



*Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Samuel Moncada,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations*

on behalf of the

“Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations”

during the consideration of Agenda Item 69 of the Program of the General Assembly, entitled

“Report of the Human Rights Council”

New York, 29 October 2021

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Mr. President,

1. It is an honor for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the Member States of the “Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations”, made up of Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, the State of Palestine, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Syria, Zimbabwe, and my own country, Venezuela.
2. At the outset, we congratulate Ambassador Nazhat Shameem for her leadership at the head of the Human Rights Council during its fifteenth cycle, corresponding to 2021, and express appreciation for the presentation of the report of this body to the General Assembly, in accordance with its Resolution 60/251, of which we have taken due note.

Mr. President,

3. The Group of Friends considers the Charter of the United Nations to be a milestone and a true act of faith on the best of humanity. It is the code of conduct that has ruled international relations between States for the past 76 years, on the basis of timeless principles; such as, self-determination of peoples, sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and refrainment from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. These are all basic norms and principles that, apart from being the foundation for modern-day international law, today remain as relevant as back in 1945.
4. In addition, we consider that ensuring compliance with and strict adherence to both the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental for ensuring the realization of the three pillars of our Organization, as well as for advancing towards the establishment of a more peaceful and prosperous world and of a truly just and equitable world order.
5. In this context, we express our serious concern at the current and growing threats against the Charter of the United Nations. 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 to selective approaches or accommodative interpretations of the provisions of the UN Charter. These practices have resulted, as history and facts prove, in massive violations of human rights and other tenets of international law, which, in many instances, remain unpunished to this very date.

Mr. President,

6. Seventy-six years ago, the international community rallied around a series of common purposes and principles, all contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and declared their commitment to defend life, freedom, independence, justice and human rights, the latter being, precisely, one of the three fundamental pillars of our Organization. Hence, achieving the full enjoyment of human rights in all their dimensions represents a noble ideal and objective that is today more relevant than ever.

7. The Group of Friends attaches a supreme value to the promotion and protection of all human rights, both individuals and collectives, including the right to development, without distinction of levels or categories, and considers also that their promotion and protection is enhanced on the basis of dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with the principles of impartiality, objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization and non-confrontation, and within a framework of equality and mutual respect between States.
8. In this regard, we reject all kinds of double standards that undermine human rights and prevent a harmonious environment and progress in this field, and we are concerned by the proliferation of unilateral mechanisms that pretend to conduct an impartial assessment of the human rights situation in specific States, especially when they do not count with their due consent and participation. The continuation of this practice infringes upon the spirit that must guide the higher ideals in favor of the genuine promotion and protection of human rights, while representing also a clear violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, which has committed us to promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind. We recall, in this regard, that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council is the proper mechanism to discuss in a constructive manner human rights situation.
9. To conclude, while calling for an end to the politicization of human rights, the Group of Friends reaffirms its willingness to continue contributing to the institutional strengthening of the Human Rights Council, on the basis of an approach that promotes multilateralism, and that it is complemented in a transparent manner with other United Nations instances. If we really seek to advance universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, we must rely on consensual political and diplomatic mechanisms for their promotion and protection, while preventing that the name of our Organization and the spirit that should guide its endeavors be misused for objectives that are contrary to the purposes and principles enshrined in its very own founding Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.