

H.E. Mr. Julio César Arriola Ramírez  
Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations in New York

H.E. Mr. Julio César Peralta Rodas  
Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations in Geneva

29th September, 2021

Your Excellencies,

### **Questions from Human Rights Council Elections Pledging Event 2021**

On 8<sup>th</sup> 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 Paraguay 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](mailto:m.pai@ishr.ch) by 8th October 2021.

### **Questions addressed specifically to Paraguay**

1. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: If elected to the HRC, will Paraguay endorse and promote the adoption of laws against all forms of discrimination?
2. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: If elected to the HRC, will Paraguay review the situation of pro-life and pro-family declarations made by municipalities and even the National Congress that

are then used to deny human rights?

3. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: If elected to the HRC, what preventive actions will Paraguay undertake in relation to cases of sexual harassment in universities?
4. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: Being a candidate for the HRC, could you explain what comprehensive sexual education is?
5. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: As a member of the HRC, what additional measures would Paraguay take to prevent the sexual abuse of children and adolescents?
6. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: Being a candidate for the HRC, could you explain what gender equality means for Paraguay?
7. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: As a member of the HRC, will Paraguay allow the Itaipú hydroelectric dam to continue with its attempts to evict an indigenous community?
8. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: As part of the HRC, what mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders would Paraguay adopt?
9. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: Being a candidate for the HRC, could you explain what is the State's posture regarding the allegations of torture that occurred at the Navy headquarters in Ciudad del Este in July 2020?

#### **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

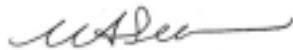
Liechtenstein's support of a candidature, in addition to its human rights record, pledges and commitments. To what extent are you prioritising strengthening accountability and supporting the ACT Code of Conduct?

7. *Eric Richardson*: During COVID, 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. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: Would Paraguay ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights if elected to the HRC?
2. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: If successful in being elected to the HRC, would Paraguay reconsider the Ministry of Education's resolution that bans teaching on gender equality and prohibits teachers from providing comprehensive sexuality education?
3. *Amnesty International Paraguay*: What kind of indigenous land restitution mechanism, in line with human rights standards, does Paraguay intend to adopt and promote? Will the State return its land to the Tekoha Sauce Indigenous Community?

We look forward to hearing from you.



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