

*Translated from Spanish*

S-GCN-22-011958

Bogotá D.C., 17 May 2022

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your note LA/COD/4 of 25 April 2022 concerning the communication addressed to the Secretary-General in which reference is made to an alleged incident at the premises of the Consular Section of the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Bogotá.

I wish to inform you that, following the unilateral severance of diplomatic and consular relations with Colombia announced by Venezuela on 23 February 2019, the Venezuelan premises in Colombia were left empty, and no diplomatic or consular activities are currently being conducted there.

The premises belonging to the Venezuelan State have not received any maintenance or upkeep, which the Venezuelan State is responsible for, as owner of the properties. This has led to the deterioration of the premises of the Consular Section in Bogota, and several complaints about damage have been filed by owners of neighbouring properties and local residents.

Following the severance of diplomatic and consular relations, Venezuela ceased to comply with its lease payment obligations in respect of its leased buildings, which has caused harm to the owners of the buildings, who are not receiving lease payments and cannot access the buildings to prevent their deterioration.

This contrasts with the respect that Colombia has continued to show for Venezuelan laws and regulations after the severance of diplomatic and consular relations. In this regard, it should be noted that the Government of Colombia has continued to fulfil the obligations entered into in lease agreements that it had signed to ensure the functioning of the diplomatic and consular premises of Colombia accredited to Venezuela, as well as its other obligations as an owner and lessee.

**Miguel de Serpa Soares**

United Nations Legal Counsel

New York

While Colombia confirms its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, it considers that the situation of the Venezuelan premises should be treated as an exceptional situation in which the failure of the Venezuelan Government to fulfil its basic obligations regarding the maintenance of its premises and payments owed to individuals is creating serious difficulties for the receiving State.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, and in accordance with the inviolability of consular and diplomatic premises, the Colombian authorities have, through the diplomatic channel, repeatedly informed the the Venezuelan Government – represented by the interim Government of Juan Guaidó, which is recognized by Colombia – of the situation at the consular premises in Bogotá. The authorities have also transmitted petitions submitted by individuals concerning the cessation of payments due under civil obligations.

Colombia considers that, in view of the difficulties that have arisen as a result of the severance of diplomatic and consular relations, its work to protect the above-mentioned premises must be met by a commitment from the Venezuelan Government to fulfil its obligations as owner and lessee.

Colombia requests that the information it has provided be taken into consideration and that, at the same time, through the Secretary-General, Venezuela be urged to assume its responsibilities with regard to the properties that housed its premises, in particular by duly fulfilling its lease obligations in respect of the owners of the properties, which are not the responsibility of the Government of Colombia. For its part, Colombia, pursuant to article 27 (a) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, will continue to strengthen its protection of the premises of foreign missions, through its diplomatic police service.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Marta Lucía **Ramírez**

Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia

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