

Independent experts launch report evaluating candidates for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Washington D.C., May 31, 2018 —A group of four leading regional human rights experts has called on the Organization of American States (OAS) and its member states to strengthen their commitment to a more transparent selection of judges to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, while also reviewing the four candidates standing for election this June.

In a report presented on May 31 in Washington D.C., the members of the 2018 Independent Panel on the Election of Inter-American Human Rights Judges note that despite some improvements in the process, OAS member states and the international community have yet to take action on a number of measures to promote greater transparency in nomination and election processes with the aim of ensuring that only the very best candidates are nominated. Some of their recommendations include:

- That states should issue public calls for nominations spelling out the criteria and processes for the nomination and election of candidates.
- That states create a formal, independent and non-political body at the national level to publicly assess and interview candidates, and ensure that they satisfy the nomination criteria.
- That states should nominate a minimum of two candidates for election and that at least one nominee should be a woman.
- That states should consider the Commission's need to have a wide range of experiences amongst its members, including different and complementary skills, when nominating candidates for election.
- That the OAS set up its own Consultative Committee responsible for reviewing and ensuring the suitability of all nominated candidates, a model now embraced by the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court.

The Panel's recommendations are included in its independent assessment of the four nominees standing for election this June to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Member states of the OAS will elect three Judges during the OAS General Assembly, which will be held in Washington D.C. on June 4 and 5, 2018.

The Panel is part of an ongoing effort by civil society groups to push for more transparent and rigorous nomination and election processes in the Inter-American Human Rights System. The Panel was convened by the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Center for Justice and International Law, and the Due Process of Law Foundation, and has been endorsed by human rights groups, non-governmental organizations, and universities from throughout the region (see the list of endorsing organizations below). These organizations share a common commitment to strengthening the Inter-American human rights system through the principle of fair, transparent, and inclusive elections, and through the nomination of qualified and independent candidates. For the first time, the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at American University

Washington College of Law served as the Secretariat of the Panel. Two similar Panels evaluated the candidates for both the Commission and Court during the 2015 and 2017 elections.

The 2018 Panel's assessment includes a review of publicly available information, together with responses to a questionnaire submitted to each candidate by the Panel; each candidate's declarations at the presentation before the OAS Permanent Council and during the conversation with civil society at the Washington DC-based Inter-American Dialogue; and interviews conducted with three of the four candidates.

The Independent Panel on the Election of Inter-American Human Rights Judges is composed of four renowned academics with recognized expertise in human rights and the Inter-American system— Carlos Ayala (Venezuela), Ximena Medellín (Mexico), Juan Méndez (Argentina) and Naomi Roht-Arriaza (United States).

The panel's final report is now available in [Spanish](#). An English version will be released in the coming weeks.

Endorsing organizations

Argentina

- Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Buenos Aires

Bolivia

- Comunidad de Derechos Humanos
- Construyendo Redes para el Desarrollo
- Coordinadora de la Mujer
- Derechos en Acción
- Fundación CONSTRUIR

Canada

- Human Rights Clinic of the Human Rights Research and Education Center, University of Ottawa

Chile

- Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Diego Portales
- Chile Transparente
- Corporación Humanas

Colombia

- Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)
- Corporación Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (CCAJAR)
- Grupo de Investigación en Derechos Humanos de la Facultad de Jurisprudencia de la Universidad del Rosario
- Maestría en Derechos Humanos y Cultura de Paz de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Cali

Costa Rica

- Asociación Ciudadana Acceder
- Costa Rica Íntegra (Capítulo costarricense de Transparencia Internacional)
- Defensa de Niñas y Niños - Internacional (DNI)

Ecuador

- Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador
- Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM)
- Fundación Ciudadanía y Desarrollo

United States

- Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, American University Washington College of Law
- Santa Clara University, School of Law, International Human Rights Clinic
- The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute

El Salvador

- Agrupación Ciudadana por la Despenalización del Aborto Terapéutico, Ético y Eugénico
- Colectiva Feminista por el Desarrollo Local
- Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD)
- Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (Idhuca)

Guatemala

- Centro de Acción Legal Ambiental y Social (CALAS)
- Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos¹
- Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad
- Red de la No Violencia contra las Mujeres (REDNOVI)

Honduras

- Asociación de Jueces por la Democracia (Honduras)
- Centro de Investigación y Promoción de Derechos Humanos (CIPRODEH)

Mexico

- Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan"
- Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan de Larios
- Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (FJEDD)
- Grupo de Información en Reproducción Asistida (GIRE)
- Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir

Nicaragua

¹ Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas (CAFCA), Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH), Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos (CIIDH), Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP), Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala (ICCPG), Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG), Seguridad en Democracia (SEDEM), Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos (UDEFEUGUA) y Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas (UNAMG).

- Centro por la Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua, CEJUDHCAN

Panama

- Alianza Ciudadana Pro Justicia

Peru

- Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH)
- Instituto de Defensa Legal
- Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
- Paz y Esperanza
- PROETICA, Capítulo Peruano de Transparencia Internacional

Regional

- Amnesty International
- Asociación Interamericana por el Medio Ambiente (AIDA)
- Asociadas por lo Justo (JASS-Mesoamerica)
- Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
- Centro de Derechos Reproductivos (CRR)
- Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)
- International Service For Human Rights
- IPAS Centroamérica
- Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI)
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- The Carter Center
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Venezuela

- Acción Solidaria en VIH/sida
- CIVILIS Derechos Humanos
- Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de los Sucesos de Febrero-Marzo de 1989 (COFAVIC)
- Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Los Andes
- Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA)