

H.E. Mrs. Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Permanent Representative of United States to the United Nations in New York

H.E. Mr. Benjamin Moeling

Permanent Representative of the United States 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 the United States 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 the United States

1. *Joseph Alafac (Twitter user)*: Will they finalize the ratification of, or accession to, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child since the US is the only State in the world that still hasn't ratified the treaty?
2. *Empathy Surplus Project Foundation*: What is the USA's 50 state plan for human rights education? And how will the USA candidate convince Congress to enable the five ratified human rights treaties?
3. *CIVICUS*: How do you intend to strengthen civic freedom at the national level, particularly with regards to freedom of peaceful assembly, and globally through influence on the Council and other multilateral institutions?
4. *South China Morning Post*: China has come under growing international scrutiny for its actions in HK and Xinjiang. Can the US delegation please detail what further actions, whether through the Council or otherwise, it plans to take in this regard?
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. *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?

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

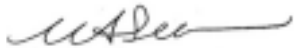
Questions posed and answered during the event

1. *American Civil Liberties Union*: Will the United States adopt a national plan of action to fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and take concrete steps to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Universal Periodic Review recommendations to create a National Human Rights Institution?
2. *Human Rights Watch*: If the US is again elected to the UN Human Rights Council, will it commit to scrutinizing abuses by friends and foes alike? And will it commit to allowing its own rights record

(including racism and other problems) to be thoroughly scrutinized?

3. *Community Action Center*: How will the U.S. foreign policy implement the pledges expressed with regard to the Israeli policies and discriminatory laws applied against Palestinians in general and in East Jerusalem in particular? The annexation of East Jerusalem was condemned by many Human Rights Council members and yet the American embassy was moved to Jerusalem in 2018. How will the U.S.A. contribute to fulfilling the many resolutions of the UN bodies regarding the unlawful annexation of East Jerusalem?

We look forward to hearing from you.



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