



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 40th PLENARY MEETING OF THE 10th EMERGENCY
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED
NATIONS ON “ILLEGAL ISRAELI ACTIONS IN OCCUPIED EAST
JERUSALEM AND THE REST OF THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN
TERRITORY”**

New York, 27 October 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.

Mr. President,

2. The Member States of our Group of Friends have been following with grave concern the latest developments in the Middle East region, particularly the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this context, allow us from the very outset to express our condolences to the families and loved ones of all innocent civilians who have lost their lives during the course of the past twenty (20) days in this latest regrettable spiral of violence, death and destruction. We also wish a full and speedy recovery to all those left injured or wounded.
3. We, as peace loving nations that strictly abide by the norms of international law, strongly condemn all violence and hostilities directed against civilians. We stress, in this regard, and in light of the continued deterioration of the situation on the ground, including as a result of the continuation of shelling and airstrikes, the urgency of protecting civilians and averting the further loss of human life, particularly by bringing an immediate, durable and fully respected halt to the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and ensuring that emergency humanitarian aid reaches the civilian population in need at this dire time. International humanitarian law must be upheld and fully complied with.
4. Consequently, we urgently call for an immediate ceasefire and a halt to all acts of violence and hostilities, particularly those directed against civilians, including



women and children, and civilian objects and infrastructure, including, among others, hospitals, schools, refugee shelters, and food warehouses. On the eve of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we call for the full respect of all human rights, particularly to life and health. We also call for restraint and, thus, urge an end to all inflammatory rhetoric and dehumanizing language, which in no way serve ongoing political and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation on the ground and only further stoke tensions and violence, while further endangering human lives.

Mr. President,

5. In line with the Special Communiqué issued by our Group of Friends on 17 October, we seize this opportunity to renew our call on responsible members of the international community, particularly those who may have influence, as well as the Security Council of the United Nations, in pursuance of its duty to maintain international peace and security, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, to urge Israel:
 - a. To heed to the latest calls of the Secretary-General of the United Nations;
 - b. To take the path of international legality, including by ensuring full compliance and adherence, among others, to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions, its Additional Protocol I and all other relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
 - c. To put an immediate end to the ongoing military aggression and the inhumane siege of the Gaza Strip, in order to avoid a catastrophe and the total collapse of critical infrastructure, which will inevitably lead to more civilian casualties, widespread hunger, disease, poverty and even greater human suffering and despair, thus, further deepening the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza;
 - d. To ensure the rapid and unhindered access and distribution of desperately needed humanitarian assistance, including crucial life-saving supplies, such as fuel, food, medicines and water;
 - e. To allow UNRWA to operate safely and effectively, without obstructions, alongside other humanitarian actors on the ground and to cease attacks on UN and other humanitarian and medical personnel; and



- f. To immediately abrogate its order for the civilian population to evacuate all areas in northern Gaza, as well as any other measure aimed at the forced transfer or mass displacement of the civilian population in Gaza.

Mr. President,

6. Our Group of Friends regrets that the Security Council of the United Nations has been prevented from exercising its duties with regards to the maintenance of international peace and security, despite the repeated and collective call of the Arab Group and the international community for it to demand a comprehensive ceasefire, the protection of civilians, as well as fairness and justice. We trust, however, that this General Assembly will unequivocally fulfill its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, including by adopting relevant measures aimed at redressing the current situation, particularly aimed at ensuring the protection of all civilians and the respect for other legal obligations, including those derived from international humanitarian law. We express, in this context, our support to draft resolution A/ES-10/L.24, submitted by the Delegation of Jordan, as Chair of the Arab Group, and urge all responsible members of the international community to support this text.
7. Moreover, we seize this opportunity to once again call for the release of all civilians, as well as Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including children, and for the adoption of urgent measures aimed at ensuring, on one hand, the safety and wellbeing of all civilians, and, on the other one, the provision of international protection for the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the basis of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report from 2018 to the General Assembly of the United Nations, as well as of the provisions of Security Council resolution 904 (1994).
8. Similarly, we also express our grave concern about the escalating violence and attacks against the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We demand a halt to the systematic violence, human rights violations, provocations and incitement, as well as to all settlement activities and annexation measures, and to all other breaches of the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. These grave violations must end and, at this stage, we cannot overemphasize, that a further dangerous destabilization of the situation must be prevented, including as part of efforts to prevent a spillover effect into the entire Middle East region.

Mr. President,



9. In line with our principled and historic positions, we reaffirm our firm commitment to the cause of Palestine – a fellow member from our Group of Friends – and its people in their just and legitimate struggle to achieve their inalienable rights, including to self-determination, freedom, the return of Palestine refugees and justice. We emphasize, in this context, the importance, as never before, of creating a credible political horizon for the realization of a just and lasting solution to the Question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in full accordance with international law, the relevant UN resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. We stress the urgency of efforts in this regard and aimed at actualizing the overwhelming international consensus on the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders.
10. Moreover, we stress that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, and call for urgent efforts to address the root causes of this protracted and tragic conflict, to ensure accountability, and to promote and support meaningful efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.
11. To conclude, we reaffirm our full commitment to preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, a historical treaty that constitutes a true act of faith in the best of humanity, and which, to date, although under attack, keeps us all bound, among others, to our promise of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to ensuring respect for the dignity and worth of the human person. Let us act collectively and responsibly, without delay, to uphold our solemn duties under the UN Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.