



AI Index: AMR 53/4730/2021
24 September 2021

-Check against delivery-

JOINT ORAL STATEMENT
Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch

Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

VENEZUELA: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE REQUIRED IN THE FACE OF PERSISTENT IMPUNITY

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-eighth regular session
13 September – 8 October 2021

Madame President,

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch welcome the report and update by the Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela.

Like the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), our organisations have reported on crimes under international law and human rights violations by Venezuelan security forces and armed pro-government groups, including violations of the right to life, physical integrity, and freedom.

The FFM identified patterns of violations and crimes that were part of a widespread and systematic course of conduct that it concluded amounted to crimes against humanity. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) reported that based on available information it had found a reasonable basis to believe that crimes against humanity had been committed in Venezuela.¹

It is of grave concern that there appears no prospect of an independent investigation or genuine accountability at national level, as the authorities continue to enable and promote impunity.

The Fact-Finding Mission's report to this session highlights how the justice system itself has been turned against the people of Venezuela and the protection of their rights.² How judges and

¹ Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 15 September 2020, UN Doc. A/HRC/45/33, para 2086. Available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFMV/A_HRC_45_CRP.11.pdf, and Amnesty International, Hunger for Justice: Crimes Against Humanity in Venezuela. 13 May 2019, AMR 53/0222/2019. Available at: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr53/0222/2019/en/; <https://www.icc-cpi.int/venezuela>; <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/11/30/crackdown-dissent/brutality-torture-and-political-persecution-venezuela>; <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/05/punished-protesting/rights-violations-venezuelas-streets-detention-centers-and>.

² Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 16 September 2021, UN

prosecutors “have denied, as opposed to guaranteed, some rights [...] in response to interference from political actors or from within the judicial or prosecutorial hierarchy,”³ and in some cases facilitated arbitrary detentions.⁴ How justice system actors have deprived detainees of their right to legal defence.⁵ How in many cases, instead of protecting the victims, authorities charged with investigating human rights violations and crimes under international law were participating in the repression.⁶

The international community must do more to fill this damaging accountability gap and send a clear message that the perpetrators of crimes under international law will be held to account. Victims and survivors need a convincing step towards justice, including political and practical support for the work of both the FFM and the ICC and the exercise of universal jurisdiction by other states. We urge this Council to continue to follow the situation closely, and follow up on the Fact-Finding Mission’s recommendations.

We would like to ask the Fact-Finding Mission, how can civil society contribute to your important work in following up on the situation in Venezuela?

Thank you, Madam President.

Doc. A/HRC/48/69, para 119. Available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFMV/A.HRC.48.69%20EN.pdf.

³ Ibid, para 110.

⁴ Ibid, paras 111 and 113.

⁵ Ibid, para 115.

⁶ Ibid, para 119.