

HRC | Elections of the HRC President for the 15th cycle in 2021

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By 15 January 2021, the UN Human Rights Council (the Council) is expected to elect the Council's President for the 15th cycle in 2021 from the Asia-Pacific Group. The State Representatives who have put forward their candidacies are: Bahrain, Fiji and Uzbekistan. Our organisations* urge all members of the Council to elect the Council President based on Council membership criteria.



Update: On 15 January 2021, the Council elected the Fijian Ambassador as its President. The results of the vote were: 14 votes for Bahrain, 29 votes for Fiji and 4 votes for Uzbekistan.

On 12 January 2021, the Council announced that a vote is expected on 15 January 2021 to elect the Council's President for the 15th cycle in 2021 from the Asia-Pacific Group.

While we do not take a position on individual candidates, we consider that it is imperative that the process be in line with the principles set out in General Assembly *Resolution 60/251* and the Council's Institution Building Package, which include transparency, non-politicization and the promotion and protection of human rights, and that the Council President should embody these values.

The role of the Council President is to uphold the institutional integrity of the Council in its work, including by playing a key role in cases of [reprisals](#) and intimidation. We reiterate that acts of intimidation and reprisals are the most flagrant types of non-cooperation. Any representatives of States that appear in the Secretary General's annual reports on reprisals, particularly those States which are repeat offenders, seeking the position of the Council's Presidency raises serious concerns.

The Council's President must uphold the minimum criteria set out in General Assembly *Resolution 60/251*, which requires that Members uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and cooperate fully and in good faith with the Council and its mechanisms. Thus, the Council President should have a demonstrated commitment to addressing reprisals and a history of supporting cooperation with Council mechanisms.

In this regard, ISHR has prepared an [objective comparison of all three candidates to the Council's Presidency](#), based on OP9 of General Assembly *Resolution 60/251*. The score-card is intended to give a brief overview of each candidate's [adherence to Council membership standards](#): upholding the highest standards of promotion and protection of human rights, cooperation with the Council's mechanisms, their record on acts of intimidation and reprisal against those who cooperate with the UN in the field of human rights and pledges to strengthen and adhere to Council membership standards. ISHR acknowledges that data limitations and the need for objectivity mean that several of the criteria are concerned with form rather than substance.

We urge all members of the Council to elect the Council President based on the membership criteria as outlined above.

Read the [score-card here](#) and [sources and criteria here](#).

***Signatories:** *Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB); Association for Progressive Communications - APC; Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA); Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD); Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS); Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS); Child Rights Connect; CIVICUS; Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI); Conectas Direitos Humanos; CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide); DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project); FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights; Humanists International; Human Rights House Foundation; Human Rights Watch (HRW); ILGA World; International Commission of Jurists; International Service for Human Rights (ISHR); Save the Children; The Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)*

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