



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

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. SAMUEL MONCADA, AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF
VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING THE 46th 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, 15 December 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, whose Member States appreciate the convening of this important and timely meeting.

Mr. President,

2. It has now been more than two months since the beginning of this regrettable spiral of violence, death and destruction that has caused the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians, particularly women and children, including over a hundred humanitarian and UN personnel, as well as the destruction of hundreds of homes in the Gaza Strip. It has been two months in which the entire Palestinian civilian population of the Gaza Strip has been living in a true “hell on earth”, as described by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. After more than two months into the latest escalation of this protracted conflict, it has become clear that there is no safe place in the Gaza Strip for the civilian population, who remain besieged and indiscriminately bombed and shelled, day and night, from air, land and sea, along with cruel ground operations, by the Israeli occupying military forces. No space or civilian infrastructure is safe from airstrikes. Refugee camps, sheltering over 1,300,000 Palestinian civilians, of the over 1.9 million Palestinians forcibly displaced, have been repeatedly targeted. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA has even warned that, as fact and figures demonstrate, the United Nations flag no longer provides protection to civilians in Gaza. Schools and hospitals have not been spared and are also under constant attack. The lives of babies, children, women, men, elderly, sick and wounded, all equally endangered. International humanitarian law has been entirely trampled.
4. This entire situation can only beg the questions: where are those who in other instances would have already referred to the notion of the responsibility to protect



in the interest of the wellbeing and the human rights of millions of Palestinians subjected to years of aggression under Israel's illegal occupation? How many more times will we witness the use of the veto in the Security Council to shield Israel, the Occupying Power, from accountability for the crimes it is openly and systematically perpetrating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem?

Mr. President,

5. Today, the international community is witnessing a carnage against the Palestinian people, and, although we regret to admit, the body entrusted by the Charter of the United Nations with ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security has repeatedly been prevented, as latest as last Friday, from fully and effectively exercising its duties and, as a result, has fallen short in adopting a much-needed resolution unequivocally demanding a ceasefire. We cannot turn a blind eye to this humanitarian catastrophe that is unfolding before us. We need to act and we need to do it now, in order to avert further loss of human life. As the Commissioner-General of UNRWA has correctly stated, the humanitarian situation is now untenable.
6. In this context, the Member States of our Group of Friends cannot overemphasize the importance of ensuring full respect for and adherence to the provisions of international humanitarian law, including the principles of proportionality and distinction, as well as the safety and security of all civilians, especially children, and of all humanitarian and medical personnel on the ground and journalists, in line with relevant provisions of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including A/ES-10/21, sagely adopted by this body in the face of this ongoing crisis.
7. The situation is truly at a "breaking point", as stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, when invoking the provisions of Article 99 of the Charter, a step we commend and consider to be in the right direction, in light of the seriousness and continued deterioration of the situation on the ground. We therefore reiterate our demand for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the ongoing atrocities. Not only is this necessary, in the name of humanity, but also for ensuring that humanitarian assistance, including crucial life-saving supplies, such as enough fuel, *inter alia*, for conducting basic humanitarian operations, as well as food, medicines and clean water, enters the Gaza Strip and that it can be swiftly distributed to all those in desperate need.
8. Similarly, we also call for the adoption of urgent measures aimed at ensuring, on one hand, the safety and wellbeing of all civilians, and, on the other one, for

facilitating the provision of international protection for the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, 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 in other relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

9. We also renew our call for ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access to be granted consistently, safely and to scale, in order to meet the urgent needs created by the catastrophe in Gaza, which is, needless to say, a truly man-made crisis. This is key for avoiding the total collapse of critical civilian 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 catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza, half of the population of which is largely comprised of children and Palestine refugees, and over 85% of it which has now been internally displaced.
10. Moreover, we stress once again that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Question of Palestine in all its aspects, in accordance with international law, can only be achieved by peaceful means, and therefore call for urgent efforts to address the root causes of this protracted and tragic conflict, which has years of occupation and its subsequent consequences at its core, and to ensure accountability. Today, more than ever, we need to urgently create a credible political horizon leading to the realization of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, through the attainment of the independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine, on the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital; that is, a political horizon leading to the realization of the two-State solution, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.
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 persistent 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, including by implementing resolution A/ES-10/L.27, which was overwhelmingly adopted by this General Assembly just earlier this week.



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I thank you, Mr. President.