

**VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC
OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW
IN RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENTS BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES
OF PERU (EC-91/NAT.36) ON BEHALF OF THE SELF-PROCLAIMED
“LIMA GROUP” AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (EC-91/NAT.12)**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5
OF THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

My delegation is obliged to take the floor to voice our position of the State in response to the statements voiced by the delegations of Peru and the United States of America, respectively.

The statements that we just heard are a direct attack upon the rules of the game within the community of nations, and an affront to the delegations of the States Parties of the OPCW that do not share the positions of the aforementioned delegations and the countries that support them.

We reiterate what we had the opportunity to express in this very room last March in response to the same script that was read again today: this forum is not the place for this discussion. This session's agenda, distributed by the Technical Secretariat, does not contain any item on the discussion of Venezuela's domestic political situation. We would not have adopted this agenda if any delegation attempted to politicise and polarise our Organisation even further.

These statements are an attack against the sovereignty of Venezuela, and an aggression against Venezuela as a full member of OPCW. My country is free and sovereign, and answers only to its people on domestic affairs.

Likewise, these statements constitute an attack against multilateralism, which is the heart of international law. We must honour the principle of peaceful coexistence, the legal equality of the States, the non-intervention into domestic affairs, respect for sovereignty and independence, and territorial integrity; all of these are principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

My delegation wishes to call upon all of the delegations here today to consider the duty to defend these principles and coexistence at international forums, to ensure that they serve the purposes of dialogue, compromise, and cooperation among the States.



The only Government that Venezuela has is run by President Nicolás Maduro, who was constitutionally elected on 20 May 2018 by 68 per cent of the vote at elections that were witnessed by 120 international observers.

President Nicolás Maduro cannot be replaced by anything other than a free, universal, secret, and direct vote, as stipulated by the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Therefore, the only legitimate representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW is that which I am exercising at this very moment as Permanent Representative, as I have done for several years.

Regrettably, this practice of the Government of the only State Party that still possesses chemical weapons is a maneuver aimed at distracting attention away from the issues that fall within the competence of this body and at avoiding its own responsibility; its actions in international forums are meant to make them implode, and they are part of the obstacles against reaching the necessary consensus in discussions.

It seems ironic that the United States of America, having withdrawn from international bodies—particularly those concerning human rights—wants to lecture Venezuela.

This country, which separates children from migrant families, has let a great number of humans in its custody perish—children in particular—from its arbitrary and illegitimate actions that it intends to take to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries.

I do not want to abuse the time and patience of the distinguished delegates and, for the sake of political coherence with what we have always upheld, I believe that we have sufficiently expressed our points of view and we regret that this issue has resurfaced, but we reserve the right to respond when necessary; we hope this is the last time it will be necessary.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I kindly request that this statement be considered an official document of the work of the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council and be published on the website and external server of our Organisation.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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