



Statement of H.E. Mr. Calixto Antonio Ortega Rios, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW in response to the interventionist statement of the delegation of the United States during the 105th session of the Executive Council of the OPCW The Hague, 5-8 March 2024

The Permanent Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela categorically rejects the unlawful, unsubstantiated and arbitrary questioning of Venezuelan internal and sovereign affairs contained in the declaration of the United States of America, which questions the sovereignty of a State that is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns the statement, and the use of this important international organization for mere political and sectarian ends of one of its State Parties.

These deplorable and highly unlawful statements are only a part of an unfortunate and continuous effort of this particularly divisive and aggressive State Party to the Convention and its irresponsible use of this Organization, in an effort to gain political leverage against those States that fail to fall into their geopolitical orbit. Our necessity to condemn these statements stems from the divergence of their purposes from those of the Convention and the OPCW, which unfortunately distort its work, waste its time and shows utter contempt for the Organization and its noble purposes. All State Parties should avoid such inappropriate actions, and respect the purposes and objectives of the Convention.

The Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW, once again, wishes to emphasize the principle that States, in their international relations, must refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This is not a mere wish; it is unquestionable International Law.

Venezuela as a free and sovereign State, and it has an obligation to respond only to its people, on issues of internal and domestic affairs. The only legitimate Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is currently headed by President Nicolás Maduro, who was constitutionally elected on the 20th of May, 2018, with 68 percent of the votes that were cast during that electoral process, a process that was observed by over 120 international observers, all of which verified the legitimacy and constitutionality of the aforementioned process. Therefore, the only lawful and legitimate representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela before the OPCW that can exercise representation on behalf of the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is the one chosen by its legitimate and Constitutional President, the very same representation that is now emitting this current statement.

We wish to take this opportunity to draw attention to the importance of the recent announcement made by the Venezuelan National Electoral Council, regarding a new call for general elections, after a vigorous campaign of consultation with absolutely all the political parties that exist in the country and that wish to be a part of the democratic process. According to our national institution, the next elections are scheduled for the 28th of July, 2024. The overwhelming majority of the political parties registered for these elections are opposition parties, and their enthusiastic participation reflects the level of confidence that the electoral system enjoys in Venezuela, and the free and democratic nature of its system and institutions. Those who question these realities intentionally ignore these facts, and prefer instead to advance their petty political and geopolitical interests.

The United States has consistently shown double standards when classifying the political systems of all nations in the international system – an unlawful act in and of itself, by the way- according to arbitrary criterion and notions, such as the degree of alignment of the State's foreign policies to US meager and sad imperialist interests. In the case of the Venezuelan State, which refuses to serve US interests and instead subordinates itself only to the will and interests of its people, it is hardly surprising that the US government automatically considers Venezuela an enemy, and takes highly unlawful, aggressive and destructive actions against its State and people. Venezuela will not take "democracy lessons" from a country that has a political system in shambles, that has ex-Presidents questioning the legitimacy of their own political system, the pervasive use of lawfare tactics to disqualify potential presidential candidates, and has the worst record of human rights violations in the international system, killing its own people domestically and foreigners abroad through imperial wars and its blind support for genocide elsewhere.

Furthermore, the last Report of the United Nations, published on October 2021, refers to the conclusions of the visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, considering the catastrophic humanitarian impact of US unilateral coercive measures on the state of human rights in our country. Indeed, if the United States really wishes to “alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people” as it claims in its statement, it might wish to begin with dismantling the nefarious and inhuman economic blockade that it has maintained since 2015 and to this very day, actions that can easily be categorized as war crimes against the entirety of Venezuela and its people, which are the real cause of the suffering they claim to hope to alleviate. It is indeed very simple: to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people, all that is needed is to suspend the war crimes that are being committed against it, for mere interests of “regime change”, and “geopolitical alignment”. All US has to do to alleviate suffering, is to finally comply with international law.

Finally, we lament the complete lack of respect and consideration that the government of the United States has shown this prestigious institution and its member states, by employing these meeting for lamentable and miserable purposes that diverge significantly from the objectives of the Convention. Unfortunately, we found ourselves obligated to respond only due to the aggressive nature of the declarations of the US government representatives. Hopefully, we can all persuade the United States government to abandon this rouge behavior, comply with international law and respect the Convention and the institution that it has created, the OPCW.

The Permanent Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela requests that this statement be considered an official document of the **105th session of the Executive Council** and be published on the OPCW catalyst and public website.