

**VENEZUELA****STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE
NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN RESPONSE
TO THE STATEMENTS BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF
COLOMBIA ON BEHALF OF THE SELF-PROCLAIMED “LIMA GROUP” AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AGENDA ITEM 5**

Mr Chairperson,

I had not planned to take the floor again today. Nevertheless, my delegation finds itself obliged to take the floor to express the position of the State on the pronouncements made by the delegations of Colombia on behalf of the self-proclaimed “Lima Group” and the United States of America, in that order.

As we have repeatedly stated here, these pronouncements that we have just heard are a flagrant attack upon the rules of the game of the community of nations and an affront to the delegations of the States Parties to the OPCW that do not share the positions of the aforementioned delegations or the States that support them.

Once again, we find ourselves obliged to reiterate what we have stated in this very room in March and later in July in response to the same script that was read out again today. This forum is not the place for this discussion. The agenda that was distributed by the Technical Secretariat for today’s session does not have any item on it concerning Venezuela’s domestic political situation. Neither would we adopt any such item in the event that any delegation would again attempt to politicise and polarise our Organisation.

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

Likewise, these pronouncements are an attack upon multilateralism, which is the heart of international law. We are indebted to the principle of peaceful coexistence, the legal equality of the States, non-intervention into domestic affairs, respect for sovereignty and independence, and territorial integrity—all of which are principles consecrated in the United Nations Charter.



My delegation wishes to call for all of the delegations present to consider the duty we have to defend those principles and coexistence on international platforms in order to ensure that they serve the purposes of dialogue, compromise, and cooperation among the States.

Many delegations will question the reasons why, time and again, discussions of this nature keep taking place at this Organisation, because they have no place in this forum, as we have already indicated.

The answer to this question is the huge divide among these governments within the framework of the session of the General Assembly of the United Nations that took place a few days ago in New York City, where there was a resounding split with regard to the intent to not recognise the legitimate Government of Venezuela. As it was not possible to manifest this failed intent, they are again looking to contaminate this Organisation, bringing a discussion that aims to distract attention away from the matters that are truly of interest to the States Parties of the OPCW.

Likewise, it looks to distract attention away from the facts such as the assassinations of social leaders, officials, farmers, and the defenders of human rights in their countries, things that constitute the policies of the State of these countries, which have declared themselves to be the “Lima Group”. The numbers clearly indicate as such: as an example, so far this year there have been more than 300 cases in Colombia, according to the statistics of specialised United Nations bodies and the information provided by that country’s prosecution bodies.

These statements are an attempt to have us forget that Colombia is the largest producer of cocaine in the world, with 70 percent of global production, while the United States of America is the largest consumer according to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in its 2019 World Drug Report.

These statements would have us forget that there are over 500,000 homeless people in the United States of America, according to a report by that country’s Department of Housing and Urban Development; they would have us forget the intolerance, racism, discrimination against women and the indigenous, the xenophobia against immigrants; they would have us forget the new and hellish forms of incarcerating immigrants and separating them from their own children in detention centres designed for that very effect; they would have us forget the number of children who have died in police custody in that country; and, of course, they would detract our attention from the severe institutional crisis that is taking place in countries such as Peru, which is also a member of the self-proclaimed “Lima Group”.

The only government that Venezuela has is led by President Nicolás Maduro, constitutionally elected on 20 May 2018 by 68 percent of the votes in the presence of 120 international observers.

President Nicolás Maduro cannot be replaced any other way than by a free, universal, secret, and direct vote as dictated 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 this very moment as Permanent Representative, as I have done for several years.

I do not wish 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-Second Session of the Executive Council and published on the website and external server of our Organisation.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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