Jorge Rodríguez

Esqs. Monjas a San Francisco, Hemiciclo

Palacio Federal Legislativo

Carmelitas, Av Sur 2

Caracas, Distrito Capital

**VENEZUELA**

Dear President of the National Assembly

May I express my serious concern on the present discussions in the National Assembly regarding a potential bill called “law on the review, regulation, activity and finance of Non Government Organisations (NGO) and connected organisations”, debated e.g. on 2024-01-09.

It is reported that the discussions are leading towards seriously restricting the freedom of work and activities of NGOs by prohibiting essential social principles.

Do I need to remind your Excellency the historical systems that tried to dictate and control the way how their citizens have to render mind?

> in Argentine (~1960 – 1983)

> in the Soviet Union (1950ties – 1980ties)

> in the present North Korea

> …

I seriously urge you to defend the higher principles of Democracy and Human Rights (HRD), according to the obligations Venezuela as a nation ratified which include:

+ freedom of thought, consciousness & religion (HRD art.18)

+ right for expression of opinion (HRD art.19)

+ right for assembling, creating and belonging to associations (HRD art.20)

It might be a tempting desire to regulate the way the public behaves. But whenever a government historically tried to restrain their citizens thought by “law” these restraints have been misused by the police, military, the judicial and penal systems in wrongful, unfair and brutal ways.

A government that cannot cope with critics is always tempted to suppress opposition, discourage open discussion which is a platform for open debate and the exchange of ideas.

May this National Assembly reach a decision that is respecting the principles of Human Rights valuing organisations which support the most vulnerable people in the country and society as a whole.

With sincere thoughts