and negotiations of both the report of this Committee and the draft resolution submitted annually to the General Assembly on the same subject. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the Chair of the Host Country Committee to increase transparency and inclusiveness in that process this year, including by extending an invitation to non-members of the Committee, in particular to those facing issues on the agenda of this Committee, to participate in the consultations on its annual report.

**Mr. President,**

9. Despite our efforts and continued commitment to engage in good faith, including through the Host Country Committee, it has not been possible to move forward and resolve all these outstanding issues, which are all equally important. Indeed, the continuing challenges in relation to the implementation of the Headquarters



Agreement have resulted in recurrent and even systematic episodes which have, at the same time, become obstacles that continue to deliberately limit the ability of certain Member States to discharge their responsibilities effectively and thus the purposes of the Organization.

10. This is not only an abuse by the Host Country of its role, but also a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, in particular the principle of sovereign equality of States, bearing in mind that this situation is not affecting the UN membership as a whole, but only a limited number of Member States, including from our grouping, with whom, not by mere coincidence, the government of the Host Country has well-known political differences at the bilateral level. We insist that the privilege of hosting the Headquarters of the United Nations shall **not** be misused for taking advantages or advancing political agendas against a particular group of countries, and that the bilateral differences that there may exist between the Host Country and other States of our Organization must in **no** way result in selectiveness or interference in the manner in which the Headquarters Agreement is applied.
11. Therefore, while expressing our appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General to reconcile these issues with the competent authorities of the Host Country, we consider that these efforts have not produced the result that we all would have wished, which is why, in the absence of concrete, practical, meaningful, real or tangible solutions to **all** the issues pending before the Host Country Committee, after what has been a more than reasonable period of time, we believe that the activation of the arbitration procedure provided for in Section 21 of the Host Country Agreement seems to be the only way to ensure both its integrity and the end of selective policies, while allowing us all, without exclusion or discrimination of any sort, and in line with the provisions of Section 27 of the same Agreement, to fully and effectively discharge our responsibilities, without discrimination or limitation of any kind.

**Mr. President,**

12. This is an issue with multiple tracks and we ought to be clear, in order to avoid been deceived by an alleged improvement of the situation on one (01) of those tracks. The question of visas is a very important component of the entire issue, but there are also other equally important issues. This matter must therefore be addressed comprehensively, in a balanced and equal manner, without cherry-picking, in order to avoid being misled by numbers that may give the impression of a relatively and overall good performance in matters related to the implementation of the Host Country Agreement and other relevant international legal instruments.



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13. In light of this cumulative situation that now threatens the integrity of the Host Country Agreement, we therefore respectfully urge the Secretary-General to proceed accordingly, without further delay, in the interests of the United Nations and all that it encompasses, and in accordance with the mandate already given to him in General Assembly resolutions 74/195, 75/146, 76/122 and 77/114. To proceed otherwise would only encourage the continued violation of the Headquarters Agreement by the Host Country.
14. In conclusion, while renewing our commitment to spare no effort to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, we take this opportunity to underline that our request today, as in the past, remains quite simple: we demand that the Host Country not only respect diplomatic customs, the rules of international law and the principles enshrined in the founding Charter of our Organization, regardless of any bilateral differences that may exist, but that it also fully comply with and abide by its legally binding international obligations, including those derived from the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. This, in turn, would ensure the integrity of that instrument, both in letter and in spirit, while allowing us all to fulfil the promise contained in the UN Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.