



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 JOINT GENERAL DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEMS 54, 55,  
56, 57 AND 58, REFERRED TO DECOLONIZATION, WITHIN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

*New York, 02 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.
2. This being the first time we take the floor at this current session, allow us at the very outset to convey our best wishes to you, as you assume the Chairmanship of the Fourth Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau, while looking forward to working closely throughout this 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. Rest assured of the constructive and active engagement of our delegations.

**Mr. President,**

3. Decolonization is one of those files in which the United Nations has indeed made great progress. There are multiple success stories, as demonstrated by the expansion of the membership of our Organization. Today we are a total of 193 Member States, in comparison to 51, when the United Nations was established back in 1945. Nevertheless, the task remains uncompleted: 17 non-self-governing territories, plus Palestine and Puerto Rico, still await on us for ensuring that their inalienable right to self-determination is fully realized. Over sixty (60) years have passed since the adoption of landmark General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Nevertheless, much still remains to be done, in order to truly and effectively achieve the eradication of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.
4. In this context, we seize this opportunity, from the very outset, to reiterate our historic and principled positions on decolonization items, to express our firm adherence to the provisions of the “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples”, and, most importantly, to reaffirm our unwavering moral and political commitment with the full realization of the



inalienable rights of each and every Non-Self-Governing Territory, whose situation has been seriously impacted by the current global crisis, while calling on the Occupying and Administering Powers to actively engage in a dialogue that would allow us to finally reach a fair and comprehensive solution to each of these pending questions.

5. The Member States of our Group of Friends are conscious, though, that the only way to move forward in this important field is if all concerned parties, both Administering and Occupying Powers and Non-Self-Governing Territories, renew their commitment and political will towards that end. And, while nowadays focus is being put on other pressing challenges, the international community must not lose sight of the questions referred to decolonization, as the yearns for freedom and justice of millions of people have already been protracted for way too long, while negatively impacting both the rule of law at the international level and the very purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; namely, the principle of “equal rights and self-determination of peoples”, as stipulated in Article 1 (2).
6. Similarly, we also seize this opportunity to renew our call to the Administering and Occupying Powers to respect the inalienable right of all Non-Self-Governing Territories to their natural resources, as well as their right to establish and maintain control over their current and future exploitation. Likewise, we urge the Administering and Occupying Powers to avoid the pursuance of economic or other activities, including of a military nature, that have the potential to negatively affect the interests and well-being of the peoples of said territories.
7. Moreover, we call upon colonialist countries to assume their responsibilities for and pay full compensation for the economic, social and cultural consequences of their occupation, bearing in mind the right of all people who were or are still subjected to colonial rule or occupation to receive fair compensation for the human and material losses they suffered as a result of colonial rule or occupation.

**Mr. President,**

8. More than twenty (20) years have passed since the last Non-Self-Governing Territory changed its status and became not only a sovereign and independent State, but also a full member of our Organization. Today, when we find ourselves immersed in the Fourth International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism, we ask ourselves: how much more time has to pass before the yearns and legitimate aspirations for peace, justice, self-determination and freedom of the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, plus Palestine and Palestine, that remain in our



agenda can be carried out? How many more decades do we have to declare before we, once and for all, eliminate colonialism in all its forms and manifestations?

9. We underline, in this context, that the very existence of colonialism in any form or manifestation, as well as its modern neocolonial practices, including economic exploitation, unilateral coercive measures, limitation of access to new technologies and other attempts to limit development, as well as attempts to eradicate variety of cultures and civilizations, and other forms of hegemonism and of colonial and neocolonial restraint of the freedom of national development, are incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore express our categorical rejection of the blatant and detrimental use of colonial and modern neocolonial practices in international relations.
10. Moreover, it is worth recalling that the current International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism is scheduled to end in the year 2030, when the international community should have achieved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At that time, we will have to account, among others, on the progress made towards, as stated in General Assembly resolution 70/1, the removal of “the obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial or foreign occupation”. Bearing in mind that the promise is, and continues to be, to leave no one behind, and that colonialism adversely affects the economic and social development of peoples, as well as the full enjoyment of their human rights, we hope that this synchrony can be seized for effectively advancing in the decolonization agenda during the seven (07) years ahead of us.
11. Furthermore, we express our solidarity with those peoples around the world that have historically been subjected to years of exploitation and domination, particularly from foreign powers with colonial and supremacist mentalities, including through the application of modern neocolonial practices, such as the plundering of natural resources. In this context, we make vows for their legitimate demands to be canalized in a peaceful and to be addressed in timely manner, confident that this shall enable them to realize their full potentials, as they struggle to fully pursue their respective national development plans
12. 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.



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Hence, we reiterate our full support and solidarity with the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, as well as with the heroic peoples of Palestine and Puerto Rico, in their struggle for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination, as well as our firm determination to continue participating in an active and constructive manner in all efforts aimed at advancing towards the achievement of a world free of colonialism, with a view to settling once and for all our pending debt with humanity regarding the definitive conclusion of the decolonization process around the world.

13. It is our moral duty to ensure that decolonization continues to be one of the top priorities of the United Nations, and to continue raising awareness, among others, of the negative impact of colonialism, transatlantic slave trade and its lasting consequences, which nowadays are amplified by an escalation and proliferation of modern neocolonial practices.

I thank you, Mr. President.