

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE
DEBATE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 129,
ENTITLED “THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND THE
PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE, WAR CRIMES, ETHNIC CLEANSING
AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”**

New York, 01 July 2024

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, and, in this context, reaffirms, from the very outset, the commitment of its Member States to the respect, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to which they attach utmost importance.
2. We express, in this context, our categorical rejection of the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide, while emphasizing the central role of States as guarantors of the safety, security and wellbeing of their respective populations.

Mr. President,

3. The Group of Friends considers the Charter of the United Nations to be the code of conduct that has ruled international relations between States for the past seventy-eight years, based on timeless principles that, in addition to being the basis of international law, remain today as relevant as they were in 1945.
4. We therefore call upon countries to uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, we also believe that ensuring compliance with and strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental to ensuring the realization of the three pillars of our Organization, as well as to advancing towards the establishment of a more peaceful and prosperous world and a truly just and equitable world order. We shall avoid, in this context, any sort of accommodative interpretation of this unique and foundational framework of the United Nations.



5. Against this background, we seize this opportunity to reiterate our serious concerns at the current and ever-growing threats to the Charter of the United Nations. This includes attempts to advance non-consensual and controversial notions, such as, *inter alia*, the responsibility to protect. Such approaches, coupled, among others, with the growing resort to unilateralism; to claims of non-existent exceptionalism; to attempts to ignore and even replace the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter with a new set of so-called “rules” that – to say the least – remain unknown; threaten to undermine multilateralism, the rule of law, particularly at the international level, and the UN System as a whole.
6. Moreover, we also note that there is no intergovernmentally agreed basis for the position and mandate of the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. The biased reports produced by this Office, which intends to praise the notion in question, contribute in no way to providing answers to the many questions that still arise from the lack of a clear definition or scope, while completely and perhaps deliberately ignoring the tragic consequences resulting from its application in the recent past, which ultimately validates the legitimate concerns that still prevail.
7. In this context, we seize this opportunity to express our concern at the discontinuation of the previously prevailing practice of requesting Member States’ opinions on the topics for the forthcoming reports of the Secretary-General. Such an approach leads to non-transparent and further bias in the work on the notion of the responsibility to protect. Instead of working on the aspects of importance to Member States, like studying the cases of misuse of this notion, the Secretariat now exercises full discretion in this regard, without having a clear mandate for proceeding along those lines.

Mr. President,

8. Much attention has been devoted to the importance of prevention within the General Assembly and the Chambers of other main bodies of our Organization. And, as a matter of fact, by signing the founding Charter of the United Nations, States committed, among others, to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to promote social progress and to ensure respect for fundamental human rights. Therefore, the ideals of preventing conflicts or the commission of serious crimes remain very relevant today.
9. However, the emphasis put on prevention in the most recent report of the Secretary-General, in the context of the notion of the responsibility to protect, seems to be completely artificial. It is rather unfair to claim that the so-called root causes of the violations and abuses to be addressed through the notion of the



responsibility to protect, are internal problems in the concerned States, including due to a lack of security, good governance, etc. We all know, for instance, that this is not the case in those countries where this notion has been applied in the past, and that such conditions and the ensuing crises were rather a direct consequence of foreign interventionism and obscure plans to serve geopolitical interests of others; not of the peoples claimed to be protected in application of this infamous notion.

10. We therefore call to draw lessons from the experiences of the recent past in which this notion of the responsibility to protect has been invoked, so that we can ensure that the resulting tragedies never happen again. We propose to turn to the core values and principles that unite us, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, instead of allocating resources, when our Organization is facing a well-known crisis of liquidity, for producing divisive and non-mandated reports and advancing notions of a speculative and dubious nature.

Mr. President,

11. The Group of Friends considers the Charter of the United Nations to be both a milestone and a true act of faith in the best of humanity. Its provisions, which are legally binding on **all** its signatories, contain also the set of cardinal principles on which we have all voluntarily agreed upon to conduct our international relations: sovereign equality of States, respect for territorial integrity, self-determination of peoples, refraining from the threat or use of force against the political independence of any State, and non-intervention into the internal affairs of another State. Such commitments, as enshrined in the founding Charter of our Organization, must be implemented in good faith.
12. Hence, we cannot overemphasize that, for our Group of Friends, early warning and prevention must fully respect each and every tenet enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as of the norms of international law. In this context, we consider that, instead of pushing for controversial and divisive approaches that have the potential of further increasing tensions and mistrust around the globe, the international community should make greater use of the tools provided by multilateralism and diplomacy for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the applicable norms of international law and with the due consent of parties to a dispute, and in the interest of jointly addressing common challenges facing us all, insofar as a global community with a shared future.

Mr. President,



13. The notion of the responsibility to protect may have had truly altruistic intentions. However, time and the course of history have shown us its catastrophic consequences when it is selectively invoked, particularly in countries with vast natural resources, and we shall continue to see more of its negative impacts, as this notion continues to be used or arguably abused, for the sake of both promoting and justifying interventionist agendas, disguised by alleged humanitarian purposes, that in no way ultimately respond to its claimed intentions. In addition, the definition and scope of this notion, which is highly politicized and has also raised serious and legitimate concerns for a significant number of States, remains unclear.
14. Almost twenty (20) years after the adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document, doubts still persist and many questions still remain unanswered, especially those raised by developing nations. For instance, if the true and real intention is to protect the population, why don't we start by both promoting and strengthening international solidarity and cooperation in the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality? Why don't we start by addressing the root causes of conflicts? Why don't we focus on dialogue, negotiation, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect? Why don't we join in calling for an end to the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures? Why don't we all call for accountability for the multiple crimes committed on a daily basis in the State of Palestine against Palestinians?
15. It is the lack of answers and, in many cases, the deafening silence to such doubts and concerns, that demonstrates that the responsibility to protect is riddled with double standards.
16. The ongoing carnage in Palestine is, perhaps, and painfully, the greatest case on point, as many of the advocates of this nefarious notion are the very same ones defending the Occupying Power and shielding it from its responsibilities, ultimately further prolonging both the suffering of the Palestinian people and the prevailing cycle of impunity. All this serves to prove, among others, that this notion only seems to serve agendas of a dubious nature, promoted by certain governments, particularly from the Global North, that only seek to sustain domination in the Global South through, *inter alia*, the pursuance of neocolonial practices, including the weaponization of human rights, of the economy and the international financial system, particularly against nations that have sovereignly, freely decided to both own their destiny and remain politically independent, and not to allow certain countries from the developed world to intervene in their internal affairs.

Mr. President,



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

17. With these reflections, we conclude by reaffirming our determination to preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, while calling on all responsible members of the international community to desist from such practices and to once and for all promote win-win cooperation and engage in good faith, in order to effectively honor the aspirations of “We the Peoples of the United Nations”.

I thank you.