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ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 4: Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (HRC res. 42/25)

IMPUNITY FOR GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DEMANDS CONTINUED SCRUTINY BY THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-fourth session
30 June – 17 July 2020

Madam President.

Amnesty International remains alarmed over the continued human rights crisis in Venezuela, where extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force and torture by the security forces continue with impunity as part of the government's policy of repression of dissent.

In the context of COVID-19, the authorities have directed attacks against journalists, health care workers and others who have raised their concerns on the government's response to the pandemic. For example, journalist Darvinson Rojas was arbitrarily detained for 12 days by the police's Special Actions Force (FAES), only for reporting on the spread of the disease at the start of the pandemic.

We share the High Commissioner's concerns over the lack of independence of the justice system, which, rather than holding those suspected of criminal responsibility under international law and serious human rights violations accountable, continues to be used to silence and criminalise those perceived as a threat to the government.

Madam President,

Ending the cycle of impunity in Venezuela is essential to reigning in the rampant human rights violations that continue unabated. While we welcome the High Commissioner's efforts to engage constructively with the Government of Venezuela and access the country, we see no evidence of political will on their side to engage in good faith to end the violations and improve access to justice. Despite commitments made by Venezuela to this Council last September, we are yet to see meaningful improvements on the ground.

It is therefore critical that this Council ensures the continuation of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) alongside the ongoing work of the High Commissioner, and that it further strengthens the FFM's mandate to better contribute to accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims.

Thank you, Madam President.