

**Human Rights Council elections 2025**  
**Questions asked by civil society to candidate States**  
**during the Pledging Event**  
**4 September 2025**

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# Questions to all States

## On specific country situations

- Uganda is a pivotal country in the Great Lakes Regions in Africa, what is the view of candidate states on the on-going Human Rights abuses and daily extra-judicial killings, daily arrests and intimidation by the Museveni government against the opposition supporters of the National Unity Platform ? (From Williams Ntege Lubwama, Ugandan-Canadian human rights defender)
- How will candidate States engage with the situation of political prisoners in Pakistan, Egypt and Tunisia? (From an anonymous HRD)
- What concrete steps will candidate States take to address the persecution and forced displacement of the Rohingya people? How will they protect their rights? (From Mohammad Jaber - Rohingya Relief Foundation)
- Given Vietnam's candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council 2026-2028, how can Member States ensure that Vietnam, which is unjustly prosecuting journalists for exercising freedom of expression, upholds the Council's highest human rights standards, as evidenced by its failure to address reprisals against human rights defenders? ( From vietnamese journalist Đoàn Bảo Châu)

## On accountability

- Will candidate States commit to supporting competitive slates and only voting for candidates with strong human rights records, to strengthen the Council's legitimacy? (From Plan Rights International)
- Will candidate States commit to supporting independent investigations into serious human rights violations worldwide, including those committed by allies? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- How will candidate States ensure that, if elected to the Human Rights Council, they will uphold the Council's mandate with integrity, particularly by supporting accountability for gross human rights violations—including those committed by powerful States—including by protecting the rights of marginalized groups such as women, LGBTQIA+ people, persons with disabilities, and human rights defenders? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- What concrete measures will candidate States take to redress and repair crimes committed during the colonisation of countries in Africa? (From Youlou Denov Ferry)
- What concrete actions will candidate States promote to put an end to the different genocides and crimes against humanity currently unfolding in the MENA and African regions? (From Youlou Denov Ferry)

- Some Global North countries ignore and violate human rights, it seems without consequences. How will candidate States address double standards at the HRC? (From Youlou Denov Ferry)
- What measures will candidate States take to ensure that the United Nations and its missions in areas where human rights violations are occurring, such as Libya, are transparent and accountable in their performance? How will they ensure that deliberate violations are not ignored, but rather accurately documented and reported? (From anonymous HRD)
- Given the ambiguity surrounding the documentation of violations, what steps will candidate States take to ensure that violations are documented accurately and impartially? Will they support the establishment of independent mechanisms to investigate serious violations, especially those in which the state is involved or condones? (From anonymous HRD)

## On human rights defenders

- Given that the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders remains a non-binding instrument, do candidate States consider that it should be updated or complemented by stronger international standards — such as the recognition of a formal international status for human rights defenders, similar to refugee status — to ensure they receive concrete protection against reprisals and guaranteed access to international mechanisms (From Tomasz Tuczapski from the International Human Rights Commission - IHRC)
- What concrete steps will candidate States take to protect civic space and ensure that human rights defenders, journalists, and activists can work without fear of reprisal? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- Will candidate States commit to speaking out and taking concrete action against egregious abuses such as forced organ harvesting, systemic discrimination, and reprisals against civil society actors? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- How will candidate States support women rights defenders refugees? (From Savie ASBL NGO LGBTQ - DRC)
- What concrete steps will candidate States take to recognise and protect human rights defenders, especially from killings and arbitrary detentions? (From Samuel Merlin Meyene Me Ndi )
- In light of increasing threats against human rights defenders, what concrete steps will candidate States take to ensure their immediate and effective protection? How will they work to promote international accountability for violators of defenders' rights, including through the use of targeted sanctions mechanisms?(From anonymous HRD)

- How will candidate States support local and international civil society organisations working in dangerous areas and facing multifaceted threats? What are their plans to enable these organisations to access funding and technical support without restrictions? (From anonymous HRD)
- How do you plan to collaborate with other human rights defenders to ensure they receive the necessary support to work fearlessly in Africa? (From Zero Corruption Campaign-ZCC)

## On Climate, Land, Business and Human Rights

- How do candidate States connect economic activities with human rights in a way that fulfils the State's obligation and guarantees human rights? How do candidate States propose to regulate business activities at the national level, including the investment cycle and value chains, in order to respect human rights and the environment and ensure a decent life for all people? (From Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación -PODER)
- What is the specific plan and action that candidate States will work on, if elected, in relation to regulating business conduct and thus guaranteeing the protection of human rights, particularly those of women, children and adolescents, with the effective participation of individuals and communities affected by public, private and mixed business activities, and how will cases of redress for pending abuses and violations be addressed? (From Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación -PODER)
- How will candidate States integrate climate justice and environmental protection into your human rights agenda, particularly in supporting vulnerable and Indigenous communities? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- If elected, what would candidate States do to further the realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment at the international level and to bridge implementation and monitoring between the Human Rights Council and other multilateral forums? (From Ann Harrison, Amnesty International)

## On groups historically excluded

- What strategies are you envisaging to make minority rights more valued? (From AFRICAphonie)

## On migrants and refugees' rights

- How will candidate States ensure the full protection of asylum seekers and refugees, including a commitment not to deport individuals to countries where they may face

persecution, violence, or torture? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights' Defender, Canada)

- How will candidate States concretely support refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa? (From Youlou Denov Ferry)

## Women and girls' rights

- How do candidate States plan to advance gender equality and ensure the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence and discrimination, including in conflict zones? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)
- What commitments will candidate States make to place gender equality and girls' empowerment at the heart of your Human Rights Council membership? (Plan Rights International)
- How will candidate States address gender-based violence against girls, including in education settings, humanitarian contexts, and online spaces? (From Plan Rights International)
- Will candidate States government commit to integrating a gender perspective into all resolutions and debates you engage in as a Council member? (From Plan Rights International)
- Will candidate States commit to supporting resolutions that address systemic discrimination against girls, including in education, digital access, and participation? (From Plan Rights International)

## LGBTQ+ rights

- Will candidate States explicitly commit to protecting LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination and violence, and support relevant UN resolutions upholding the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons globally? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights' Defender, Canada)
- Please explain how, within your vision for membership, you will collaborate with other States on the Human Rights Council to advance equality and non-discrimination against LGBTIQ people in your respective States and around the world. Furthermore, how will candidate States hold other UN Member States outside the HRC to account for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the human rights of LGBTIQ people globally? (From Kendra Hughbanks)
- Would candidate States support a resolution that called for an end to violence against people based on their sexual orientation and gender identity? If not, why not? If yes, why do they consider this important? (From Outright International)

## Children and older persons

- How will all candidate states support the full and meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organisations as equal participants in the Human Rights Council's new Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group to draft and negotiate the forthcoming treaty on the rights of older persons? (From the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People)
- How will candidate States ensure that children, including girls, can meaningfully participate in the work of the Human Rights Council and other UN mechanisms during your membership? (From Plan Rights International)
- What specific steps will candidate States take to advance the rights of the child, particularly girls, in the digital environment, including preventing online exploitation and protecting children's privacy? (From Plan Rights International)
- How will candidate States ensure systematic follow-up to recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and child-related UPR recommendations during your mandate? (From Plan Rights International)
- What measures will candidate States take to protect and support child and youth human rights defenders, especially girls, who face risks when engaging with UN processes? (From Plan Rights International)
- How will candidate States ensure that civil society, including child- and youth-led organizations, can engage freely and safely with the Human Rights Council? (From Plan Rights International)
- How will candidate States use their seats to ensure that the Human Rights Council responds robustly to violations affecting children, especially girls, including in armed conflict and other crises? (From Plan Rights International)

## On emerging and new technologies

- What do candidate States expect to do regarding the issue of cybertorture defined by the United Nations in march 2020 in the report about " Psychological torture" (A-HRC-43-49), and also what concerns the report about "The consequences of neurotechnologies on human rights" (A-HRC-57-61, September 2024), and more recently the resolution A-HRC-58-I.9 (March 2025) and the meeting of intergovernmental experts at the Unesco Paris in May 2025 on "the neurotechnologies and human rights"? (From an anonymous HRD victim of cybertorture)
- As technology increasingly impacts fundamental rights, how do candidate States plan to uphold digital freedoms, regulate AI responsibly, and prevent misuse of surveillance tools? (From Dean Bordode, Human Rights Defender from Canada)

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## Questions for specific countries

### Chile

#### *Questions asked during the event*

- Chile has engaged actively at the Human Rights Council but at home, migrants & asylum seekers face racism & laws enabling expedited expulsions. What will Chile do to ensure migrant rights are protected at home? (From Human Rights Watch)
- What are Chile's plans for collaboration among Latin American States to protect human rights and the environment in the context of business and investment activities, with special attention to indigenous and peasant communities and civil society participation? (From Project on Organization, Development, Education and Research - PODER)

#### *Further questions received*

- How will Chile raise academic-freedom cases in interactive dialogues, support mandates addressing attacks on higher education, and back resolutions that integrate academic freedom into country situations, consistent with your membership duties? (from Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- In 2019, the Chilean Carabineros force violently repressed mass protests. Accountability for these abuses has been slow and police reforms have been limited. What steps will Chile take to ensure redress for police abuses (from Human Rights Watch)
- How will Chile address the situation in Haiti at the Human Rights Council? Will your country take a public position on what is happening in Haiti? What concrete steps will you follow and promote to make sure the HRC addresses what is happening in this country? (From Vision Haitienne des Droits de l'Homme)

### Ecuador

#### *Questions asked during the event*

- How does the Ecuadorian State intend to defend the rights of Indigenous peoples, nationalities, and the Afro-descendant people at the Human Rights Council when, at

the national level, land and territories continue to be exploited through extractive activities without prior consultation, leaders face persecution, several ancestral languages are being lost, and structural discrimination? (From an anonymous human rights defender)

- How will Ecuador ensure respect for judicial independence and separation of powers at the HRC with recent allegations, highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, regarding threats by high-ranking officials calling for demonstrations against the Constitutional Court and the President of the National Assembly calling the judges “enemies of the people”? (From an anonymous human rights defender)

#### *Further questions received*

- How does the Ecuadorian State intend to advocate for the rights of girls and women at the Human Rights Council when, nationally, a girl or woman is killed every 21 hours, the 2024 Law on Integral Reparations for the Families of Victims of Femicide, has yet to be implemented, the 2018 Law on Violence Against Women remains only partially implemented—particularly the Unified Violence Registry (Registro Único de Violencia, RUV), which, as of 2025, is still not operational and in August of this year, the President eliminated its own Ministry of Women and Human Rights—transferring its functions to the Ministry of Government with no clear budget? (From Walleska Pareja and another anonymous human rights defender)
- How does the Ecuadorian State intend to defend the human rights of people of African descent in the Human Rights Council when, at the national level, serious violations linked to contemporary forms of slavery and exploitation persist, according to the concerns expressed by Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery; the Working Group on Business and Human Rights; Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; and Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- As HRC members, how will Ecuador raise academic-freedom cases in interactive dialogues, support mandates addressing attacks on higher education, and back resolutions that integrate academic freedom into country situations, consistent with your membership duties? (from Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- How does the Ecuadorian State intend to defend the rights of girls against sexual violence at the Human Rights Council when it has not complied with the Inter-American Court ruling in the case of the girl Paola Albarracín, which orders, among other measures, the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education?” (From an anonymous human rights defender)



- What are Ecuador's plans for collaboration among Latin American States to protect human rights and the environment in the context of business and investment activities, with special attention to indigenous and peasant communities and civil society participation? (From Project on Organization, Development, Education and Research - PODER)
- How will Ecuador ensure respect for freedom of association at the HRC, when, on August 28, it enacted the Social Transparency Law—despite the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Gina Romero, expressing serious concerns that this law stigmatizes the work of social and human rights organizations and casts suspicion on international cooperation, including from Member States of this very Council- ? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- Since May, president Noboa has pushed several bills through expedited approval. These laws threaten Ecuadorians' rights. They open the door to unjustifiable use of lethal force, weaken accountability for security force abuses by granting pardons, erode safeguards on intelligence gathering, and introduce harmful changes to laws on youth justice that put children's rights at risk. What steps is the government taking to make sure newly adopted laws align with domestic and international human rights standards? (From Human Rights Watch)
- How will Ecuador address the situation in Haiti at the Human Rights Council? Will your country take a public position on what is happening in Haiti? What concrete steps will you follow and promote to make sure the HRC address what is happening in this country? (From Vision Haitienne des Droits de l'Homme)
- How does Ecuador intend to defend sexual and reproductive rights at the Human Rights Council when, at the national level, Clinical Practice Guideline for the Interruption of Pregnancy in Cases of Rape has not yet been approved, nor has Mifepristone been acquired, despite the fact that this medicine is already included in the National List of Essential Medicines and represents the most appropriate standard for voluntary termination of pregnancy, in addition, Comprehensive Sexuality Education is not mandatory in Ecuador and is limited to occasional talks and informational activities? (From anonymous human rights defenders)
- Ecuador has experienced a sharp rise in organized-crime-related violence recently. In the 1st half of 2025: 4,619 homicides—47% increase vs the same period in 2024. What measures is Ecuador taking to address the surge in violence while ensuring respect for human rights? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Human Rights Watch documented serious human rights violations in Ecuador after Daniel Noboa declared an “internal armed conflict” in 2024. What measures is the government taking to prevent further abuses, ensure accountability & guarantee security operations comply with international human rights standards (From Human Rights Watch)

- On 21 August 2025, the National Assembly of Ecuador refused to vote in solidarity with the Palestinian people and the victims of famine, despite having done so in previous years. Likewise, in May 2025, during an official visit to the State of Israel, the President of Ecuador supported Netanyahu, stating that Ecuador and Israel have the same enemies. Ecuador's support for Israel comes in the context of a genocide denounced by the United Nations in which 168 UN workers (in 2024 alone) and hundreds of humanitarian workers have lost their lives. Will Ecuador, as a member of the Human Rights Council, continue to support and justify Israel and, consequently, the genocide being carried out against the Palestinian people and the murder of United Nations and humanitarian workers? (From Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos del Ecuador)
- On 12 August 2025, the President of Ecuador, together with his cabinet and several members of parliament, led a huge march against the Constitutional Court of Ecuador, with thousands of people arriving in the capital Quito from all over the country. The president rebuked the Constitutional Court, stigmatised it and even attempted to evict it from its headquarters for having suspended several legal provisions of two laws that allow for the permanent militarisation of Ecuador, without any kind of control, and the spying on civil society organisations. This was unanimously condemned by international protection bodies. What does Ecuador understand by independence of the judiciary and What are its views regarding the threats to the Constitutional Court? (From Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos del Ecuador)
- The crisis of insecurity, despite the uncontrolled militarisation of the country since 9 January 2024, when the President of Ecuador declared internal armed conflict, has resulted in the worst figures in Ecuador's history. There were more than 4,500 murders in the first half of the year, and there has been a spike in human rights violations, such as forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and excessive use of force in the line of duty. Ineffective militarisation, without democratic controls, has been legalised through the National Solidarity Law, which was passed in just one month. Does Ecuador endorse the permanent militarisation of the country under the terms of the National Solidarity Law, and consequently in other countries, as a response in line with the standards that regulate the participation of armed forces in the control of public order? (From Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos del Ecuador)
- In April 2024, the Ecuadorian government invaded the Mexican diplomatic headquarters on the grounds of recovering a fugitive from Ecuadorian justice who had been granted diplomatic asylum by the Mexican State. Does Ecuador consider that invading diplomatic headquarters is justified in order to recover fugitives from justice? (From Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos del Ecuador)

- How does Ecuador intend to promote democratic values and judicial independence nationally and internationally? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- How can Ecuador promote the separation of powers and democracy when it constantly sends contradictory messages against the Court of Justice and passes laws that are regressive for democracy and the fundamental freedoms of human rights defenders in the name of securitisation? When it proposes mergers of institutions, avoiding the guarantee of specific social and environmental rights, prioritising capitalism and the regression of human rights? (From an anonymous human rights defender)

## Egypt (did not attend the event)

- As a Human Rights Council candidate, how will Egypt address the systematic denial of marriage registration for Bahá'ís under Article 134, which leads to intergenerational civil and legal violations, including risks of statelessness, disinheritance, denial of birth certificates, and restricted access to education, healthcare, and residency rights? (From Bahá'í International Community)
- Egypt now wants a seat on the UN Human Rights Council, at the podium where it has long deflected criticism of its own dire record. Will Egypt now end its wholesale crackdown on peaceful speech and release thousands unjustly detained in its dungeons? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Why is Egypt seeking membership of the UN Human Rights Council when it is going out of its way to stop its own citizens engaging with the Geneva-based body and its mechanisms, and refusing access to its Human Rights experts wishing to visit the country? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Why does Egypt want a seat on the UN Human Rights Council after it has long undermined human rights mechanisms, blanket denied any and all abuses, and rarely spoken out on the human rights situation in neighbouring countries? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Given reports from UN experts regarding persistent harassment, surveillance, and intimidation of Bahá'ís, including forced closure of social projects and pressure on friends and colleagues to sever ties, what concrete steps will Egypt take to ensure the community can live free from discrimination and enjoy the full protection of their rights in line with its international human rights obligations? (From Bahá'í International Community)
- How does Egypt plan to address the ongoing discrimination caused by the use of a dash or blank space in the religion field on national identity cards, which UN experts have noted impedes access to education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services for Bahá'ís? (From Bahá'í International Community)

- Considering that Bahá'ís are denied burial in Muslim cemeteries, that two Bahá'í cemeteries have previously been confiscated by the State, and that requests for additional cemetery land have been refused based on religious edicts from Al-Azhar, what steps will Egypt take to ensure that Bahá'ís can exercise their right to burial in accordance with their religious beliefs, consistent with its obligations under international human rights law? (From Bahá'í International Community)
- UN experts have expressed concern about reports of Bahá'ís being placed on airport watchlists, subjected to heightened surveillance, and harassed or interrogated when traveling. As a Human Rights Council candidate, how will Egypt ensure that Bahá'ís can exercise their right to freedom of movement without intimidation, arbitrary restrictions, or discrimination based on their religion? (From Bahá'í International Community)
- Given repeated communications from UN Special Rapporteurs and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances regarding cases of transnational repression, how will Egypt fully cooperate with these mechanisms, including by responding to their requests and implementing their recommendations? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- What concrete safeguards will Egypt implement for human rights defenders, journalists, and dissidents abroad, including ending cross-border harassment and ensuring freedom of expression for the diaspora? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- Will Egypt reform security cooperation agreements and domestic legislation that have been weaponized as tools of transnational repression—such as through surveillance, extraditions, or information-sharing? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- How does Egypt justify the systematic use of counter-terrorism laws to target defenders and dissidents, including through in absentia verdicts, placing individuals on terrorism lists, and fabricating legal cases against exiled activists? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- How does Egypt address the denial of consular services—including passport renewals, identity documents, and birth certificates, especially affecting children of political opponents—and what measures will be taken to ensure they are granted these fundamental rights? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- In light of high-profile incidents like the enforced disappearance of poet Abdulrahman Yusuf, how will Egypt ensure accountability, including investigating those responsible and preventing future violations? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)
- As part of its voluntary pledges to the Human Rights Council, will Egypt commit to time-bound reforms addressing transnational repression, such as legislative review,

diplomatic protections, and cooperation with UN bodies? (From Egyptian Human Rights Forum -EHRF)

- The Committee Against Torture, in November 2023, in response to credible reports of widespread torture decided that Egypt should take the following steps: Ensure prompt and impartial investigations into all torture allegations, explicitly criminalizing enforced disappearances, provide comprehensive redress for victims (including compensation, rehabilitation, and satisfaction), align their anti-terrorism legislation with international human rights standards, and providing access to independent monitoring of detention facilities. The Committee also called for the abolition of administrative detention and for ensuring the safety of NGOs working on human rights. What concrete measures has Egypt adopted to ensure compliance with this decision by the Committee Against Torture including abolition of administrative detention of HRDs and safety of NGOs? (From Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies)
- The UN Secretary-General's successive reports on reprisals in the MENA region specifically highlights cases in Egypt involving human rights defenders such as Ebrahim Metwally Hegazy, Bahey El Din Hassan, Ahmed Amasha, Mohamed El-Baqer, and who reportedly faced reprisals; including harsh prison sentences, prolonged illegal detention, and travel restrictions; after cooperating with UN mechanisms. Additionally, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing's documented reprisals during her visit to Egypt in 2018, including home demolitions, incommunicado detention, police summons, and travel bans against individuals who cooperated or spoke with her. Could Egypt clarify what investigations, restitution, or systemic safeguards have since been implemented to ensure that future visits by UN mandate-holders do not result in reprisals against cooperative individuals? Finally, as a candidate for the Human Rights Council, can Egypt state what concrete commitments it is making to fully cooperate with the UN human rights system and to guarantee that no reprisals will occur during its tenure. (From Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies)

## Estonia

### *Questions asked during the event*

- As a leader in digital governance, how will Estonia address the human rights impacts of artificial intelligence, online privacy, and digital surveillance, both domestically and in multilateral fora? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)
- Estonia has supported civil society access at the UN when some governments have pushed to shrink it, mostly targeting human rights groups. Yet Estonia has gone

against calls by civil society groups as it was one of five European countries to announce their intent to leave the Mine Ban Treaty, which puts their own civilians at risk and walks back years of progress to eradicate these indiscriminate weapons. As Estonia runs for a seat at the UNHRC, will it reconsider its withdrawal, which will take effect in December, and instead invest in measures to keep civilians away from mined areas, caring for landmine victims, and promoting mine clearance? (From Human Rights Watch)

#### *Further questions received*

- Estonia has taken steps to ratify the Istanbul Convention, but concerns remain about the availability of support services for survivors of domestic violence. If elected, how will Estonia improve its national response to violence against women and ensure that the Human Rights Council addresses this issue as a global priority? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)

#### **India (did not attend the event)**

- How will India ensure the protection of minorities and human rights defenders, particularly those advocating for women's rights, environmental rights, and freedom of expression, from harassment and arbitrary detention? (From Ecoris for sustainable development)
- On 4 June 2023, Government of India set up a Commission of Inquiry to inquiry into "the causes and spread of the violence, which took place in Manipur since 3 May 2023, and whether there were any lapses on the part of any of the responsible authorities or individuals". When is the report of this Commission going to be submitted so that appropriate action can be initiated to address the basic human rights of the hundreds of citizens killed, tens of thousands of citizens still languishing in the despicable IDP camps and the four million citizens of Manipur ethnically segregated and living with abject sense of insecurity? (From a human rights defender from Manipur)
- What safeguards will India adopt to prevent misuse of anti-terror & national-security laws against academics and student groups engaged in peaceful research, teaching, or advocacy? (Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- India's Constitution guarantees the right to liberty and a speedy trial. Why are civil rights activists being held in prolonged pre-trial detention, in some cases for years, without bail being granted, even when charges are unproven and trials have not commenced? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- What concrete measures is the Government of India taking to ensure that civil rights defenders are not subjected to arbitrary detention and denial of bail, and that

judicial processes comply with India's obligations under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)? (From an anonymous human rights defender)

- India claims to be a "mother of democracy" but is systematically discriminating against religious minorities at home, expelling hundreds of Muslims unlawfully. What steps will India take to ensure rights of religious minorities are protected within its borders? (From Human Rights Watch)
- India: abstained on UN resolutions on Gaza & Ukraine; failed to protect Rohingya refugees' rights within its borders; stopped access to UN rights monitors. As an HRC member, will India commit to support human rights, justice and accountability and facilitate full access to OHCHR & Special Procedures? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Given India's bid for a seat on the Human Rights Council, could the delegation share its perspective on the status of ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture, and whether there are plans to ratify the convention in the near future? (from REDRESS)

## Iraq (did not attend the event)

- Those criticizing the government are increasingly targeted through penal code Article 229, which criminalises a broadly defined "insulting of a public official" or Article 443, which again broadly defines defamation. Will Iraq commit to stopping the use of these articles to silence peaceful expression, withdraw any pending cases, and release anyone held under them? (From Gulf Center for Human Rights)
- What specific steps will Iraq follow to address Torture? (From Almonqith Organization for Human Rights)
- As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, how can we expect Iraq to protect the LGBT rights when it doesn't at home (From Human Rights Watch)
- Iraq is trying to portray itself as an open, post-conflict country while quietly increasing repression at home. A draft FOE & peaceful assembly law raises fears this will only. As an UN Human Rights Council member, will Iraq commit to expanding – not shrinking – free speech & assembly? (From Human Rights Watch)

## Italy

### *Questions asked during the event*

- How will Italy address human rights concerns related to migration and asylum seekers at its borders and in the Mediterranean, and how will it advocate for

migrants' rights internationally if elected to the Council? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)

- Italy continues to face challenges in effectively addressing domestic violence and femicide, despite recent legal reforms. If elected to the Council, how will Italy strengthen its domestic response to violence against women and girls, and how will it use its seat to advance global commitments on eliminating gender-based violence? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)

#### *Further questions received*

- How will Italy guarantee women's rights from a differentiated perspective? Women of diverse gender identities, trans women, or women from the LGBTI community? (From Tatiana Rincon)
- Italy obstructs NGO sea rescues & enables Libya forces to intercept migrants and refugees and take them back to Libya to face arbitrary detention and other abuses. Will Italy stop this? (From Human Rights Watch)
- Will Italy commit to full cooperation with UN Special Procedures and to implementing the recommendations of treaty bodies, particularly those related to migration, asylum, and climate-related human rights issues? (From Ecoris for sustainable development)

## Mauritius

#### *Questions asked during the event*

- Despite numerous resolutions - including those issued by the UN Human Rights Council and the Security Council - grave human rights violations in Sudan remain unaddressed. If elected to the Human Rights Council, what concrete steps will Mauritius take to ensure accountability, including effective follow-up and enforcement mechanisms? (From the Nubian Center for Peace and Democracy)
- The Chagossian people were forcibly displaced by the United Kingdom's government to allow the United States to build a military base on their island. They continued to suffer poverty, stigma, and discrimination half a century later. The new treaty between the UK and Mauritius, which recognizes Mauritius's sovereignty over the islands, does not address justice for crimes against humanity against Chagossians or their right to remedies for these crimes. Will Mauritius make a clear statement recognizing the Chagossians' right of return to all of the islands in the archipelago and guaranteeing their involvement in rebuilding their homeland? (From Human Rights Watch)



### *Further questions received*

- As HRC members, how will you raise academic-freedom cases in interactive dialogues, support mandates addressing attacks on higher education, and back resolutions that integrate academic freedom into country situations, consistent with your membership duties? (from Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- How can we work with South Africa and Mauritius to raise international awareness of slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, which is not taught in schools? Why are only transatlantic slavery and the slave trade highlighted? (From an anonymous human rights defender)

## Pakistan

### *Questions asked during the event*

- In Pakistan, despite the presence of human rights laws and institutions, we continue to witness systemic failures in implementation, including in areas like child marriage, forced conversions, and gender-based violence. What would Pakistan do during its HRC membership to move beyond paperwork and take measurable action at the provincial and grassroots levels? (From an anonymous human rights defender from Pakistan)
- In light of the current situation in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, it is important to address the grave risks faced by human rights activists and religious minorities inside Pakistan. Despite having escaped immediate danger, they now face the serious threat of deportation back to Afghanistan—a return that could mean imprisonment, abuse, or even death. What will Pakistan do to protect these vulnerable individuals? (From a defender from the Intercommunity and Justice organization in Afghanistan)

### *Further questions received*

- What safeguards will Pakistan adopt to prevent misuse of anti-terror & national-security laws against academics and student groups engaged in peaceful research, teaching, or advocacy? (From Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- As HRC members, how will you raise academic-freedom cases in interactive dialogues, support mandates addressing attacks on higher education, and back resolutions that integrate academic freedom into country situations, consistent with your membership duties? (from Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- How will Pakistan handle the issue of enforced disappearance? (From Sabiha Baloch)
- Pakistan has been responsible for the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan where they face a devastating humanitarian crisis and where women and girls are denied their fundamental rights. If Pakistan wins a seat

on the UN HRC, will Pakistan defend the rights of immigrants and refugees in the face of the erosion of protections both domestically and globally? (From Human Rights Watch)

- What action will Pakistan take, as a candidate for the UN Human Rights Council, to: Protect Pakistan's own minorities from violence Ensure protection of immigrants and refugees End its crackdown on free expression, in line with its human rights obligations (From Human Rights Watch)
- The Baloch and Pashtoon people are facing severe human rights abuses, while activists face threats and intimidation. Six of my colleagues, including Dr. Mahrang, are illegally detained, and thousands remain disappeared, among them a polio patient, Mahjabeen. My father was abducted to silence our voices, and I am fleeing police persecution. How will Pakistan address such atrocities? (Sabiha Baloch)
- Pakistan is a signatory to several key human rights treaties including ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, and CAT. However, practical implementation remains weak, with minimal coordination between federal and provincial governments. How does Pakistan plan to address repeated failures by member states to meet their reporting obligations and treaty commitments, and what accountability measures are proposed for non-compliance? (From an anonymous human rights defender from Pakistan)

## Slovenia

### *Questions asked during the event*

- Slovenia has a strong record of supporting accountability efforts for Palestine. Can Slovenia apply those standards to push the EU on China, India, Sudan, or is even actively supporting authoritarian leaders Egypt & Tunisia, & contributing to harmful abusive migration policies (From Human Rights Watch)
- Slovenia has played a great role and leadership in the promotion and protection of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. What are Slovenia's perspective and commitments on this issue as a member of the UN Human Rights Council? (From Yves Lador)

*No further questions were received for Slovenia.*

## South Africa

### *Questions asked during the event*

- How will South Africa advance climate justice at the Human Rights Council and ensure that the voices of communities most affected by climate change, especially in

the Global South, are meaningfully included in decision-making? (From Ecoris for sustainable development)

- The Human Rights Council and other human rights mechanisms of the UN are increasingly addressing the issue of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, and the criminalisation of poverty. How will South Africa champion these themes during its membership, especially given the lessons learned domestically from Marikana, policing of protests, and the ongoing debates in our country around the decriminalisation of petty offences, sex work, and other minor, non-violent crimes? (From the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum - APCOF)

#### *Further questions received*

- Will South Africa's bid for a continued seat on the UN Human Rights Council be matched by stronger action on human rights abuses in Africa (From Human Rights Watch)
- If re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council would South Africa rise above double standards, be consistent backing justice & investigations even where allies are implicated? (From Human Rights Watch)
- As HRC members, how will South Africa raise academic-freedom cases in interactive dialogues, support mandates addressing attacks on higher education, and back resolutions that integrate academic freedom into country situations, consistent with your membership duties? (from Saba Ismail, human rights defender)
- How can we work with South Africa and Mauritius to raise international awareness of slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, which is not taught in schools? Why is only transatlantic slavery and the slave trade highlighted? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- How does South Africa view the situation of human rights defenders globally and nationally? What measures is South Africa taking to protect human rights defenders in South Africa? How will South Africa advance protection for human rights defenders in the Human Rights Council? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- The Human Rights Council has an important role to play in advancing torture-free trade, and specifically to prevent the export and use of equipment for torture or ill-treatment, as set out in the recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. Given South Africa's own constitutional and international human rights commitment to a society free from torture, how will it use its membership on the Council to champion global regulation in the manufacture, trade, and use of law enforcement equipment that can be used, or abuse, for torture? African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (From the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum - APCOF)
- The Human Rights Council has underscored the importance of rights-based counterterrorism and security practices. What commitment will South Africa make

to strengthening parliamentary and civilian oversight of security institutions in counter-terrorism operations, both domestically and in its role at the HRC? African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (From the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum - APCOF)

- On 13 December 2022, South Africa parliamentary majority voted against the phala phala panel report to proceed on impeaching the president, Cyril Ramaphosa. How will South Africa address this denial of an individual right to access justice? (Mr.Maurice Okungu)

## United Kingdom

### *Questions asked during the event*

- In 2023, the United Kingdom government refused to act on the Justice Select Committee's recommendation to resentence all people imprisoned under an indefinite Imprisonment of Public Protection (IPP) sentence. Earlier this year, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, affirmed the experiences of those detained under IPP sentences by stating that the sentences amount to 'psychological torture'. How will the UK government address this human rights concern, including abolishing the sentence retrospectively and committing to a resentencing exercise – to drastically reduce the number of people serving an IPP sentence, in recognition of its strong link to self-harm and suicide? (From the United Group for Reform of Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection - UNGRIPP)
- Given the growing evidence of transnational repression targeting Hong Kong and other diaspora communities in the UK, what specific steps will the UK take to ensure the protection of activists, journalists, and human rights defenders in exile, and will the UK commit to making this a priority if elected to the Human Rights Council? (From the Hong Kong Democracy Council - HKDC)

### *Further questions received*

- Many people on IPP sentences (over 700 people) have spent 10 - 20 years longer in prison than a judge deemed fit, with no release in sight due to the route that is currently being taken by the Government. The Justice Select Committee recommended a working group to find a safe way to release people back into the community, this is likely to include licence restrictions. With no policy change for those still in prison, 13 years after the IPP was abolished, they are essentially being left in prison indefinitely: much longer than those who have been given a life sentence. Does the UK government not consider this a human rights issue? (From Donna Mooney)

- How will the UK ensure policy coherence between international defence of freedom of association and domestic policy? HRDs are currently suffering the over-reach of terrorism legislation, with 100s of peaceful protesters arrested for non-violent protest against the genocide in Palestine? Will the government rectify this and overturn the proscription of peaceful protest groups and the criminalization of those opposing proscription? (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- How will the United Kingdom be seen as a legitimate defender of civic space and the right to freedom of assembly and association internationally while domestically people are being charged with terror offences for peaceful protest? Most recently for being present on a zoom call discussing a peaceful protest. Furthermore, can we count on the British government to take a clear stance against racist and fascist narratives on migration at a time when violent xenophobic protests are erupting throughout the country? At a time when the far right is on the rise globally, and the UK FCDO strategy speaks of countering anti-rights trends. (From an anonymous human rights defender)
- On the last 1st of August 2025, the integrity of higher education and freedom of speech at universities has been restored and is now protected by a robust new law. Congratulations! But an issue remains for the same freedom for environmental human rights defenders, to the point that it has become an issue in some of the treaties the UK has ratified. What are the UK's commitments for these freedoms of speech and association for environmental human rights defenders, as new member of the UN HRC? (Yves Lador)
- In light of domestic debates around asylum policy, including proposals to externalize asylum processing, how will the UK ensure compliance with international refugee law and promote protection of refugees at the Human Rights Council? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)
- In the UK, civil society has raised concerns about gaps in protection and support for survivors of domestic abuse, particularly migrant and minority women. As a Human Rights Council member, how will the UK ensure stronger domestic protections while also promoting international accountability for gender-based violence? (From Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment - PIC)
- Will the UK commit to full cooperation with UN Special Procedures and to implementing the recommendations of treaty bodies, particularly those related to migration, asylum, and climate-related human rights issues? (From Ecoris for sustainable development )
- The Chagossian people were forcibly displaced by the United Kingdom's government to allow the United States to build a military base on their island. They continued to suffer poverty, stigma, and discrimination half a century later. The new treaty between the UK and Mauritius, which recognizes Mauritius's sovereignty over the islands, does not address justice for crimes against humanity against Chagossians or

their right to remedies or these crimes. Will the UK government make a clear statement recognizing the Chagossians' right of return to all of the islands in the archipelago and guaranteeing their involvement in rebuilding their homeland? Will the UK also clearly recognize to their right to reparations for the crimes and other harms the UK has inflicted on them? (From Human Rights Watch)

- How will the UK use its seat on the Human Rights Council to strengthen accountability mechanisms for authoritarian regimes—including China—for human rights violations in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet? (From the Hong Kong Democracy Council - HKDC)
- Civil society participation is essential to the Human Rights Council's credibility. What concrete measures will the UK commit to in order to protect civic space and prevent reprisals against human rights defenders engaging with the UN system, especially those in exile or facing cross-border threats? (From the Hong Kong Democracy Council - HKDC)
- If elected, how will the UK lead efforts to counter the growing influence of states within the Council that seek to weaken international human rights norms, and will the UK support reforms to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of the Council's mechanisms? (From the Hong Kong Democracy Council - HKDC)
- Given concerns about inconsistencies in the UK's human rights policy—for example, balancing trade and human rights—how will the UK ensure that human rights considerations remain central in its foreign policy decisions and in its work at the Council? (From the Hong Kong Democracy Council - HKDC)

## VietNam (did not attend the event)

- Independent human rights organizations consistently document that Viet Nam holds one of the largest numbers of prisoners of conscience in the world, including human rights defenders, religious leaders, journalists, and environmental activists. Alarmingly, several such prisoners have died in custody under suspicious circumstances. Most recently, Lay Buddhist Vương Văn Thà died in prison on the Vietnamese Communist Party's September 2nd holiday, once again without transparency or justice. How does Viet Nam reconcile this troubling record with its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council, whose mandate is to uphold the highest human rights standards? Will Viet Nam commit to: (1) Conducting thorough, impartial investigations into these deaths and providing truth and redress to families? (2) Immediately releasing all prisoners of conscience? And (3) Ending the criminalization of peaceful expression and association? (From Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy)

- Vietnam has received communications from Special Procedures concerning the escalating repression of the Khmer Krom indigenous people in Vietnam, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion on prisoners of conscience currently detained in the country (Opinion No. 39/2024 concerning Pham Chi Dung, Opinion No. 51/2024 concerning Nguyen Lan Thang, Opinion No. 30/2025 concerning To Hoang Chuong and Thach Cuong). How will the government implement their recommendations? (From the Vietnam Human Rights Network)
- Why should Vietnam get a second term on the UN Human Rights Council, when its government hasn't taken any steps to stem repression of independent voices, end persecution of unregistered religious groups, or repeal or reform abusive laws? (from Human Rights Watch)
- Will Vietnam pledge to release unconditionally and immediately Khmer Krom human rights activists who were imprisoned merely for exercising their rights under the UN international laws? (From Hua Son)
- Will Vietnam drop baseless charges against journalists, ensuring compliance with Article 19 of the ICCPR, which Vietnam has signed but violates through criminalizing lawful reporting? (from Vietnamese journalist Đoàn Bảo Châu)
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