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Joint Statements

Statement by the International Contact Group on Venezuela

At a moment where the talks facilitated by Norway are suspended and there are no signs of a serious political process towards a peaceful and democratic way out of the crisis in Venezuela, the International Contact Group (ICG) recalls that the "status quo" is not an option. The costs for the population of the continued erosion of democracy and the rule of law, political repression, human rights violations and poor living conditions, as well as the unprecedented impact on the region are untenable.

The ICG reaffirms that only a negotiated transition that leads to credible presidential elections with international observation, the re-institutionalisation of public powers and guarantees that allow political coexistence can bring a lasting solution.

The ICG calls upon Venezuelan actors to put the interest of the nation above other considerations and return to a credible, representative and serious negotiation on the basis of the original agenda and the latest proposals tabled under Norwegian facilitation. The systemic crisis will not be solved without democratic elections, respect of the National Assembly's rights, and a return to an independent system of checks and balances.

Alternative routes such as the "national table" including some minority political forces, or the recourse to non-political means either to stay in power or achieve a change of power, will not deliver the sustainable solutions needed to overcome the national divide. The group also asks for immediate release of all political prisoners and full restoration of parliamentarians' immunities, under the rule of law.

As agreed by the Group at the last ministerial meeting, the Special Adviser for Venezuela of the EU High Representative, Mr Enrique Iglesias, will return to Caracas for contacts with all the relevant national stakeholders.

The ICG will also continue actively promoting the building of an international coalition around a negotiated electoral path, while underlining that the solution to the country's plight needs to be Venezuelan and Venezuelan only. The international community has the duty to accompany and support solutions that should emerge from a serious negotiation process, backed by the

democratically elected National Assembly.

At the same time, the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people, inside and outside the country, cannot wait for a solution to the political crisis as recently underlined by International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant crisis. The ICG remains engaged in its efforts to help facilitate and increase the delivery of coordinated humanitarian assistance to Venezuelans in need.

Press contacts

Press Contacts:

[Maja KOCIJANCIC](#)

Maja KOCIJANCIC

Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

+32 (0)2 29 86570

+32 (0)498 984 425

[Christina WUNDER](#)

Christina WUNDER

Press Officer for International Cooperation and Development

+32 (0)2 29 92256

+32 (0)460 792 256

[Xavier CIFRE QUATRESOLS](#)

Xavier CIFRE QUATRESOLS

EEAS Press Officer

+32 2 297 35 82

+32 460 75 51 56

www.eeas.europa.eu

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