

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**40th Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

*Geneva, 25 January 2022*

Mr President,

Slovenia appreciates the national report by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and its presentation today.

Slovenia remains deeply concerned about the significant restrictions on civic and democratic space in the country, marked by acts of harassment of journalists, human rights defenders and the opposition, unlawful arrests, arbitrary detentions, and the lack of independence of the justice system. We call on the authorities to ensure basic health services, equal access to vaccines, essential services and food, as well as to meaningfully engage with all relevant stakeholders in the country towards a democratic, inclusive and peaceful solution of the long-lasting crisis.

Slovenia also wishes to point out the importance of freedom and autonomy of the universities, based on compliance with international standards on the protection of the right to autonomy and academic freedom.

Slovenia would like to make the following recommendations:

-  to ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

-  to ensure that human rights defenders are protected from harassment, criminalization and persecution and to adopt policy for the protection of human rights defenders.

Thank you.