

**Statement by Sir Ronald Sanders, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda
At a Meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States
On Tuesday, 5th September 2023
“In Remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the coup d’état in Chile”**

We, the representatives of our Governments, on this Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, are custodians of democracy, peace, human rights and development in our hemisphere.

It is a grave responsibility, and we must always recall the importance of our task and how much the peoples of our countries expect us to defend and uphold their rights and freedoms.

Today, we collectively remember - and reflect - upon a dark day in the history of the Americas—the coup d'état in Chile on September 11, 1973.

It led to the overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende.

This event shook not only Chile but the very foundations of democracy and the rule of law in our hemisphere.

For a great many people all over the world, President Allende was a beacon for social justice, economic reform, and democratic values.

His life was abruptly and tragically cut short, and so, too, was freedom and justice in Chile.

I recall the words of President Allende spoken in his final radio address to the Chilean people on the day of the Coup.

He said:

"I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment when treason seeks to prevail. Keep in mind that, much sooner than later, the great avenues will again be opened, through which will pass free men to construct a better society."

But while the coup d'état prevailed, there were widespread human rights abuses, thousands of disappearances, and a regime that stood against the values we cherish today.

To ensure that such an event does not fade into the annals of history, unnoticed and unacknowledged, my delegation fully supports the establishment of a permanent symbol in the OAS headquarters, recognizing President Allende.

We are aware that this will also be a remembrance of all those who lived in fear and suffered under the subsequent autocratic rule in Chile, and a reminder to all our nations of the dire consequences of standing silent when democracy is assaulted.

Our Council should use this occasion to reaffirm our commitment to the enduring values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Let us honour President Allende and the countless others who have fallen in the struggle for these ideals, let us also resolve never to allow history to repeat itself.

Thank you.