



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8476th meeting

Thursday, 28 February 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Ndong Mba	(Equatorial Guinea)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Germany	Mr. Lindner
	Indonesia	Mr. Djani
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	South Africa	Mr. Matjila
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Abrams

Agenda

The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2019/186 and S/2019/190, which contain the texts of two draft resolutions. The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolutions.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have before us draft resolution S/2019/186, submitted by the United States of America. We have finally reached the culmination of the spectacle of the United States' double standards in Venezuela. During the Security Council meetings a month ago and then the day before yesterday (see S/PV.8452 and S/PV.8472), it has become totally obvious that regardless of their political preferences, a majority of the countries in the western hemisphere support a resolution of Venezuela's problems through dialogue among Venezuelans themselves. An inclusive, nationwide dialogue is now needed above all else, but unfortunately Washington is stubbornly marching towards its goal of escalating the tensions and achieving its own scenario through an unconstitutional change of Government.

Let us take a look at the text of the draft resolution to see exactly what the United States is proposing that the Security Council vote on, which is that we should recognize the Venezuelan National Assembly's, and I quote, "constitutional authority", and the presidential elections held in May of last year as "neither free nor fair" — and this almost a year after they took place. That is why the United States has prepared this draft resolution. Its hypocritical concern for the humanitarian situation in the country is merely a smokescreen. But perhaps the United States has another goal — making history. If this draft resolution were to be adopted,

it would be the first time in history that the Security Council had removed one President of a sovereign country from office and installed another. Is that world democracy in action? I am not even talking here about the politics at issue or the question of Maduro versus Guaidó. Do the members of the Council really not understand that this is legally illiterate, null and void? What is this thinly veiled trolling and mocking of Council members? Do those planning to support the Americans' draft resolution understand that they will be participating in a legal theatre of the absurd?

The United States delegation cannot possibly be unaware that its draft resolution has no chance of being adopted and yet has deliberately submitted it to the Council so that afterwards it can point fingers at those who it claims are obstructing the "restoration of democracy" in Venezuela. It is now deliberately undermining the Council's unity. But does it need it? Our American colleagues seem to have forgotten what international law is. All they have left in their diplomatic arsenal is ultimatums, sanctions and threats of the use of force.

Needless to say, we realize that all of this has been undertaken solely in order to accuse dissenting States of obstructing the delivery of aid to Venezuelans. But it is just another example of shameless propaganda. On 26 February (see S/PV.8472), we spoke in detail about the fact that Russia and China were delivering humanitarian aid to the Venezuelan people freely and without any problems. It was only the United States that had failed to do so because it had disregarded a State's sovereignty and the inviolability of its borders. I said this the day before yesterday and I will say it again now. If the United States really wanted to help the people of Venezuela, it would be operating officially through any of the United Nations-accredited agencies there. But that is not the goal. It is merely a pretext. Its goal is regime change. This is probably the clearest and most direct case we have seen of the implementation of the infamous concept of humanitarian intervention, an intervention with humanitarian components and under humanitarian pretexts. That is the so-called rules-based order, rather than international law, that our Western colleagues are proposing and constantly talking about.

That is why we have prepared an alternative draft resolution (S/2019/190), designed not to encourage political intrigue and regime change but to provide Venezuelans with real help in their efforts to normalize the situation in their country. In the draft resolution

we emphasize that any international assistance should be based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and the consent of the country's legitimate Government. We also express support for international mediation initiatives, including the Montevideo Mechanism, which would help Venezuelans to achieve what is the most important thing right now, a political settlement. There is simply nothing like this in the United States draft resolution, because it is not aimed at solving any of the problems involved.

Yesterday, we held expert consultations on our text and listened to the views of Security Council members, including the representative of the United States. We heard not one concrete comment. The Western experts said only that they would not work on our text, and our American colleagues immediately presented their draft for a vote. What is the point here of diplomacy or the quest for a compromise? This whole scheme is a propagandist public-relations stunt dictated in large part by domestic political concerns, and we are sorry that the Security Council has been dragged into it once again.

We are seriously worried that today's meeting could be exploited as a stage for preparing not a humanitarian intervention but a real one, an excuse for outside interference based on the Security Council's alleged inability to resolve the situation in Venezuela. We want to appeal once again to those members of the Security Council who genuinely want to help rather than pandering to this political show. We urge them to vote against the United States draft resolution and in support of our document, which has been specifically written to avoid language that could create disagreement and focuses entirely on giving Venezuelans real help in the form of international assistance and mediation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2019/186, submitted by the United States of America.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

China, Russian Federation, South Africa

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received nine votes in favour, three against and three abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Abrams (United States of America): The situation in Venezuela demands our action now. The corrupt former Maduro regime has caused an economic collapse that threatens peace and security throughout the region. Millions of Venezuelans have fled their country in search of food, medicine and opportunity. The time for a peaceful transition to democracy is now. Each member of the international community that joins in recognizing the Guaidó Government is supporting the people of Venezuela as they strive to reclaim their democracy.

Regrettably, by voting against this draft resolution (S/2019/186), some members of the Security Council continue to shield Maduro and his cronies and prolong the suffering of the Venezuelan people. This man-made crisis has extended well beyond Venezuela's borders and threatens to destabilize the region. Events from this past weekend show that Maduro will stop at nothing to maintain power, including the use of gang violence against unarmed Venezuelan citizens.

Regardless of the results of today's voting, this draft resolution shows that democracies around the world — and especially in Latin America — are mobilizing behind interim President Guaidó. The United States will remain steadfast in our support for the legitimate Guaidó Government and the National Assembly. We look forward to genuinely free and fair elections and to a Government that reflects the will and aspirations of the Venezuelan people.

The United States will pursue all avenues to increase humanitarian assistance to Venezuelans, both inside and outside their country. In fact, there was an additional aid delivery today to the border region — Cúcuta, Colombia — of emergency medical kits for 40,000 people, enough high-nutrition food for 10,000 infants for two months and hygiene kits for 35,000 people.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our concern about the safety and security of interim President Juan Guaidó when he returns to Venezuela, and we hope that all members of the Council will join us in doing so.

Now is the time to strengthen our commitment to the Venezuelan people. We call on members of the Security Council to join in that commitment, and I would like to express satisfaction that a clear majority of the Council did so today.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru voted in favour of the draft resolution on the situation in Venezuela (S/2019/186) in order to enable the Security Council, in exercise of the mandate bestowed upon it by the Charter of the United Nations, to adopt a decision that contributes to regional peace and security, as desired by the international community.

We deeply regret the lack of unity within the Council to help address the situation in Venezuela — which represents an unprecedented threat to the peace, security, freedom and prosperity of the entire region — and to prevent a further escalation of violence and address the terrible humanitarian crisis causing the country to suffer. It is even more incomprehensible given that this was a minimum text that, for the sake of consensus, had avoided mentioning relevant aspects such as the constant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms; the terrible humanitarian situation faced by the population, especially those who are most vulnerable; the breakdown of democratic order; endemic corruption and economic collapse; and the exodus of more than 3.4 million Venezuelans fleeing this awful reality.

However, we are encouraged to note that the majority of Council members have reaffirmed their commitment, to and solidarity with, the brotherly people of Venezuela, as well as their full willingness to continue promoting the restoration of democracy in that country. This aspiration will be possible only through the timely holding of free, fair and credible elections that are open to the participation of all political parties, with international backing and observation, thereby guaranteeing the right of all Venezuelans to live in democracy and freedom.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is paying close attention to the situation in Venezuela and supports the Venezuelan Government in its efforts to safeguard its national sovereignty, independence and

stability. Venezuelan affairs should be decided by the Venezuelan people independently. When it comes to the Venezuela issue, China's starting point in the Security Council's is to uphold the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles governing international relations, promote a peaceful settlement of the Venezuela issue and maintain long-term peace, stability and development in Latin America.

China opposes external forces interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs and opposes military intervention in Venezuela. It is regrettable that the draft resolution before us (S/2019/186) was seriously inconsistent with China's principles and position as previously stated. Therefore, China had to vote against it.

China calls upon the Venezuelan Government and opposition parties to seek a political solution through dialogue and consultation within the constitutional and legal framework. We hope that the international community will take actions that are truly conducive to the stability and economic development of Venezuela and the improvement of the livelihoods of people in the country. Under the premise of respecting the sovereignty of Venezuela, we should provide constructive assistance to the country to promote a smooth resolution of relevant issues as far as possible.

Any actions taken by the Security Council on Venezuela should be in line with those principles.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2019/186) on the situation in Venezuela presented by the United States. We did so because, in the view of both Belgium and the European Union, the draft resolution includes the essential elements for a way out of the crisis, namely, a peaceful political process; free, fair and credible presidential elections, with international electoral observation, in line with the Venezuelan Constitution; the encouragement of peaceful, inclusive and credible initiatives; the security of Venezuelan citizens and political actors; and, finally, unimpeded access to humanitarian aid, in accordance with humanitarian principles. Belgium also supported the draft resolution because nothing in its text justifies the use of force and it advocates for seeking a peaceful solution. We regret that some have blocked prospects for this.

As the Security Council prepares to vote on a competing draft resolution (S/2019/190), I wish to

express the intention of my delegation to vote against it. Indeed, the text lacks a critical element. For Belgium, as well as for the European Union, the solution to the Venezuelan crisis is through the organization of free, fair and credible presidential elections. The Venezuelan people have already suffered too much. It is high time to let them decide their own future.

We also express our reservations with regard to paragraph 3 of the draft resolution and stress the importance of humanitarian assistance in line with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It is unacceptable for irregular armed groups to intimidate civilians and members of the National Assembly who have mobilized in order to distribute aid.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We take the floor in explanation of our vote in two regards.

First, the Dominican Republic believes that there is no other possible solution to the crisis in Venezuela than the holding of free and competitive elections without delay, with guarantees for all groups and stakeholders. Such a peaceful and inclusive political process must lead Venezuelan society to reconcile with itself and overcome the differences that have generated these situations of permanent tension, which endanger the Venezuelan people as well as the regional environment.

Therefore, to dispel any suspicion, the use of force is not an option for us. On the contrary, we favour an inclusive dialogue in which all political actors and civil society can participate — an indispensable step for a peaceful, democratic outcome that respects human rights.

Finally, we understand that it is necessary to create the conditions conducive to providing assistance to those in need, in light of the serious humanitarian crisis afflicting the Venezuelan people.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We take the floor to explain our vote.

South Africa made clear its position on the situation in Venezuela when we addressed the Security Council two days ago (see S/PV.8472). We reiterate our view that inclusive political dialogue is necessary to resolve the political crisis in Venezuela. We remain concerned about the serious humanitarian situation in the country and support United Nations efforts to provide

humanitarian assistance to alleviate the hardships experienced by the people of Venezuela.

South Africa is concerned at the irregular procedure in presenting the draft resolution before us. The dispensing of the 48-hour practice for the consideration of the draft resolution undermines due process and our ability to meaningfully engage on the text to reach consensus. We have before us two divergent draft resolutions on the situation in Venezuela (S/2019/186 and S/2019/190). This is unfortunate, as South Africa believes that the Council should be unified in its approach to supporting the people of Venezuela in finding a solution to the crisis. We must speak with one voice when assisting the Venezuelan people in weathering the humanitarian challenges faced as a result of the political and economic difficulties in their country.

However, instead of bringing the Council and the people of Venezuela together, the draft resolutions serve to illustrate how far the Council is from contributing to dealing with the crisis. The lack of unity of the Council on this matter widens divisions and undermines the credibility of the Council to make a meaningful contribution to resolving the situation in Venezuela. Ideally, the Council should adopt a draft resolution that would facilitate internal, inclusive political dialogue among the people in determining their own way out of their political and economic difficulties.

Furthermore, a Council resolution should facilitate the provision of international assistance based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and based on a thorough and accurate needs assessment. Therefore, the provision of aid should be depoliticized and must meet the needs of the people of Venezuelan.

While the draft resolution presented by the United States (S/2019/186) calls for a peaceful political process, it is prescriptive on the outcome of that process, thereby infringing on the sovereignty of Venezuela. Internal political processes should remain the national prerogative of Member States. From the outside, we can encourage parties to engage in political dialogue, but we cannot dictate outcomes such as the holding of elections. Furthermore, the context of the crisis, set out in the United States draft resolution, does not reflect a balanced understanding of the underpinnings of the crisis in Venezuela.

There are three elements in the United States draft resolution that are antithetical to the principles

and values that underpin South Africa's democratic dispensation and our foreign policy.

First, in the fourth preambular paragraph, regarding the authority of the National Assembly to release political prisoners and grant amnesty, South Africa views this as tantamount to a violation of the principle of the separation of powers, on which the South African Constitution is predicated. Therefore, South Africa cannot support, at the international level, the violation of this universal, sacrosanct and inviolable principle that underpins the governance of the modern State.

Secondly, South Africa also cannot support paragraph 1, which expresses deep concern that the presidential elections of 20 May 2018 were neither free nor fair. President Nicolás Maduro was elected for a second six-year term in the presidential elections on 20 May according to the National Electoral Council (NEC) of Venezuela. President Maduro was re-elected by a wide margin, garnering over 5.8 million votes, according to Ms. Tibusay Lucena, President of the NEC. His closest challenger, Mr. Henri Falcón, received approximately 1.8 million ballots, while the third-place candidate, Mr. Javier Bertucci, received 925,042 votes. Over 8.6 million Venezuelans went to the polls, putting voter turnout at 46.01 per cent. The announcement was made when the NEC had counted more than 92 per cent of ballots. South Africa respects the authority of the NEC as the constitutionally mandated body that is charged with the management of the electoral process in Venezuela — like in all of our countries. That body declared President Maduro the winner, and that should be respected as we respect all other electoral processes elsewhere in the world. That is the basis on which President Maduro enjoys legitimacy and international recognition.

Thirdly, and finally, South Africa believes that paragraph 4 is partisan and biased, as it stresses the importance of ensuring only the security of the members of the National Assembly and members of the political opposition. A Council resolution cannot stress the security of a certain sector to the exclusion of others. As an impartial body, the United Nations should insist on the security of all Venezuelans. South Africa was therefore not in a position to support the United States draft resolution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2019/190, submitted by the Russian Federation.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

China, Equatorial Guinea, Russian Federation, South Africa

Against:

Belgium, France, Germany, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Kuwait

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received four votes in favour, seven against and four abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): As is clear, the United Kingdom voted in favour of the American draft resolution (S/2019/186) and against the Russian one (S/2019/190). I think the fact that the Russian draft resolution failed to obtain the required number of votes whereas the American text was vetoed accurately pinpoints the unease that many Members of the United Nations feel about the situation in Venezuela and how untenable it is for it to continue.

We were content to vote in favour of the United States text because it addressed important issues in Venezuela about which we too are concerned. It emphasized the importance of establishing the necessary conditions for a new and credible electoral process in Venezuela. Despite the Russian polemic, the United States text did not seek a permanent transfer of power to a different leader. It called for free and fair elections, which we also believe in. We believe that the Nicolás Maduro presidency is illegitimate and that the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, is constitutionally interim President of Venezuela until credible, free and fair elections can be held. Those elections are a condition on the part of transition to peace.

Secondly, the American draft resolution acknowledged deep concern about violence and the use of excessive force by the security forces in Venezuela against unarmed, peaceful protesters, including those actively engaged in getting humanitarian assistance

into the country to the benefit of ordinary citizens. There is clear evidence that liberty and justice have been systematically dismantled by Maduro's regime.

Finally, the text addressed the economic collapse brought about by Maduro's corrupt policies, which led to the humanitarian crisis that has so far forced more than 3.5 million Venezuelans to leave their country for other countries in the region. That has placed huge strain on the social services of Venezuela's neighbours. We would like to thank the United States, as penholder of the draft resolution, for drafting a text that properly recognizes the gravity of the situation in Venezuela. There are limits as to how far a Government can inflict damage and suffering on its own people.

Turning to the Russian text, the United Kingdom was compelled to vote against the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation today. We fundamentally disagreed with its content because it pretended that there were threats to use force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Venezuela. There have been no threats to Venezuela's political independence or territorial integrity.

Secondly, the Russian draft resolution focused on alleged attempts to intervene in Venezuela's domestic affairs. As we have seen, the crisis has spilled far beyond Venezuela's borders, and the current situation in Venezuela represents a clear threat to peace and security in the region.

Thirdly, the text included a selective reading of the Charter of the United Nations — one that we have heard before. It presents a biased interpretation of the events unfolding in Venezuela and its support for the Maduro regime. A full reading of the United Nations Charter would show that the Security Council should cooperate to address the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

Finally, the text failed to explicitly recognize two crucial aspects of the situation in Venezuela: the humanitarian crisis — I should say the man-made humanitarian crisis brought about by corrupt economic policies — and the need for free, fair and credible elections.

Mr. Lindner (Germany): Let me explain why we voted in favour of the draft resolution of the United States of America (S/2019/186) and against the Russian draft resolution (S/2019/190).

We supported the United States text because it recognizes the dire humanitarian situation — a man-

made humanitarian situation — respects the sovereignty of Venezuela, conforms with the European Union's call for free, credible and transparent elections and promotes a peaceful political solution to the crisis.

As for the text of the Russian Federation, it does not present a solution to the crisis. It supports a Government — the Maduro regime — that does not represent the Venezuelan population and refuses to recognize the humanitarian emergency of its population. The text also includes unspecific allegations of violations of the Charter of the United Nations. However, efforts here in the Council and by the international community do not constitute interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. Serious humanitarian rights violations by the Maduro regime, plus the 3.5 million refugees fleeing from Venezuela to Colombia, Brazil and even Peru and other countries, have also made the situation in Venezuela a threat to the stability and security of the entire region.

We want to recall our main aims for Venezuela. We condemn the use of force. Secondly, the origins of the ongoing crisis in Venezuela are political, and the solution can therefore only be a political one. An inclusive, political and peaceful solution to the crisis must therefore urgently be found. Thirdly, we stress the need to respond to the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people — there is a humanitarian crisis — and alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable. Fourthly, we strongly renew our call for a peaceful restoration of democracy through free, transparent and credible presidential elections, in accordance with international democratic standards and the Venezuelan constitutional order.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): We regret the two vetoes against the American draft resolution (S/2019/186) — a draft resolution that could have contributed to a political and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Venezuela and relieved the suffering of the Venezuelan people at a time when they are facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in its history.

Contrary to what we have heard here in the Chamber, the American text, which took into account many of our requests, was neither a legal basis for the use of force nor an attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Venezuela. As everyone knows, France — along with the whole of the European Union — has constantly reiterated its repudiation of the use of force to resolve

the Venezuelan crisis, to echo what the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany has just said.

The draft resolution of which we voted in favour reflects not only the tragic reality of Venezuela today, but also our commitment to a peaceful and political resolution of the crisis. As many States, including France, pointed out last Tuesday (see S/PV.8472), the holding of free, credible and transparent presidential elections should be the priority objective for the restoration of Venezuelan democracy. It is a matter of delivering a political solution to a political crisis. That is the *raison d'être* of the International Contact Group launched by the European Union and Uruguay, of which France is a member.

The stance of the countries that blocked the draft resolution after having refused to participate in the negotiations serves to protect Nicolás Maduro's regime. Along with the majority of the Council's member States, France believes that it is the responsibility of the Security Council to strongly condemn the blockage of humanitarian aid, as well as the use of violence against women and men whose only crime is a desire to provide help and assistance to their fellow citizens. The use of the veto today serves to protect a regime that has decided to starve its people.

Furthermore, the text submitted by Russia (S/2019/190) clearly does not provide a solution to the current crisis. It maintains the illusion that Venezuela is in a peaceful situation and raises the spectre of foreign invasion at a time when 3.5 million migrants and refugees have fled the country and the majority of the population has been plunged into total poverty. The Russian draft resolution does not include a single word on those tens of millions of people. Not once does the word "humanitarian" appear in the draft resolution. The Venezuelan population's access to neutral, transparent and independent international aid is an absolute necessity.

Today's impasse must not and cannot lead us to resign ourselves to the situation. France will pursue its efforts, in particular through the International Contact Group. It is in that spirit that I wish to reiterate our call for a peaceful and negotiated end to the crisis, which entails the organization of free, credible and transparent presidential elections as soon as possible, as well as free access to humanitarian aid.

While Venezuela is now on the verge of collapse, our responsibility is neither to supplant the Venezuelan

people nor to make decisions for them. On the contrary, it is to give them a voice and allow them to express themselves freely in order for them to take ownership of their destiny. Therein lies the compass that guides France's actions.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru did not support the proposed draft resolution (S/2019/190) for the following reasons. It does not take into account the fundamental aspect of the problem in Venezuela, which is the existence of an illegitimate regime that has caused one of the most serious humanitarian crises and exoduses in the history of the region — a result of its disastrous economic management and corruption — and neither does it take into account the flagrant violations of human rights and individual freedoms or the urgency of holding free presidential elections.

Peru ratifies its full commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles. However, we cannot accept an approach that considers only some of the Charter's provisions that we consider relevant to this case. We also cannot support the quest for irrelevant dialogue mechanisms, which have repeatedly failed by virtue of the illegitimate regime's proven lack of commitment, having been used only to gain time, perpetuate its time in office and subsequently lash out with new abuses and violations of human rights.

Peru questions the willingness of a regime that — as we saw last weekend and heard in the Council two days ago (see S/PV.8472) — not only opposes the much-needed access to humanitarian assistance but also denies the existence of an emergency and crisis, ignoring the situation and showing no concern for the 3.4 million citizens who have had to flee the tragedy caused by Nicolás Maduro.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Poland voted in favour of the United States draft resolution on Venezuela (S/2019/186). We decided to support that draft resolution as we believe that it is the primary responsibility of the Security Council to address urgently the worsening humanitarian crisis affecting millions of Venezuelans. The crisis has been further exacerbated by the blocking of the delivery of humanitarian aid by pro-Maduro security forces. Every day that passes without that aid is a day with more and more people suffering, including children, owing to the lack of basic services, food and medicines. We therefore regret that not all members of the Council decided to engage in the consultation

process. Another division among Council members sends a negative message to a place that deserves better.

At the same time, Poland decided to vote against the Russian draft resolution (S/2019/190), as it lacked the basic and most important element of acknowledging the humanitarian catastrophe. We also reject the notion that responding to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela undermines its sovereignty — quite the contrary. Let me stress that it is the Council's responsibility and within its legitimate concern, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, to address situations that endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, such as that taking place in Venezuela right now. Moreover, we are responding to the calls of the legitimate authorities in Venezuela.

In conclusion, what really matters is the suffering of the people of Venezuela. They deserve a better future. We hope that we will be able to meet their rightful expectations.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): The text submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2019/190) is consistent with the South African Constitution and the values and principles of democracy founded on the rule of law. At the international level, the Russian text assesses the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and reinforces the founding principles of the United Nations based on the sovereign equality of all its States Members. That draft resolution speaks to the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes, in line with the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 3, and Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Furthermore, the Russian draft resolution reiterates the need to fully respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in the provision of international humanitarian assistance. The Russian text is a reaffirmation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which enjoys universality in terms of its scope and application. It was on that basis that South African supported the draft resolution.

Ultimately, South Africa will urge for any further action by the Council to be guided by genuine efforts to maintain international peace and security and promote the unity of peoples in that regard.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia's position on the situation in Venezuela has always been consistent, clear and principled, and we have had the opportunity to express it a number of times. Indonesia regrets that

we cannot achieve unity in the Security Council on how to address the situation in Venezuela. The fact that two separate draft resolutions (S/2019/186 and S/2019/190) were submitted is clear evidence of the lack of a sense of unity among Council members, which is sad. After my less than two months on the Council, I must humbly say that this is a sad day for the international community, particularly the people of Venezuela. It is undoubtedly a collective failure — a failure of the 15 of us seated around this table — because we all came here today knowing that we would not reach the consensus needed for the adoption of a draft resolution. I would like to address that failure to reach a consensus resolution as follows.

First, neither draft resolution is complete, because neither is comprehensive enough and both have been overly politicized. Therefore neither would be useful or helpful in ensuring the interests of the people of Venezuela. Neither makes a serious attempt to find a consensus on this highly sensitive matter. The need for flexibility in the Council and the priority of reducing the tensions in Venezuela are of the essence. We would have liked to see more balanced and all-embracing drafts. We would also have valued a more thorough consultation and preparatory process for all parties to the discussion.

The situation in Venezuela is still worrying and therefore demands that the Council be united and take the right actions, comprehensively and without exacerbating the situation. In that regard, Indonesia has always taken the principled position that in order to achieve a durable solution, the following points should be taken into account.

First, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of non-interference, sovereignty and territorial integrity should be honoured and should always be the starting point in discussing any issues within the framework of the United Nations. Secondly, any solution should focus on an inclusive political dialogue involving all parties. We urgently need to address the large deficit of trust, and we therefore call on all the parties to accept the good offices offered by the Secretary-General and refrain from taking action that could lead to a further deterioration of the already fragile situation on the ground. Thirdly, we must urgently address the needs of the people of Venezuela, who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations must play an important role in delivering and organizing support for humanitarian assistance. Fourthly, the plight of Venezuelan refugees,

which is affecting neighbouring countries, must be urgently addressed.

Those four points should form the elements of a good, consensus Security Council resolution. In the absence of those elements, Indonesia refused to accept or reject either draft resolution, because both are flawed. If we really care about the people of Venezuela, we should present a united front and find a joint solution. We talk constantly about the importance of a united front, and we do not have one.

In all honesty, I must admit that my delegation is starting to believe that dialogue and negotiations are a luxury here in the Council. I have been wondering how the Council can promote dialogue for universally acceptable solutions if its members have difficulty in sitting together and having a dialogue to find common ground. We beseech our colleagues to put aside their differences. Now is not the time to be divided by political rhetoric. Let us spare no effort in ensuring that we will be part of the solution and not part of the problem. Despite the deeply divergent views in the Council, Indonesia is of the view that it is still possible for us to arrive at a consensus in the future, as long as the Council lives up to its mandate and responsibility.

We still have unfinished business, and that is assisting Venezuela and its people in finding a peaceful solution to their current challenges.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We deeply regret that the Security Council has once again been dragged into this exhibition of political adventurism.

Draft resolution S/2019/186, submitted by the delegation of the United States, was written to instigate regime change on a pretext of caring about people. We have seen all of this before in Libya, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. We adopted one resolution on Libya, resolution 1973 (2011), that was used unscrupulously to enable bombings and brutal regime change. We all know what that led to. Where is Libya now? What has become of it? And what has become of the African countries to which international terrorism has spread from Libya? Washington and London have once again robbed an entire nation of billions of dollars and forcibly imposed handouts to establish the circumstances for regime change. First they create colossal humanitarian problems and then they call on the world to solve them. We were obliged to exercise our right of veto because the United States draft resolution was not aimed at

resolving the crisis in Venezuela. We therefore proposed draft resolution S/2019/190, an alternative that could have helped Venezuelans solve their own problems themselves, without intervention from outside.

Many delegations have been saying today that Venezuela should hold elections as soon as possible. The decision to hold elections is one for Venezuelans themselves. We do not need to decide it for them. The most important thing is dialogue, but our colleagues are burning bridges both literally and figuratively. Our draft resolution included support for the Montevideo Mechanism. But dialogue and mediation are clearly not what Washington and the delegations that support it were aiming for. Today we heard the same old line from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, which is that the Russian text failed to receive enough votes while the United States text was vetoed. That is exactly why this whole scheme was concocted, so that tomorrow the media will proclaim it, without a word about how our draft resolution was shot down. This has all happened before, as we all know and remember. It was done on purpose. It is why they deliberately set out to destroy the Council's unity, as has been said here today, not for the first time. Seven members of the Security Council linked to that bloc to one degree or another and in one group or another voted against our draft resolution. And yet the number of supporters not even so much of Venezuela but of international law itself is much larger, at least 60 international delegations, as the recent meeting we held on Venezuela showed. Seriously, there are far more of them, and most are sitting here in this Chamber now.

Today's vote is a glaring example of why the veto is necessary. It is needed to defend peace and the right of peoples to decide their own destiny. It was clear today that, had that right not been conscientiously exercised, the Council itself would have risked transforming itself into a threat to peace and security. It is a good thing that did not happen.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela is today at peace, which is safeguarded by the constitutional Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros, who is in full exercise of his legal powers and is guaranteeing the protection of the Venezuelan people and territory and the effective control of the country. We repeat — there is no violence

of any kind in Venezuela. If there are any threats to the peace, they are coming from abroad.

With regard to draft resolution S/2019/186, submitted by the United States and the Government of President Trump, we denounce, first, the falsification of the content of the resolutions of the Organization of American States (OAS), which are mentioned in the draft resolution, as the very Charter of that regional organization establishes that States do not have the authority to determine the legitimacy of the electoral processes of another country. That authority does not exist. And, if a group of countries decided to ignore the election results, the countries of that group did so in their national capacities, which do not apply whatsoever to that regional forum. This being about a failed operation of political aggression, our country is today fully exercising all its rights and privileges at the Organization of American States. Therefore, it is not true that we have been sanctioned or disregarded by the OAS. That is false, yet it is cited as an example in draft resolution S/2019/186.

We also reject the fact that our Constitution continues to be used in an attempt to justify a colonial intervention, while supporting a fictitious entity that does not exist in our basic law. The self-proclaimed Government constitutes a dictatorship, which has no legal basis in Venezuela. Its spokespeople have even already abandoned all intentions of calling for elections and are intending to hold on to power for years without consulting the people. For them it is enough to have the support of President Trump.

The European countries that support the Government of President Trump in this adventure do so in spite of the fact that the legal experts of their own Parliaments are warning them that their interference in our internal affairs and their coercive illegal actions constitute hostile and illegal acts against our nation. The international community cannot understand how the Security Council can allow the deliberate violation of the Charter of the United Nations by Council members, which have an obligation to enforce it.

We denounce the fact that no mention has been made of the violent acts that occurred last weekend from Colombian territory to Venezuelan territory. That was an international incident, not a national one. As an international incident, it falls under the responsibility of the Security Council, but it has been deliberately ignored. The Colombian Government still has not submitted the protocols and photographs that

it threatened to show a few days ago that allegedly prove that it was a humanitarian operation and not an operation of aggression. We are still awaiting that alleged evidence. There is no international law that protects a Government from presenting itself at the border of another country and trying to force unknown cargo into that foreign territory using unknown protocols. Three days after the attack, there are still people with masks on at those bridges — protected by the Colombian Government — throwing firebombs from Colombian territory at the Venezuelan forces of public order. We still have not seen a single mention of that, not to mention any condemnation of those acts of aggression.

We want the world to know that, when some countries in this Chamber express concern about the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, they never refer to the causes of the problem. It is illegal for acts of economic war to be perpetrated against our country, in violation of the human rights of our people and while using them as hostages in a policy of calculated cruelty, in total violation of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, after that policy of calculated cruelty, there is concealment of the responsibility of the primary perpetrators of that crime, which are — we will name them here in the Chamber — the Government of the United States and Government the United Kingdom.

We also denounce the fact that those two colonial Powers — one still quite strong, the other in decline — have, in the course of one week, carried out the biggest robbery in our history — more than \$30 billion was stolen from the Venezuelan people. And they want to conceal that pillage of historic proportions. If they have a genuine interest in the humanitarian situation and the well-being of the Venezuelan people, the first thing they should do is to return what they stole. The United States and the United Kingdom are committing acts of looting and pillaging that cannot be concealed under the cloak of humanitarian assistance. It is the same colonialist plundering from two centuries ago, but now it is disguised with a racist and messianic ideology that proclaims itself to be saving third-world countries. We do not need those saviours. We do not need those saviours, who are motivated by greed and end up destroying every nation they enter. We do not need those saviours.

They are at this moment carrying out a massive extortion operation against every country legally trading with Venezuela. The United States and Europe are not a

world Government that regulates trade throughout the rest of the world, and their illegal acts are the primary cause of our people's suffering. The Security Council must ensure compliance with international law in the face of the use, by the United States and the United Kingdom, of international economic institutions as weapons of mass destruction. Modern wars are not conducted only with bombs, but also with banks. They are using banks to destroy our people.

Given that the primary function of this organ is the maintenance of international peace and security, the world cannot understand why President Trump's Government refuses to adopt a draft resolution prohibiting the use and threat of use of force in the case of Venezuela. Do Council members know why it does not do that? Because President Trump continues to publicly threaten the Venezuelan people with the military option. It is immoral and irresponsible to blackmail an entire population in total violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The President of Costa Rica pointed out yesterday that he did not endorse the communiqué issued by the group of countries that met last Monday in Bogotá to discuss the situation in Venezuela, because the issue of the use of military force against Venezuela was openly discussed. Both Costa Rica and other countries in the region refuse to support the violence of the United States and its allies against our people.

We want to denounce — and it is a very important denunciation — the fact that there is an ongoing military threat against Venezuela. It is for that reason that the United Kingdom deployed a warship last Saturday less than 80 kilometres off our coast. It still has not been able to justify its presence. It is for that same reason that the United States made a show of troop movements on Colombian territory near our border, while at the same time threatening to kill our Head of State.

We also denounce the fact that the spokespeople of President Trump's Government are currently fabricating a narrative alleging an absurd number of supposed defectors from the National Bolivarian Armed Forces so as to justify the formation of a so-called liberation army of Venezuela on Colombian territory, with the aim of infiltrating our country and destroying the peace of our nation. The organizers of that armed criminal group flagrantly brag with total impunity in the Colombian media. That is public data. We are not saying that we have secret information. We will share

all the information with the Council. It is no longer about publicly using military force but instead of its covert use in a war using paid mercenaries, in the same manner as was done in Nicaragua during the cruel war by the Contras. And, in a cruel twist of fate, the person put in charge by the United States of the operation by the Contras in Nicaragua was Elliott Abrams, who is present here. He himself is today responsible for the operation against Venezuela. He is the one who used airplanes loaded with weapons disguised as humanitarian aid to foment death and destruction in Nicaragua. And he would have us believe that he is very keen to send monetary assistance to Venezuela using masked men throwing Molotov cocktails.

In conclusion, we demand from the Security Council a clear statement condemning and prohibiting the use of military force in all its forms and manifestations against Venezuela. It is already publicly known that the United States is right now attempting to put together an indirect mercenary war using irregular armed groups, which will make it possible for it to seem — perversely — to be part of a colonial humanitarian operation and thus the supposed saviours of our nation. In brief, we are here to call for what any other country or responsible State Member of the United Nations would call for, that is, defence of the principles of our founding Charter, including respect for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, the right to the self-determination of peoples and the right of States' legal equality. But, above all, we have come to request that Security Council uphold our right to peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the United Kingdom has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I will be very brief but, as a number of lurid claims were made against my country, I would like to respond.

First, I have sent you a letter, Mr. President, in response to allegations made by the Venezuelan representative, which sets out very clearly British policy towards his country — very much along the lines of European Union policy, which we heard about earlier.

Secondly, if theft and plundering of the Venezuelan people's wealth is occurring, it is because of their own Government. It is not because of mine.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.