

[Inter-American Commission: NGOs welcome appointment of Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression](#)

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(New York) - The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has [announced the appointment](#) of a new Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Edison Lanza. Mr Lanza, a Uruguayan journalist and lawyer, has been appointed for a 3-year term, renewable once. He will take office on 6 October ahead of the 153rd Session of the Commission.

'ISHR welcomes the appointment of Edison Lanza as Special Rapporteur and looks forward to working with him to ensure that human rights defenders, journalists, legal professionals and other civil society actors are able to exercise their fundamental right to freedom of expression, without restriction or retaliation,' said Eleanor Openshaw of the International Service for Human Rights.

Mr Lanza has considerable experience working with civil society organisations and monitoring bodies on the right to freedom of expression at the national level. He also has significant experience working with international and regional human rights mechanisms, including through the conduct of strategic litigation before the Inter-American Commission and consultancy work with the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

In announcing Mr Lanza's appointment the Commission emphasised the [rigour and transparency of the selection process](#), which included substantial consultation with and input from civil society on the quality of final candidates.

'The process for Mr Lanza's appointment is a good practice example of engagement with civil society,' said Ms Openshaw. 'Input from civil society is essential to ensure the appointment of independent, expert candidates with a sound understanding of the human rights situation, both in law and on the ground,' she said.

Freedom of Expression is given a particular emphasis within the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, with the relevant Rapporteur the only mandate holder not to have additional duties as a Commissioner, meaning that he or she is able to focus exclusively on the Rapporteurship. The importance of the mandate is reinforced by the position's designation as a 'Special Rapporteur' - the only such case in the Commission. The [mandate has previously come under attack](#) in efforts by certain States to weaken the Commission.

Mr Lanza's appointment has been welcomed by [NGOs working on freedom expression](#). However, they highlighted both the breadth and depth of threats to freedom of expression across the continent that he will need to address in his new role, and the pushback his mandate is likely to continue to experience from some States of the OAS.

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