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ORAL STATEMENT

Item 2: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL MUST RESPOND TO GRAVITY OF OHCHR
REPORT ON VENEZUELA BY LAUNCHING INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL
INVESTIGATION**

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-First session
24 June – 12 July 2019

Thank you, Mr. President.

We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for her report and update on Venezuela, and also Feliciano Reyna and other speakers for their poignant presentations.

For many years, courageous human rights defenders, victims and their representatives have raised alarm over the human rights crisis unfolding in Venezuela, despite being subjected to persistent and targeted attacks and smear campaigns, which appear intended to stifle their human rights work.

As outlined in the report before us, millions of people have fled Venezuela due to the dire lack of access to food, medicines and basic goods; and the ruthless policy of repression, comprised of systematic and widespread extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary detentions, intentional lethal use of force and other crimes that could amount to crimes against humanity.

Victims of human rights violations in Venezuela have no access to effective remedies at the national or regional level. Nor do there appear to be opportunities at national or regional levels to address and improve the human rights situation on the ground. This makes an effective international response crucial.

Despite heightened international scrutiny, including the visit by the High Commissioner last month and the presence of two OHCHR staff in the country, grave human rights violations continue unabated.

Last weekend a person who was detained by Venezuelan authorities was killed while being held in custody, reportedly because of torture. This Monday, a 16-year-old boy was shot in the face by police officers with rubber bullets during a peaceful protest. He lost both his eyes. These two heinous acts were committed days after the High Commissioner met with high-ranking

authorities of Maduro's government and while members of her office were present in the country. These continued violations raise serious concerns over the commitments made by the Government during and after the visit and make clear the need for a more robust response by this Council.

The Council must take urgent action to address the ongoing violations documented in the report presented today. In the absence of opportunities for justice and accountability at the national or regional levels, Amnesty International calls for the urgent creation of an Independent International Commission of Inquiry to investigate and to contribute to justice, truth and reparation. This would send an important message to victims and perpetrators alike that the international community will not allow impunity to prevail in Venezuela.

Thank you, Mr. President.