

**Statement by Msgr. John Putzer, Chargé d’Affaires, a.i.**

**Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other**

**International Organizations in Geneva**

**at the 40th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

*Geneva, 25 January 2022*

Mr. President,

 The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of Venezuela on the occasion of the presentation of its third Universal Periodic Review and notes the efforts made by Venezuela to consolidate compliance with international human rights law.

My Delegation also acknowledges the establishment of a National Dialogue Forum and the creation in 2021 of the Special Commission for Dialogue, Peace and National Reconciliation. It is of utmost importance that such mechanisms are allowed to operate in a transparent, inclusive and effective fashion.

Nevertheless, this Delegation wishes to express its concern with regard to the current humanitarian and social situation, aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Holy See recommends to the Delegation of Venezuela the following:

1. To continue efforts aimed at facilitating sincere and open dialogue with all stakeholders and promoting national reconciliation, including at the local level.
2. To reinforce policies to ensure access to essential services, including food supply, medical assistance, and the right to quality, holistic education.
3. To strengthen national measures to combat criminal violence, especially as regards arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial executions, and the disproportionate use of force by civil and security forces.
4. To ensure the independent character of all aspects of the justice system and guarantee access to this system to all people so as to combat impunity and provide redress to victims.

Thank you, Mr. President.