



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

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING THE
90th PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN
CONNECTION WITH AGENDA ITEM 60, ENTITLED “USE OF THE
VETO”**

New York, 19 July 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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,

5. We are participating today in this debate as a result of the activation of the mechanism established in General Assembly resolution 76/262, although this plenary meeting we consider may be rather unnecessary, as the core of the issue



itself has already been overtaken by reality, to some degree, following the decision announced on 13 July 2023 by the government of the Syrian Arab Republic with regards to the granting of permission to the United Nations and its relevant Specialized Agencies for using the Bab al-Hawa crossing point for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian civilian population in need in the northwest region of the country, for a six months period.

6. Nevertheless, we 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/2023/506.
7. That being said, we would like to stress that any outcome of the Security Council must always guarantee the full respect to the sovereignty, the right of peoples to self-determination, the territorial integrity, political unity and independence of the Member States of our Organization, including that of the Syrian Arab Republic, while taking into account the positions and legitimate concerns of the concerned States themselves, in order to ensure their full ownership of all processes.
8. In this context, we seize this opportunity to also emphasize the importance of ensuring full adherence to the core principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182, mindful of the fact that it is only through full coordination and national ownership, in a context of maximum transparency, that humanitarian activities will count on the legitimacy needed for avoiding any risk of being politically exploited by external actors.
9. Similarly, we echo the request of the government of the Syrian Arab Republic to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to supervise and facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid in the northwest region of that brotherly nation, who is also a fellow Member State of our grouping, and with whom we stand in full solidarity.

Mr. President,

10. In this regard, we express our firm support to all measures anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law, and the respect to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, that are truly aimed at improving the humanitarian situation in Syria and at alleviating the prolonged suffering of the Syrian people. For instance, a positive step in that direction would be the complete and immediate lifting of all unilateral coercive measures that have been illegally and cruelly applied against the entire Syrian people on and off for the past 40



years, which were even expanded during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and had a detrimental effect to the rescue and recovery efforts in the aftermath of the tragic earthquake of earlier this year.

11. It shall be recalled that these so-called sanctions have had a devastating impact on the lives of the Syrian people as a whole and their livelihoods, given their systematic nature and broad scope, while also hindering the very work of the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies on the ground, impeding the broadening of humanitarian activities and the implementation of early recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, as called for in Security Council resolutions 2585 (2021), 2642 (2022) and 2672 (2023).
12. It must also be underscored that the illegal application of these unilateral sanctions impedes the full achievement of economic and social development of nations subjected to them, particularly in developing countries, as Syria. This reality, coupled with the interference in the internal and sovereign affairs of States, apart from representing a massive violation of human rights and producing great suffering and pain on entire populations, directly exacerbate conflicts and crises, including through the creation of what is later referred to as “man-made humanitarian crises” that were actually deliberately created, precisely, by the very promoters of such illegal measures, which have now become structural factors and fundamental drivers of contemporary crises.

Mr. President,

13. In light of all the foregoing, we alert of the negative impact of the potential entrenchment of a Cold War era mentality that is based on nothing more 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. We therefore urge all Member States of the Security Council to fulfill their responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; to both seize and rise to the moment; to reach out and engage with each other; to show greater flexibility and reach compromises that truly serve the purpose of maintaining international peace and security and of ensuring the wellbeing of all of our peoples, without double standards, politicization of any kind or selective approaches that ultimately undermine the important tasks entrusted to that body.
14. 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



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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 to ensure that the cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic, with the consent and in full coordination with its government, serves its actual purpose, while avoiding any misuse or politicization of the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people.

I thank you, Mr. President.