

H.E. Ms. Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake
Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations in New York

H.E. Mr. Mario Alberto Fortín Midence
Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations in Geneva

29th September, 2021

Your Excellencies,

Questions from Human Rights Council Elections Pledging Event 2021

On 8th September 2021, Amnesty International and the International Service for Human Rights held an online pledging event for candidate States to the Human Rights Council for the membership term 2022-2024.

This year's event had over 200 online attendees and an overwhelming number of questions posed to candidates, providing an opportunity for candidates to present their visions for membership and to engage with a range of stakeholders on their human rights commitments and pledges.

We thank you for your participation in the event. With the goal of furthering dialogue, as well as improving adherence to Council membership standards and accountability, as articulated in UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, please find below the questions addressed specifically to Honduras as well as questions for all candidate States.

The questions, as well as your responses, will be shared on ISHR's website. We request that you please send your responses to Maithili Pai at m.pai@ishr.ch by 8th October 2021.

Questions addressed specifically to Honduras

1. *ACI-Participa*: What strategy will the Honduran government implement to prevent the high rates of femicides in the country?
2. *ACI-Participa*: What concrete actions will you take with regards to the reforms made to the Honduran penal code? Do you think that said reforms should be repealed?

3. *ACI-Participa*: How will you deal with the detrimental effects of corruption in the development of Honduras?
4. *ACI-Participa*: What concrete actions do you plan to take in response to the multiple instances of abuse of authority and excessive use of force by the national police, armed forces, military police and other special forces? Should the budget of these institutions be reduced?
5. *ACI-Participa*: Mr. Mario Fortín, What actions will you take with regards to the kidnapping and disappearance of Garifuna leaders since 18 July 2020?
6. *CIVICUS*: The free participation of human rights defenders is crucial to the HRC. How will you protect HRDs so they can carry out their vital work nationally and internationally?
7. *Human Rights Watch*: Which reforms is the government undertaking to address the widespread impunity for human rights abuses in Honduras and the lack of independence of the judiciary and other oversight institutions?

Questions posed to all candidate States:

1. *Outright International*: The Human Rights Council continues to be a vital resource for LGBTI communities to bring visibility to the human rights violations they face based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. However, questions related to LGBTI persons are also unfortunately highly politicized at the Council. How would the candidates present today ensure that politics does not get in the way of promoting and protecting the human rights of LGBTI persons?
2. *CIVICUS*: What are the steps you will take to ensure full NGO participation in the Council, its mechanisms and resolutions, and to engage with national and international civil society as a Council member?
3. *Human Rights Watch*: NGOs have been banned from UN headquarters since March 2020. Although UN employees, diplomats & media representatives (resident correspondents) can now enter UN headquarters (with restrictions), NGOs remain under a total ban. What will you do to ensure COVID-19 isn't used as a convenient excuse for those who are not fans of civil society to bar NGOs from UN headquarters? Will you support allowing accredited NGO representatives to participate in UN headquarters activities in line with all UN guidelines and restrictions like other UN stakeholders?
4. *Child Rights Connect*: What are your plans to mainstream and advance child rights at the Human Rights Council?
5. *Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations*: How do candidate states intend to promote the protection of human rights defenders, at the national level and within the Council?
6. *Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations*: Ensuring accountability for human rights violations should be a priority for all States, especially Human Rights Council members. The support of the ACT Code of Conduct is an important factor for Liechtenstein's support of a candidature, in addition to its human rights record, pledges and commitments. To what extent are you prioritising strengthening accountability and supporting the ACT Code of Conduct?
7. *Eric Richardson*: During COVID-19, civil society's participation has been severely restricted,

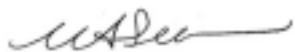
more so than at any other time in the Council's history. Links for informal negotiations which take place online are not publicly posted, NGOs are not permitted to enter the plenary room unless they are giving a speech, and during the recent Special Session on Afghanistan, there were time periods where no civil society was present due to the webcast shutting down and the ban on civil society's attendance in person. If elected, would you reverse these trends and maximize the opportunities for civil society to participate in all meetings of the Human Rights Council?

8. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What are your plans in order to improve access to healthcare to low-income individuals?
9. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What is your plan to promote the right of access to education of Muslim and Roma women refugees?

Questions posed and answered during the event

1. *ACI-Participa*: What immediate actions are planned to reduce the systematic human rights violations in the country, which include criminalisation, enforced disappearances, usurpation of territories, forced displacement of indigenous groups, femicide, excessive use of force, abuse of authority and selective assassinations, among others?
2. *Trocaire Honduras*: What became of the investigations into the 22 deaths in December 2017 and January 2018 that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras attributed to the Honduran security forces?
3. *Human Rights Watch*: What can we expect from Honduras as a member of the HRC if it abstained from voting in an Organisation of American States' resolution condemning the egregious human rights abuses committed by the Ortega regime in Nicaragua, which have been documented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights?

We look forward to hearing from you.



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