



-Check against delivery-

## ORAL STATEMENT

Item 4: Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

### CONTINUING GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN VENEZUELA REINFORCE THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING SCRUTINY BY INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

UN Human Rights Council  
Fifty third session  
19 June – 15 July 2023

Mr. President,

Amnesty International thanks the High Commissioner for his report. Scrutiny by this Council, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (FFM) and Special Procedures over the human rights crisis in Venezuela remains vital.

Since this Council last met, Amnesty International has [condemned](#) a recent spike in politically motivated arbitrary detentions in Venezuela, as well as sustained threats to civil society. Arbitrary detentions are a part of the government's long-standing policy of repression as a means to suppress dissent and control the population. Prisoner of conscience Javier Tarazona remains detained since 2 July 2021. He continues to need urgent medical care, as do other arbitrary detainees such as Emirlendris Benítez and Guillermo Zárraga. On 11 June, Siderúrgica del Orinoco (SIDOR) trade unionists Leandro Azócar and Daniel Romero were arbitrarily detained, with their whereabouts unknown for eight days. On 16 June, at least seven members of the Yukpa Indigenous people were similarly subjected to arbitrary detention, and later conditionally released.

We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of Javier Tarazona, as well as the freedom of all those arbitrarily detained for political reasons, and an immediate end to the use of arbitrary detentions to silence dissent. We urge member states of this Council to support these calls and take action to protect Venezuelan civil society.

We further call on Venezuela to provide unhindered access to the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, as well as other Special Procedure mandates.

Thank you.