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ORAL STATEMENT

## ITEM 2 General Debate

UN Human Rights Council  
Forty-second session  
9 – 27 September 2019

Thank you, Mr. President.

We thank you, Madam High Commissioner, for your update.

We deplore the fact that, despite heightened international scrutiny and engagement, including with your Office, crimes under international law and grave human rights violations in Venezuela continue unabated. We are deeply concerned by Venezuela's refusal to engage constructively with this Council to address a crisis of this magnitude, including with the findings of your comprehensive written report, which was officially dismissed as "selective and openly biased."<sup>1</sup>

As noted in that report, accountability must be at the heart of any solution to the current crisis. Given the total lack of options for justice, truth and reparation at the national or regional levels, Amnesty International, along with over 100 Venezuelan and international civil society organisations, urges this Council to create a Commission of Inquiry. This would be a critical complement to your ongoing engagement and would send a strong message to victims and perpetrators alike that the international community will not allow impunity to prevail in Venezuela.

Mr. President,

We share the High Commissioner's concerns over the devastating fires in the Amazon, which are the symptom of a larger crisis of illegal deforestation and land seizures. The conversion of forests into pasture in the Amazon often follows a pattern, whereby plots of land in the forest are identified and illegally seized, trees are cut down and cleared, then fires are lit (often repeatedly in the same area) before grass is planted and cattle eventually introduced. Beyond fighting the fires, Brazil must enforce its own laws, step up monitoring and patrols of illegal land seizures in protected areas and Indigenous territories, and investigate and prosecute those suspected of criminal responsibility for human rights abuses.

We welcome the operationalization of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 4, page 2 : [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session41/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_41\\_18\\_Add.1.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session41/Documents/A_HRC_41_18_Add.1.docx).

(IIMM). We hope that it will be able to start its work at the earliest opportunity and reiterate the need for close cooperation with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and engagement with victims, their families, and civil society organizations.

Finally, we share the concerns raised over the dire human rights crisis in Kashmir, and India's National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, which threatens to make thousands of people stateless. We urge this Council to respond.

Thank you, Mr. President.