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Joint Statements

## **Venezuela: Meeting of the International Contact Groups and the LIMA Group - Joint Statement**

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The High Representative of the EU, the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Spain, a representative of Germany, and the Special Advisor for Venezuela, members of International Contact Group, together with the Foreign Ministers of Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru, and the Vice Minister of Honduras, members of the Lima Group, and the Foreign Ministers of Costa Rica and Panama, members of both Groups, met today in New York to discuss the situation in Venezuela.

They reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to a return to democracy and adherence to the rule of law and human rights in Venezuela through a peaceful transition, leading to free and fair presidential elections. They renewed their support to the democratically elected National Assembly and its leadership.

They expressed their grave concern at the serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Venezuela, as exhaustively illustrated in the report presented by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights last July. They noted in particular the report's finding that these violations result from a strategy "aimed at neutralising, repressing and criminalising political opponents and people critical of the Government" and they stressed the urgent need to immediately release all political prisoners. They will continue to coordinate effective actions on human rights related matters in the UNHCR and other international bodies.

The current multidimensional crisis is worsening the already dire humanitarian situation of the Venezuelan population. They welcomed the publication of the first Humanitarian Response Plan and the increase of assistance from the UN and other international humanitarian organisations. They called for an increase of humanitarian space and assistance in line with the internationally agreed principles.

The crisis has compelled more than 4.3 million Venezuelans to leave their country, putting

additional pressure in the countries from the region. Both groups commended the efforts of the hosting countries, however they noted that the needs still far outpace their capabilities. They called on the international community to step up substantially its solidarity and financial support. They welcomed the forthcoming International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis, to be held in Brussels, end of October.

Both groups will continue to reach out to other actors in the international community and intensify their common work, in a coordinated and complementary manner, towards supporting a political, peaceful and democratic solution to the Venezuelan crisis.

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