Mr. President,


It is of great concern that crimes under international law and human rights violations continue with impunity in Venezuela as the authorities continue to ignore the repeated recommendations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela. Some of these crimes and human rights violations, that have been repeatedly reported to this Council, appear to amount to crimes against humanity.¹

In 2021, Amnesty noted an escalation of the Government’s repressive policy, as human rights defenders and humanitarian workers were targeted with politically motivated arbitrary detentions. Among these, we are gravely concerned over the arbitrary and prolonged detention of Javier Tarazona, Director of NGO Fundaredes and prisoner of conscience, who has been under state custody since July 2021, charged with unfounded ‘terrorism’ charges, while in critical need of medical assistance. We call for his immediate and unconditional release. Unfortunately, Tarazona’s detention is not an isolated case. It belongs to a well-documented policy that uses both public discourse and detentions to criminalize human rights defenders in Venezuela.

Recently, Amnesty International, Foro Penal and Centro para los Defensores y la Justicia published a report providing evidence of a correlation between media attacks or stigmatizations against human rights defenders, and politically motivated arbitrary detentions.

Despite various commitments made, including to this Council,² the Government has also

² UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report: Human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 5 July 2019,
continued to bar access to relevant Special Procedures\(^3\) and the Fact-Finding Mission.

We urge Venezuelan authorities to take concrete measures, which this Council should continue to press for, to end the policy of repression; allow human rights defenders to safely carry out their work; to allow full and unfettered access to the Fact-Finding Mission without further delay and invite the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions and torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to visit.

More than ever, the UN and its member states should focus its efforts on protecting and promoting a safe and enabling environment for Venezuelan civil society, who continue their work at significant personal risk.

Thank you.