

CONCEPT NOTE

Public presentation of candidates to the UN Human Rights Committee

Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Geneva, 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm CEST

New York, 7.00 am – 9.00 am EDT

Simultaneous Interpretation provided English – French – Spanish

Registration link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IdvXo4DfRP6O5jpQ-Ad5RQ#/registration

On **15 June 2026**, during the [42nd Meeting of States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\) in New York](#), States parties will elect nine members of the **UN Human Rights Committee (HRC)** for the 2027–2030 term. Members of the Committee are elected by States parties from among their nationals but serve in their personal capacity. In accordance with **Article 28** of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), they must be persons of high moral character with recognised competence in the field of human rights. Consideration should also be given to equitable geographical distribution, the representation of different forms of civilisation and the principal legal systems, in accordance with **Article 31** of the Covenant.

Nine current members of the Committee will complete their mandates on 31 December 2026, making the upcoming elections an important opportunity to address gaps in the Committee's composition. In this context, the **Geneva Human Rights Hub**, together with the [Centre for Civil and Political Rights](#) and the [GQUAL Campaign](#), is organising an **online public presentation of candidates**. The event will provide an opportunity for nominated candidates to introduce themselves, present their priorities and respond to questions from participants, contributing to transparency in the election process and supporting informed decision-making by States parties and other stakeholders.

The aim of this online event is to enhance transparency in the nomination and election process of Treaty Body members.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268 [paragraph 13], when nominating independent experts for committee elections, States are encouraged to give due consideration to:

- Equitable geographical distribution
- Representation of different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems
- Balanced gender representation
- The participation of experts with disabilities.

The resolution also reaffirms the importance of the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies [paragraph 35]. All elected members serve in their personal capacity.¹ Underlining the need for independence and impartiality, but also qualification of members, in June 2012, the Chairs of the treaty bodies discussed and endorsed the [Addis Ababa Guidelines](#) on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/electing-treaty-body-members>

Moderation

Felix Kirchmeier, Director, Geneva Human Rights Hub

Invited speakers

List of candidates as submitted by the States parties within the deadline of 27 March 2026²

Name of Candidate	Country
Mr. Fuad Zarbiyev	Azerbaijan
Mr. Juan Miguel Petit English Español	Uruguay
Ms. Yvonne Donders	The Netherlands
Mr. Zirignon Constant Delbe	Côte d'Ivoire
Ms. Veronika Bílková	Czech Republic
Ms. Kobauyah Tchamdja Kpatcha	Togo
Ms. Dalia Leinarte	Lithuania
Mr. Koji Teraya	Japan
Mr. Bacre Waly Ndiaye	Senegal
Mr. Alfredo Ortega Franco English Français Español العربية русский	Guatemala
Mr. Rafael Valim	Brazil
Mr. Jacques Nshimirimana	Burundi
Ms. Aïssata Sy	Mali
Mr. Ricardo Sánchez Pérez del Pozo English Español	Mexico
Ms. María Alejandra Eisenmann	Panama
Ms. Catherine S. Namakula	Uganda

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/events/2026/42nd-meeting-states-parties-2026-elections>

Impartiality and independence in the Human Rights Committee

The HRC is the treaty body monitoring compliance with the ICCPR. Its main functions entail receiving State reports on the implementation of the rights enshrined in the document, making recommendations to States parties, issuing general comments on specific aspects covered in the Covenant to assist States parties in fulfilling their obligations, and treating individual communications, i.e. complaints, concerning States parties to the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

The HRC composition is addressed in the ICCPR, which establishes that it shall consist of eighteen members who are nationals of the States parties.³ Other relevant criteria that have to be satisfied are as follows:

- High moral character,⁴
- Recognized competence in the field of human rights,⁵
- Serving in a personal capacity,⁶
- Preferably with legal experience,⁷
- Equitable geographical distribution of members;⁸
- Representation of different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems,⁹
- Impartiality and conscientiousness.¹⁰

Impartiality and independence of the members of the HRC are mentioned in the **HRC Rules of Procedure**, which establish that each member, before assuming duties, must solemnly declare in open Committee that he or she will discharge them independently, impartially, and conscientiously.¹¹ Furthermore, the Rules **endorse the Addis Ababa Guidelines** as the official guidelines on how HRC members shall exercise their duties, replacing the 1998 guidelines of the Committee.¹²

Impartiality and independence imply that a member of the HRC shall not participate in the consideration of the **State report**, or the discussion and adoption of the related concluding observations, concerning his or her State of nationality.¹³ This rule is prescribed on the Rules of procedure and further developed in the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

The Addis Ababa Guidelines establish that a member of a treaty body should not participate in or influence the consideration of a State party's report if he or she has, or can be perceived as having, a conflict of interest with regard to it.¹⁴ This conflict can arise from place of residence, past employment, affiliation with an organization, family and social ties, but one of the key factors giving rise to it is the nationality of the member.¹⁵

³ A/RES/2200A (XXI), ICCPR art. 28

⁴ Ibid, art. 28.2

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid, art. 28.3

⁷ Ibid, art. 28.2

⁸ Ibid, art. 31.2

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid, art. 38

¹¹ CCPR/C/3/Rev.12, Rules of Procedure of the Human Rights Committee, rule 14

¹² Ibid, rule 15

¹³ Ibid, rule 74.2

¹⁴ A/67/222, para. 8

¹⁵ Ibid, para. 3

The Guidelines highlight that in case of a real or perceived conflict of interest, the member should refrain from participating in any of the phases of committee's work on a State report, among which the dialogues, discussions, non-public consultations, deliberations, drafting and adoption of the concluding observations.¹⁶

Rules of procedure tackle also the impartiality and independence requirements regarding **individual communications**. They prescribe that a member shall not participate in the examination of the complaint if he or she is a national of the State party concerned, has the same nationality as the victim, has any personal or professional conflict of interest, or has participated in any capacity in the decision-making process related to the case covered in the complaint.¹⁷ Decisions about this issue are to be taken by the HRC without the participation of that member.¹⁸ The Rules also provide the possibility for the member to inform the Chair of his decision to withdraw from the examination of the communication.¹⁹

The Addis Ababa Guidelines reiterate the rule contained in the Rules of Procedure concerning the participation in the examination of individual complaints: they specify that the member should not participate or influence the procedure either at the admissibility or the merits stage, be the conflict of interest real or perceived.²⁰ Moreover, they extend that rule also to the participation in the preparation or conduct of or follow-up to a country visit or inquiry.²¹

The Addis Ababa Guidelines generally establish that treaty body members are accountable to the treaty body and their conscience, and they should not submit to any kind of influence, direction, pressure, or instructions by the State of their nationality or any other State.²² They should not only be free from any real conflict of interest, but must be perceived as such by any reasonable observer.²³ The conflict of interest, real or perceived, cannot stem from a member's race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, color, descent or any other basis for discrimination as defined in the core international human rights treaties.²⁴

They further prescribe that committee members must conduct their functions in a way that does not grant favorable treatment to their State of nationality or that is not perceived as granting such treatment.²⁵ They must avoid any action that might be seen as leading to bias in favor or against a State.²⁶ They shall not be politically affiliated with the government of their State of nationality, which entails that they cannot cover functions and conduct activities that are incompatible with their responsibilities as independent experts on a committee.²⁷

The **working methods of the HRC** reiterate the rules requiring individual members to refrain from participating in activities related to State reports and individual communications in case of real or perceived conflict of interest stemming from their nationality, or other personal or professional links to the specific case.²⁸

¹⁶ Ibid, para. 9

¹⁷ CCPR/C/3/Rev.12, rule 108.1

¹⁸ Ibid, rule 108.2

¹⁹ Ibid, rule 109

²⁰ A/67/222, para. 10

²¹ Ibid, para. 11

²² Ibid, para. 5

²³ Ibid, para. 2

²⁴ Ibid, para. 3

²⁵ Ibid, para. 6

²⁶ Ibid, para. 7

²⁷ Ibid, para. 12

²⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/ccpr/rules-procedure-and-working-methods>