



# General Assembly

Seventy-first session

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## Fourth Committee

### Summary record of the 24th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 May 2017, at 11.35 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Drobnjak ..... (Croatia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.*

#### **Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees**

1. **The Chair** said that the meeting had been convened for the purpose of electing the Chair and other members of the Bureau of the Committee for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

2. The nomination of Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) for the office of Chair had been endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. A request had been received for the election to be conducted by secret ballot.

3. **Mr. Régis** (Haiti), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that the Venezuelan Government had exercised its right under the Charter of the United Nations to nominate a candidate for the office of Chair of the Committee. The Group had unanimously endorsed the nomination, as its members were confident that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela could make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee. The country had played a leading role in regional efforts to achieve the freedom, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, strengthen regional solidarity, enhance political, economic, social and cultural cooperation and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. The country was currently facing difficult circumstances that gave rise to a number of concerns, and the Group called for the resumption of dialogue among all relevant national stakeholders with a view to achieving a peaceful solution to the situation that respected the rule of law, freedoms, human rights and democratic principles. However, the domestic situation would not prevent the Venezuelan candidate from fulfilling the mandate of the Chair of the Committee. The Group therefore proposed that the candidate should be elected by acclamation.

4. **Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America) said that her delegation had requested a secret ballot because of its concerns regarding the state of democracy in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the ability of a representative of the current Government of that country to chair the Committee in an impartial and apolitical manner. Members of the Committee should not ignore the growing instability caused by the current administration in their deliberations, given that the Committee's work covered important matters relating to refugees, peacekeeping and special political missions. More than 2,200 Venezuelans had recently been arrested, some civilians were being tried in

military courts, and thousands were fleeing to neighbouring countries. Furthermore, nearly 60 had been killed, and hundreds more had been injured, in the massive protests against the Government's decision in March 2017 to strip the opposition-controlled congressional branch of its powers. The planned rewriting of the Constitution would be another step in the erosion of the country's democratic institutions. The Venezuelan government also continued to curb political freedoms, including freedom of assembly.

5. Her Government supported regional efforts to address the situation and fully supported the view of the Organization of American States that it was essential that the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should ensure the full restoration of democratic order and that inclusive and effective dialogue was the right path to achieve lasting solutions to the challenges faced by the Venezuelan people. Her delegation could not support the nomination of the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the office of Chair until democratic order was restored in his country and the rights of the Venezuelan people were respected.

6. **The Chair** invited the Committee to elect by secret ballot the Chair of the Committee for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure.

7. *At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Poels (Belgium), Ms. Rivera Sánchez (El Salvador), Mr. Goldea (Hungary), Mr. Maleki (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Ikiara (Kenya) and Mr. Fawundu (Sierra Leone) acted as tellers.*

8. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	190
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	9
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	181
<i>Abstentions:</i>	42
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	139
<i>Required majority:</i>	70
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)	133
Mr. Webson (Antigua and Barbuda)	1
Mr. Zampolli (Dominica)	1
Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana)	1
Mr. Régis (Haiti)	1
Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)	1
Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay)	1

9. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) was elected Chair.*

10. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that it was unacceptable that the delegation of the United States had attempted to impose its will on other delegations and change the position of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, in what amounted to an attack on the multilateral system. He thanked the delegations that had voted for him for their demonstration of solidarity in the face of the attempt by the delegation of the United States to undermine the democratic procedures of the Committee. The result of the voting should be an important lesson for the delegation of the United States. He and his delegation were committed to furthering the work of the Committee. In that connection, colonialists such as the United States should bear in mind his country's determination to implement the United Nations resolutions on decolonization.

11. The significant challenges that his country was currently addressing would be overcome within the framework of Venezuelan law and the Constitution. External interference in his country's affairs would not be tolerated, in particular from a State with a lamentable history of interference in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region had experienced much death and destruction as a result of dictatorships imposed or supported by the United States in its attempts to exert control over the region.

12. **The Chair** said that, with regard to the three offices of Vice-Chair, the nominations of Mr. Almahmoud (United Arab Emirates) and Ms. Özgür (Turkey) had been endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States and the Group of Western European and other States, respectively. There were two candidates from African States: Ms. Benhabouche (Algeria) and Mr. Halfaoui (Morocco).

13. *Mr. Almahmoud (United Arab Emirates) and Ms. Özgür (Turkey) were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*

14. **The Chair** invited the Committee to elect by secret ballot a Vice-Chair from one of the African States.

15. At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Poels (Belgium), Ms. Rivera Sánchez (El Salvador), Mr. Goldea (Hungary), Mr. Maleki (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Martin (New Zealand) and Mr. Fawundu (Sierra Leone) acted as tellers.

16. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	190
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	3
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	187
<i>Abstentions:</i>	39
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	148
<i>Required majority:</i>	75
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Mr. Halfaoui (Morocco)	88
Ms. Benhabouche (Algeria)	58
Ms. Grignon (Kenya)	1
Mr. Hilale (Morocco)	1

17. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Halfaoui (Morocco) was elected Vice-Chair.*

18. **The Chair** said that the nomination of Ms. Angelova (Bulgaria) for the office of Rapporteur had been endorsed by the Group of Eastern European States.

19. *Ms. Angelova (Bulgaria) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

*The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.*