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ORAL STATEMENT

Item 4: Interactive dialogue on the report of the International Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (HRC res. 51/29)

RENEWED ASSAULTS ON VENEZUELAN CIVIL SOCIETY REINFORCE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

UN Human Rights Council
Fifty second session
27 February – 4 April 2023

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the FFM's update and expresses grave concern over renewed assaults on civil society by the Venezuelan government. The FFM's reporting further reinforces the importance of international scrutiny over the continuing human rights crisis in Venezuela.

Since this Council last met, Amnesty International has [documented and condemned](#) continuous efforts by the government of Nicolás Maduro to criminalise human rights defenders and civil society organisations. On 24 January 2023, the Venezuelan National Assembly took its first step to approve a bill seeking to control, restrict, and possibly criminalise as well as shut down NGOs in Venezuela. This can have a devastating impact on victims and survivors of human rights violations and crimes under international law. The bill, titled 'Law for the audit, regularization, action and financing of non-governmental and related organizations', is one example in a long series of attempts to control and restrict civil society. The misleadingly named 'International Cooperation Law', which is also being advanced through parliamentary procedure, is another.

It is deeply concerning that prisoner of conscience and Fundaredes director, [Javier Tarazona](#), continues to be detained for defending human rights and we reiterate our call for his immediate and unconditional release.

We urge member states of this Council to support calls for the protection of 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.

Lastly, we ask the FFM what steps UN member states can take to protect civic space in Venezuela.

Thank you.