



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 PURSUANT TO
RESOLUTION 76/262**

New York, 11 September 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. Be it reflected in the records, however, that the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is not joining the following statement, in the interest of preserving the integrity of its current role and responsibilities as the Head of the International Mediation for Mali.

Mr. President,

2. At the outset, allow us to seize this opportunity to welcome the transparency with which the Delegation of the Russian Federation has explained today the motivations behind the casting of its veto right with regards to the draft resolution contained in document S/2023/638.
3. In this context, we ought to recall that our Group of Friends was established in response to the increasing threats against the Charter of the United Nations and, thus, the urgent need to reaffirm and defend its very purposes and principles, which today remain as relevant as in 1945.
4. We refer, among others, to the growing resort to unilateralism; to the attacks against multilateralism; to the claiming of non-existent exceptionalisms; to the attempts to ignore and even substitute the purposes and principles contained in the UN Charter with a new set of so-called "rules" that have never been discussed in an inclusive or transparent manner and that, still to date, remain unknown; and to selective approaches or accommodative interpretations of the provisions of the UN Charter.
5. We consider that such practices are in contradiction with international law and in no way contribute to addressing, through a reinvigorated and inclusive



multilateralism, and guided by the principle of good faith and values such as solidarity and international cooperation, the complex, emerging and common challenges faced in these days by humanity. Instead, they contribute to an increase in uncertainty, distrust, instability and tensions around the world.

Mr. President,

6. The Security Council has been entrusted with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Moreover, Article 24.1 of the founding Charter of our Organization states that, in discharging its duties, the Security Council “shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations”. This means, among others, that the Security Council is obliged to respect core principles of international law, particularly those referred to the sovereignty, the right of peoples to self-determination, the territorial integrity, political unity and independence of the Member States of our Organization.
7. The Group of Friends acknowledges the authority, functions and powers of the Security Council of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security. In this regard, nevertheless, we consider that measures envisaged under Chapter VII should only be taken as a last resort and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We insist that such measures must not be an end in itself. The concerns of the country concerned shall be duly taken into account.

Mr. President,

8. Moreover, it is important not to lose sight and recall the fact that, over two months ago, the Security Council agreed to the termination of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), when unanimously adopting resolution 2690 (2023). This decision came, not only as a response to the request received from the concerned State, mindful of the basic principle of consent, which continues to serve as one of the main bases for the deployment of peacekeeping operations, but also mindful of the assurances provided by the government of the Republic of Mali on its firm commitment with both the full implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers process, and with protecting and ensuring the safety of its people, within its internationally recognized borders.
9. In this context, allow us to pay tribute to all civilian and uniformed personnel serving under the UN flag and deployed throughout the Republic of Mali,

particularly to those nationals our grouping, for their efforts and commitment towards the fulfillment of the noble mandate entrusted on MINUSMA.

10. Moreover, we ought to recall the concerns expressed by the government of the Republic of Mali to seek the termination of MINUSMA, including the existence of a profound crisis of confidence with UN personnel deployed in Mali that, as of today, has not been properly addressed and that, instead, has been deepened, including as a result of the perceived lack of impartiality from members of the Panel of Experts that supports the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), at the request then of the authorities of Bamako.

Mr. President,

11. We should also recall the official request made by the government of the Republic of Mali for the non-renewal of the measures set out in Security Council resolution 2374 (2017), taking into account at least two (02) developments:
 - a. First, that the authorities in Bamako – the concerned party – have officially requested their termination, including as a result of the negative impact they have had on national efforts for ensuring peace, security, stability, development, public services and other basic needs of the Malian people;
 - b. And, second, that the situation on the ground has drastically changed over the past six (06) years and, therefore, there is no longer a legitimate justification for perpetuating the enforcement of such a sanctions regime on Mali, the result of which would have been to further undermine the relationship between the United Nations and the government of Mali.

12. In addition, we also seize this opportunity to reiterate our demand for the complete removal of all unilateral coercive measures that have been imposed against the Republic of Mali, a fellow Member State of our grouping, in flagrant violation of the very tenets enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and of the norms of international law, and which deliberately pose obstacles on the authorities of Bamako for effectively providing for the wellbeing of its people.

Mr. President,

13. In light of all the foregoing, we alert once again of the negative impact of the potential entrenchment of a Cold War era mentality that is based on nothing more



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than confrontation, the deepening of divisions and the imposition of disparate visions and agendas. We are at a juncture in which the strengthening of the rule of law, multilateralism, diplomacy and political dialogue are needed more than ever.

14. We therefore urge all Member States of the Security Council to reach out and engage with each other, in order to serve the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, without double standards, politicization or selective approaches.
15. To conclude, the Group of Friends vows to spare no effort in preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, for which it is necessary, on the one hand, to ensure that unilateral sanctions are lifted in a complete, immediate and unconditional manner, and, on the other, to continue working together and in coordination with the government of Bamako, to ensure that the yearns of peace, security, stability, development and progress of the Malian people, with whom we stand in solidarity, are fully realized.

I thank you, Mr. President.