



ID with the Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela. 63rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Delivered by Ms Sandra Merens Permanent Representation of Luxembourg

Thank you, Mr. President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the BENELUX countries, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. We align ourselves with the EU statement.

We thank the Fact-Finding Mission for its report.

We acknowledge the continued release of political prisoners in Venezuela. At the same time, more than 300 people, among them many elderly and sick persons, as well as dual citizens, remain arbitrarily detained, while many of those released continue to be subjected to restrictive and conditional measures. In particular, we are deeply concerned about the cases of Verónica Sanchez, Oswaldo Castillo, Rolando Guevara, Franklin Durán and many others*. We call for their immediate and unconditional release and for the prompt release of all persons arbitrarily detained.

While we welcome the ongoing dialogue between the Venezuelan authorities and representatives of the 2015 National Assembly, including its focus on the judicial system, press freedom and the rule of law, we urge the authorities to restore civic space, press freedom and inclusive political processes by ensuring the full participation of all political and civic actors in Venezuela, including women, youth and marginalized communities. We appreciate the authorities' technical cooperation agenda with the ICRC on detention centers and encourage them to also cooperate fully with the Fact-Finding Mission and OHCHR. Changes on the ground make their independent monitoring for accountability all the more important, therefore we strongly support the extension of their mandate.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the Venezuelan people following the devastating June earthquakes.

Members of the FFM,

How do you assess the inclusion of human rights in the current dialogue between the authorities and National Assembly of 2015?

Thank you.

* the four mentioned detainees suffer from a serious illness and have been detained for 2-22 years.