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ESTEEMED MEMBER STATES OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL,

As you gather in Geneva for the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council, I write to you on behalf of 53,677 activists from over 131 countries¹ to ask you to seize this opportunity to support the victims of the unprecedented human rights crisis in Venezuela and create a Commission of Inquiry that offers truth and justice to its victims.

THE CRISIS IN VENEZUELA DEEPENS

Amnesty International has documented the wide range of grave human rights violations people in Venezuela have been suffering and enduring for years, including extrajudicial executions, torture and other ill treatment, politically motivated arbitrary detentions, abusive use of force, enforced disappearances, lack of an independent judiciary and due process guarantees, and violations to the rights to food and health. Our research has led us to believe that the Venezuelan authorities have committed crimes against humanity. They should answer to an independent and impartial judicial body.

If our rigorous and impartial research is not evidence enough of just how dire the situation is, surely the 4.3 million people who have fled the massive human rights violations in Venezuela will convey the gravity of the crisis.

VICTIMS HAVE A HUMAN RIGHT TO TRUTH AND JUSTICE

Victims of this crisis have no access to effective remedies at the national or regional level. If you dare raise concerns in Venezuela, or seek justice for crimes committed by the authorities, you might be putting yourself at high risk of violent reprisals, including arbitrary detention, torture and even extrajudicial executions. The generalized lack of independence of the judiciary, in a context of a systematic and generalized policy of repression against dissent, has given way to the abusive and arbitrary use of criminal law as a tool to stop and prosecute people who criticize Maduro's government.

This makes an effective international response led by the Human Rights Council crucial.

DON'T ALLOW IMPUNITY TO PREVAIL: CREATE A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

After years of progressive isolation, in the past few months we have seen heightened international scrutiny of the situation in Venezuela, including the visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in June, her updates and report to the Council, and the tenuous presence of staff from her Office in the country. However, human rights violations and international crimes continue unabated, and Maduro's government has shown its unwillingness to comply with the commitments made with High Commissioner and her Office. This underlines the need to complement her mandate with a robust and independent mechanism: a Commission of Inquiry.

Given the gravity, and continued deterioration of the human rights crisis in Venezuela, coupled with the absence of options for monitoring and accountability at national and regional levels, Amnesty International, over a hundred

¹ Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Venezuelan and international organizations and thousands of activists around the world call on you to create a Commission of Inquiry for Venezuela.

We trust your meaningful action will send a strong message to victims and perpetrators alike that the international community will not allow impunity to prevail in Venezuela.

Yours sincerely,



Kumi Naidoo
Secretary General