

Statement  
of the  
Committee for Social Development  
of the  
Venezuelan National Assembly

on the occasion of the  
Visit in the Republic of South Africa (October 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

As current members of the Venezuelan Parliament we appreciate this opportunity to discuss the serious political, social, economic and institutional crisis that our country is experiencing.

Those who today call themselves "the Venezuelan Government" have built a model of social control and domination that condemns millions of citizens to misery and poverty. They have eliminated the independence of powers and captured public institutions with the sole purpose of destroying our democracy and imposing a dictatorial regime. They have eliminated the power of the vote as a tool of expression of the will of the people and have subjugated even the most basic rights.

The political and economic model that they have implemented, where the State controls almost all economic activity, has been successful in leading the country to its greatest economic crisis. This was achieved through currency control, allowing political cronies to convert local currency to US dollars at a ridiculous cheap exchange rate, which displaced production favoring imports. The expropriation of productive companies for political reasons, a lack of protection of property rights also contributed to decimating the existing installed productive capacity. First expropriation was seen as a tool of giving back economic power and possibilities to "the people", but ended up as a means of self-enrichment by the government elite and tool of oppression of the opposition.

A lax fiscal policy, due to the vast income provided by the oil windfall, a bonanza of foreign loans, and a shady monetary policy conducted by a politicised Central Bank also contributed to the bankruptcy of the public finances once the money stopped rolling in.

Every day, hundreds of Venezuelans die of malnutrition or for lack of medical supplies. Thousands more have left the country in search of better opportunities abroad. The inequality gap increases every day: there is a small minority composed of those who govern who live a life of privilege, and an immense majority of Venezuelans who grow poorer every day.

Hyperinflation, food shortages, a failed health and education system, the destruction of the entire productive apparatus, are all evidence of a failed state, one where the model was imposed to enslave the population and perpetuate the current leaders in power.

Intimidation and attack of political and social opposition leaders by the State's Security forces, has led to hundreds of political prisoners, as well as persecuted and exiled politicians. All of this, in an environment where all information is censored and the State owns almost all tv and radio channels, has diluted all efforts to effectively oppose the regime.

As members of the Venezuelan National Assembly, we have seen our parliamentary immunity violated, we have been repressed and imprisoned, and we have been stripped of all the powers legitimately awarded to us by the Venezuelan people, in the last real elections held in Venezuela in 2016. We come here to be the voice of those who voted for us, those who have been left powerless by the regime's actions.

In recent years the international community has seen with great interest the deepening of the conflict that exists in Venezuela that is why it is fundamental for us to continue to make visible the situation we are experiencing and to strengthen relations and alliances against this type of regimes.

*Miguel Alejandro Pizarro*

Chairperson of the Committee for Social Development of the Venezuelan National Assembly

*José Manuel Olivares*

Member of the Committee for Social Development of the Venezuelan National Assembly

Johannesburg, 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2018