



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

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HECTOR CONSTANT ROSALES, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS IN DEFENSE OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM) OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**

*Geneva, 09 October 2023*

**Madam 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.

**Madam President,**

2. Our Group of Friends attaches particular importance to the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in view of the fact that the political, economic, social and environmental dynamics of recent decades, at the global level, have triggered major emergencies requiring international protection for thousands of people who are forced to leave their places of origin for reasons beyond their control.
3. Our Group of Friends acknowledges that the UNHCR's activities under the authority of the General Assembly, correspond to the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to persons of concerns to UNHCR who fall within the scope of its Statute, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. UNHCR must also work towards seeking durable solutions, including by planning for responds from the outset of refugee situations, eliminating the root causes as the most effective way to achieve solutions and assisting governments in fulfilling their international obligations.
4. In this context, and in light of the gravity of the situation on the ground, we seize this opportunity from the very outset to call for the urgent adoption of measures aimed at providing international protection to the heroic Palestinian people, who have endured years of brutal aggression, until the prevailing cycle of impunity is brought to an end and those responsible for these heinous crimes are brought to international justice.

5. Moreover, we consider that the best guarantee for ensuring sustained progress towards a more peaceful and secure world, in which development and human rights are a reality, is the full adherence to the spirit under which the United Nations was established, as clearly enshrined in the principles and purposes of its founding Charter, including the promotion of friendly relations among nations, on the basis of respect for the principle of equal rights, self-determination and the settlement of disputes through dialogue and cooperation. These political foundations are increasingly under threat by the advent of unilateral tendencies that in a progressive manner are attempting to undermine the validity of multilateralism as the formula *par excellence* for addressing the great global challenges and threats of today's world, which, in many cases, are common to all of us equally.

**Madam President,**

6. Our Group of Friends sees unilateralism, extremism, exceptionalist conceptions and foreign interventionism as one of the main root causes of the global crises that generate massive human displacements around the world, whether internal, international migration, mixed, or of persons requiring international protection in accordance with International Conventions in force, the main cause being political instability in some regions of the world. In many cases the main push factors for such displacements have been induced due to interest of an economic or nature. All of it happens without taking into account the negative impact of such approaches on the human rights of the population subject to such aggressions, including those most at risk of vulnerability.
7. In the same vein, we seize this opportunity to insist that the political, economic and social impact of the systematic campaign of application of unilateral coercive measures against entire peoples, in contravention of all norms of international law, represents the most sophisticated cause of global emergencies of human displacement, by depriving more than one-third of the humanity from the full enjoyment and realization of their human rights, including to food, health, vaccines and medical treatment, financial services, education, while also infringing upon the economy of the countries subjected to such criminal measures that even undermine the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
8. Moreover, human action, based on a model of unequal economic accumulation and the exploitation of resources, has exacerbated the current climate catastrophe, threatening the fragile balance of coexistence between humans and nature, which has generated natural phenomena of atypical proportions, such as floods, heat or cold waves, hurricanes, and unprecedented disasters. Unfortunately, these

circumstances also result in mobility crises that must be addressed through solidarity and cooperation, on the basis of a global, coherent and concerted response, within the framework of an effective and inclusive multilateralism, a commitment to which we ratify our full support and in which the United Nations is called upon to play a leading role.

**Madam President,**

9. While welcoming and encouraging the work of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian assistance, including that of the Office of the UNHCR, the Group of Friends insists that the best guarantee for the success of its mandate is ensuring full adherence to the core principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, in accordance with the guiding principles established 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 their activities will count on the legitimacy needed for avoiding any risk of being politically exploited by external actors, which would ultimately undermine trust and call into question the credibility of the Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds of the United Nations System.
10. The Group of Friends recognizes that one of the primary objectives of the work of UNHCR is to facilitate access to durable solutions, which includes voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution in the majority of refugee situations. The overriding priorities are to promote the enabling conditions for voluntary repatriation in full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, to ensure the exercise of a free and informed choice and to mobilize support, including financial support, to underpin repatriation.
11. In this regard, we emphasize that the assistance work of the United Nations, in the context of humanitarian emergencies, constitutes one of the most critical tasks of the Organization, both because of the high demand for financial resources, and also because of the technical expertise and high-risk operational capacity that it requires on the ground, generally as an emergency, which also makes it particularly sensitive in the political and social spheres. Therefore, we urge all parties involved in such operations to adhere their functions and operate in strict compliance with national and international legislation on this subject and to prevent their work from being misused for obtaining economic or commercial advantages by some sectors interested not only in profiting from human tragedies, but also in prolonging them indefinitely; an immoral practice that we strongly condemn.



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12. The Group of Friends calls to the international community, including donors and international humanitarian actors to provide adequate and urgent humanitarian assistance, including with the allocation of voluntary unearmarked contributions. We encourage international partners to contribute adequately, flexibly, consistently and predictably towards hosting, protecting and assisting refugees.
13. To conclude, the Group of Friends appreciates the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and reaffirms its willingness to collaborate at the national, regional and international levels, while reaffirming the importance of addressing the issues inherent to its mandate from a perspective of human rights, dialogue and cooperation, and avoiding at all times the politicization of the sacred figure of refugee.

I thank you, Madam President.