



Preliminary Report of the Independent Panel to Evaluate Candidates for the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression 2026

August 27, 2026

Panel's Secretariat: American University Washington College of Law



PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL TO EVALUATE CANDIDATES FOR
THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEURSHIP FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION 2026

August 27, 2026

Members of the Panel SRFOE 2026:

- Catalina Botero Marino
- Santiago A. Cantón
- Daniela Salazar

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1.- Introduction

The Independent Panel to Evaluate Candidates for the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression (Independent Panel, Panel SRFOE, or the Panel) presents its first report, aiming to strengthen the transparency governing the selection of the next Special Rapporteur of the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression (SRFOE) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). In this report, the Panel will focus on the qualifications of the ten final candidates selected to serve as Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidates nominated as finalists for the position of Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression are the following: Raissa Carrillo Villamizar, Carlos José Correa Barros, Viviana Giacaman Sarah, Mauricio Herrera Ulloa, María Dolores Miño Buitrón, Alejandra Negrete Morayta, Matías Ponce, César Ricaurte, María Daniela Rivero Gutiérrez, and Laura Salas Sánchez. In total, the list is composed of six women and four men.

The Independent Panel is composed of three experts with extensive experience and recognition in the field of human rights and freedom of expression. These experts are: Catalina Botero Marino, Santiago A. Cantón, and Daniela Salazar. They were chosen based on their experience in human rights and freedom of expression, in particular, their track record as former Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression, in the case of Catalina Botero Marino and Santiago A. Cantón, and as a former Justice of the Constitutional Court of Ecuador, in the case of Daniela Salazar. Their biographies are available in Annex 1 of this report.

American University Washington College of Law served as the Secretariat of the Panel SRFOE. The Panel's Secretariat was led by Carmen Ponce Moreda, under the supervision of Professor Claudia Martin. The Secretariat team also included Juan Peltier.

The Panel based its individual evaluations on the following criteria: high moral character; experience and knowledge in the procedures of the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS or Inter-American System) bodies and in human rights, including experience in matters related to the right to freedom of expression; independence, impartiality, absence of conflicts of interest and incompatibilities; as well as the balanced representation of men and women and of the racial and geographic diversity of the continent.

Due to the limited time available to carry out the evaluation, as well as the high number of finalists, the Panel did not receive information from civil society, did not conduct interviews with the candidates, and did not have access to information that might have resulted from a public presentation of their candidacies, given that no such presentation took place.

Accordingly, the Panel carried out individual evaluations on a preliminary basis, drawing on the curricula vitae provided by the candidates and made available by the IACHR on its website, proceeding on a presumption of good faith regarding the information they contain; on the individual videos in which each candidate set out their respective proposals; and on external research conducted on the basis of publicly available information.

The Panel hopes to conduct a more in-depth evaluation at a later stage of the selection process, should such a stage take place and time allow, through interviews with the candidates and access to information provided by civil society.

In this first report, the Panel SRFOE notes that the ten shortlisted candidates meet the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments and that, based on the information available, none of them presents any concerns that would preclude them from serving as Special Rapporteur. The Panel recognizes the quality of the shortlisted candidates selected by the IACHR.

2.- Work Methodology

a. Evaluation Criteria

The Panel SRFOE, as described in section 1 above, has preliminary assessed the background and professional experiences of each candidate in light of the requirements applicable to this selection process, as indicated by the IACHR. The requirements are set out in Article 15 of the IACHR's Rules of Procedure, in IACHR Resolution No. 04/06, as well as in the 2026 call for applications published by the same body, which complement one another.

Some of the required qualifications relate to citizenship, education, and professional experience, and can be summarized as follows:

- Be a national of an OAS member state.
- Hold a university degree in law, journalism, or a related field, and have 15 years of relevant experience at the national or international level in the IAHRs, including interaction with senior government officials, intergovernmental organizations, or non-governmental organizations.
- Or hold a master's degree in one of the fields mentioned above and at least 10 years of relevant experience.

In addition, there are other requirements for the performance of the position, namely: high moral character and independence; demonstrated professional experience and knowledge of the IACHR's procedures and legal precedents of the IACHR and of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR); demonstrated competence and professional experience in matters related to freedom of expression and human rights in the Americas; excellent command of at least two of the official languages; excellent analytical and interpretive skills; demonstrated capacity to manage personnel and experience in fundraising and project oversight; and written and oral communication skills.

Furthermore, although not expressly set out in the call for applicants, IACHR Resolution No.04/06, establishes that for the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the IACHR will take into account the balanced representation of men and women and the racial and geographic diversity of the continent.

The objective of the Panel SRFOE in this first report is to assess some of the criteria established for the selection of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, focusing, although not exclusively, on those that overlap with the requirements applicable to Commissioners. The Independent Panel to Evaluate

Candidates to the Inter-American Human Rights System Bodies (Panel SIDH) has developed a well-established practice in assessing these criteria, which may inform the present process. The criteria applicable to this process that the Panel SIDH has repeatedly considered are: high moral character; experience and knowledge in the procedures of the IAHR bodies and in human rights; independence, impartiality, incompatibilities, and absence of conflict of interests; and balance representation in the position.

Additionally, the Panel SRFOE considers the criterion relating to experience in fundraising and resource management, included in the call for this process, to be important. This aspect is essential to the sustainability of the IACHR's Special Rapporteurships. However, the Panel did not have sufficient information to evaluate this criterion with respect to each of the candidates. This criterion may be evaluated in greater depth at the next stage of evaluation, should it take place.

The Panel SRFOE has applied the following criteria, as interpreted by the Panel SIDH where applicable, which are set out below.

1. High moral character

The 2026 call for applications for the next SRFOE title-holder lists high moral character as one of the criteria to be considered. In its practice, the Panel SIDH has looked at candidates' backgrounds with respect to:

- Any record of sanctions, misconduct, or complaints in their professional practice that could bear on the ethics of the candidate's work;
- Special mentions, recognition, distinctions, or awards that speak to the candidate's high moral authority.

In the specific case of SRFOE candidates, the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the Human Rights Council (the “UN Experts' Code of Conduct”) is also worth noting, to the extent applicable.¹ On the criterion of high moral authority, the Code of Conduct requires experts to “[u]phold the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, meaning, in particular, though not exclusively, probity, impartiality, equity, honesty and good faith.”² It also states that experts must “be aware of the importance of their duties and responsibilities, taking the particular nature of their mandate into consideration and behaving in such a way as to maintain and reinforce the trust they enjoy of all stakeholders,” and “adopt a conduct that is consistent with their status at all times.”³

Finally, in specific cases where information links a candidate to unethical conduct, the Panel evaluates the sources of that information, considers whether the allegations are serious and well-substantiated, and then reaches a conclusion.

¹ Human Rights Council, Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the Human Rights Council, 6 December 2007.

² *Id.*, Article 3

³ *Id.*

2. Experience and knowledge in procedures of the IAHR bodies and human rights

The 2026 call for applications also lists as criteria “proven professional experience and knowledge in handling the legal procedures and precedents of the IACHR and the jurisprudence of the IACtHR,” as well as “proven competence and professional experience in matters related to freedom of expression and human rights in the Americas.” The Panel SIDH has developed the criterion of “recognized competence in the field of human rights”, which is equivalent to the requirements mentioned by the call for applications and can be adjusted to correspond to the required experience in the subject of freedom of expression.

Firstly, the Panel SIDH has indicated in its practice that “recognized competence in the field of human right” entails both knowledge and demonstrated experience in human rights. This includes knowledge of the Inter-American human rights instruments, familiarity with the main standards developed by the bodies of the IAHR, an understanding of the internal procedures and external relations of the IAHR, and awareness of its operational dynamics, among other aspects.

To this end, the Panel evaluates the candidate's record of professional achievements, their record of academic publications, and/or substantial experience working or litigating before the IAHR.

In this case, these criteria have been adjusted and combined with the specific experience needed to be Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE, which in addition to knowledge in human rights matters, requires a demonstrated competence and professional experience in matters of freedom of expression. The Panel has taken note of the main proposals put forward by the candidates in their presentation videos, which it will be able to evaluate in greater depth at a later stage of the process, should that stage take place and allow for interviews with the candidates.

In addition, the Panel SRFOE has taken into account the information provided by the candidates in their curricula vitae regarding their command of the official languages, given that this aspect was included in the call as a criterion and has also been considered by the Panel SIDH in the past.

3. Independence, impartiality, absence of conflicts of interest and incompatibilities

Furthermore, the 2026 call for applications stipulates that the person designated as SRFOE must satisfy the criteria of independence. In addition, Article 15 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure provides that, prior to the selection process and throughout their tenure, the Special Rapporteurs must disclose to the IACHR any interest that might conflict with their mandate as Rapporteurs. An assessment of these requirements must also take into account the criteria of impartiality and the existence of any incompatibility with the position to be held. For this reason, the criteria developed by the Panel SIDH, which are described below, have been applied in this process.

In this regard, the Panel has indicated in its reports that the criterion of independence can be defined in light of the *Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct*, which develop the concept and provide that being independent means being “free of any extraneous influences, inducements, pressures, threats or interference, direct or indirect, from any quarter or for any reason.”⁴ These criteria include not only avoiding actual bias or control by other bodies, but also avoiding any perception of such conduct or lack of independence.

⁴ Value 1, Article 1.1 of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct.

Independence includes both individual and institutional aspects; it entails not only being free from inappropriate connections or pressures, but also “appearing to a reasonable observer to be free therefrom.”⁵

Being impartial, in turn, means carrying out one's duties without favoritism, bias, or prejudice, and concerns not only the decisions themselves but also the process by which they are reached.⁶

Likewise, the Panel SIDH has taken into consideration the requirements for similar positions in other human rights bodies. For example, the United Nations treaty body system issued the “*Guidelines on the Independence and Impartiality of Members of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies*” (the *Addis Ababa Guidelines*),⁷ which apply to the independent experts who make up these bodies. These Guidelines emphasize that “treaty body members shall not only be independent and impartial, but shall also be seen by a reasonable observer to be so.”⁸ In addition, they may not be subject to direction or influence of any kind, or to pressure from their State of origin or any other State or its agencies, and shall neither seek nor accept instructions from anyone in the performance of their duties.

Along the same lines, the United Nations Code of Conduct for experts establishes that being independent requires acting in one's personal capacity and exercising one's “functions in accordance with the mandate, through a professional and impartial assessment of facts grounded in internationally recognized human rights standards, free from any outside influence, incitement, pressure, threat or interference, either direct or indirect, from any party, whether stakeholder or not, for any reason whatsoever...”⁹ Nor may they “seek or accept instructions from any government, individual, governmental or non-governmental organization, or pressure group whatsoever.”¹⁰

With respect to real or perceived conflicts of interest and possible issues relating to the requirements of impartiality and independence, the Addis Ababa Guidelines indicate that these may arise from various factors, such as the expert's nationality or place of residence, their current or previous employment, membership in or affiliation with an organization, or family or social relationships.¹¹

In this regard, the Panel recalls that the position of Rapporteur is full-time, and that the person selected must therefore resign from any current position or job.

Likewise, the Addis Ababa Guidelines specifically note, in relation to conflicts of interest, that holding a decision-making role in civil society organizations, academic institutions, businesses or private entities, or organizations related to States may also give rise to situations of conflict of interest.¹² This factor has likewise been taken into account for purposes of the present evaluation, where applicable.

⁵ Value 1, Article 1.1 of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, and paragraph 2 of the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

⁶ Value 2 of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct.

⁷ Guidelines on the Independence and Impartiality of Members of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, A/67/222 (2012).

⁸ Paragraph 2 of the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

⁹ Human Rights Council, Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council, 6 December 2007, Article 3.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Paragraph 3 of the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

¹² Paragraph 14 of the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

4. Balanced representation of men and women and racial and geographic diversity of the continent

As noted above, IACHR Resolution No. 04/06, applicable to the procedures for appointing Special Rapporteurs, establishes that the IACHR will take into account, as a selection criterion, the balanced representation of men and women and the racial and geographic diversity of the continent.

The Panel SRFOE has taken into account the previous practice of the Panel SIDH, which has considered OAS resolutions that have highlighted member States' commitment to seek a balanced composition of the IAHR bodies.¹³

In the case of the SRFOE, the criterion of balanced representation must be considered not only during the selection process for the finalist candidates, but also in the appointment of the officeholder, taking into account a historical perspective on who has previously held the position of IACHR Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

In this report, the Panel has limited itself to evaluating balanced gender representation, as it does not have the information necessary to examine other categories of diversity in greater depth. The Panel may examine this aspect in greater depth at a future stage of evaluation, should such a stage take place and should it obtain the relevant information.

3.- Evaluation of Candidates

As previously indicated, the Panel SRFOE has evaluated each candidate's background and professional experiences on the basis of the requirements contained in Article 15 of the IACHR's Rules of Procedure, IACHR Resolution No. 04/06, and the 2026 call for applications published by that same body. The evaluation of the candidates is presented below in the same order in which the IACHR published their names.

a) Raissa Carrillo Villamizar

The Panel finds that candidate Raissa Carrillo Villamizar meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate is a lawyer from the Universidad de los Andes in Colombia and holds a master's degree in International Human Rights Law from Northwestern University, in the United States.

¹³ See: OAS, General Assembly, AG/RES. 2887 (XLVI-O/16); AG/RES. 2908 (XLVII-O/17); AG/RES. 2928 (XLVIII-O/18); AG/RES 2941 (XLIX-O/19); AG/RES. 2961 (L-O/20); AG/RES. 2991 (LII-O/22). See also the most recent resolution on this subject, AG/RES. 3028 (LIV-O/24), adopted at the fourth plenary session held on June 28, 2024, Section xix, Gender parity, balanced geographic representation, and representation of the different legal systems on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Likewise, see Inter-American Commission of Women, Report with Recommendations on Good Practices to Consolidate Gender Parity and a Balanced Geographic Distribution, as well as of the Different Legal Systems, on the Inter-American Court and Commission on Human Rights, in: CP48133SCIM.pdf ([oas.org](https://www.oas.org))

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character. Likewise, the Panel has taken note that the candidate has been the recipient of academic scholarships and has received an award for her participation as a member of the litigating legal team in the case of *Bedoya Lima v. Colombia*.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. In particular, she was a professional visitor at the IACtHR in 2018 and has extensive experience litigating before the IAHR. The candidate also has experience litigating at the domestic level, having litigated cases before the Constitutional Court of Colombia. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Likewise, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression, as demonstrated by her work as Coordinator of Protection and Legal Defense of Journalists at Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)¹⁴ between 2020 and 2023, as well as her experience at Media Defence¹⁵ between 2023 and 2025. She currently serves as a consultant on Freedom of Expression and Digital Rights at the Ombudsman's Office of Colombia. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of freedom of expression.

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate has included: maintaining a strategic dialogue with State authorities, victims, human rights organizations, and other relevant actors; assisting the IACHR and the Executive Secretariat in evaluating the current strategic plan and designing the next one; and addressing the main regional challenges in freedom of expression, including violence against journalists, indirect censorship, abuse of subsequent liability, and the impacts of technological developments, emphasizing the need to exercise the position with independence and rigor.

Regarding her specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is her mother tongue and that she has an advanced level of English and French.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

The Panel notes that the candidate appears as a partner at the law firm Carrillo Ballesteros Abogados¹⁶, a position that could give rise to a conflict of interest were the candidate to retain it if elected.

¹⁴ According to the information available on its website, FLIP is based in Colombia and its mission is to defend freedom of expression and to promote an optimal environment for those who practice journalism to fulfil the public's right to be informed. See: <https://flip.org.co/sobre-la-flip/quienes-somos>

¹⁵ According to the information available on its website, Media Defence helps journalists and media outlets report freely. See: <https://es.mediadefence.org/our-organisation/>

¹⁶ The Panel obtained this information from the law firm's institutional website. See: <https://carrilloballesterosabogados.com/carrilloballesterosabogados/>

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

b) Carlos José Correa Barros

The Panel finds that candidate Carlos José Correa Barros meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a degree in Social Communication from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Venezuela and a doctorate in Information Sciences from the Universidad de La Laguna in Spain.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character. Likewise, the Panel has taken note that the candidate has received several awards for his work in human rights and in the defense of freedom of expression.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies, having participated in numerous hearings and advocacy activities before the IACHR as Executive Director of Espacio Público.¹⁷ Among other things, he has also participated in the submission of *amicus curiae* briefs before the IACtHR. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. In addition to having served for the past 23 years as Executive Director of Espacio Público, he previously served as General Coordinator of the Venezuelan Education-Action Program on Human Rights (PROVEA), focusing especially on this subject matter. Additionally, the candidate has taught at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in the areas of human rights, democracy, and freedom of expression since 2005. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in his curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of human rights and freedom of expression.

Among his proposals, if elected, the candidate has identified the following priorities: guaranteeing the life and integrity of journalists by eradicating impunity and promoting IAHR standards in each country; curbing judicial harassment and State censorship by promoting the decriminalization of defamation and slander in matters of public interest, as well as the implementation of mechanisms for the early dismissal

¹⁷ According to the information available on its website, Espacio Público is a civil society organization dedicated to the promotion and defense of human rights and, specifically, to freedom of expression in Venezuela. See: <https://espaciopublico.org/quienes-somos/>

of abusive lawsuits aimed at silencing the press; and defending digital rights against surveillance and artificial intelligence, working toward the sanctioning of the unlawful use of spyware.

Regarding his specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is his mother tongue; that he has a professional command of English in reading and writing and an intermediate level of spoken proficiency; and that he has a basic level of comprehension of Portuguese.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify him from being elected Rapporteur.

In addition, the Panel notes that the candidate appears as a member of the Americas' Advisory Committee of the organization Human Rights Watch¹⁸, a position that could give rise to a conflict of interest were the candidate to retain it if elected.

c) Viviana Giacaman Sarah

The Panel finds that candidate Viviana Giacaman Sarah meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a degree in Political Science from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and in Communications and Journalism from the Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello of Chile, and holds a master's degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University, in the United States.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. Her engagement with and knowledge of the Inter-American System is reflected in her participation as a Freedom House delegate¹⁹ at at least two General Assemblies of the Organization of American States (OAS), in Medellín in 2008 and in Cochabamba in 2012. The candidate has also stated that, during her time at Freedom House, she organized advocacy delegations during IACHR sessions and participated in preparing briefs and petitions for public hearings.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. Between 2006 and 2014, while serving as Regional Director for Latin America at Freedom House, the candidate participated in activities and initiatives relating to freedom of expression, the protection of journalists, and restrictions on independent media and access to information. She also held strategic communications positions for the government of Chile between 2014

¹⁸ This information is available on the organization's website, available here: <https://www.hrw.org/about/people/advisory-committee/americas-division>

¹⁹ Freedom House is a U.S. organization dedicated to the defense and promotion of democracy and freedom around the world. See: <https://freedomhouse.org/about-us>

and 2017. Her professional career also includes positions at the United Nations, where she states she worked on issues such as governance, the closing of civic space, and press freedom. Since 2025 she has worked as an independent consultant through Areté, Communication Consulting²⁰, her own consultancy, focusing on political risk analysis and institutional program and communications strategy. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the Panel has not identified any publications by the candidate on the subject.

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate proposes: greater dialogue with all States, without exception, with civil society, and with other actors in the region; securing a solid financial base, drawing on her experience mobilizing resources in international organizations and civil society; and improving the Rapporteurship's communications, drawing on her expertise in strategic communication to bring Inter-American standards closer to institutions and to different audiences.

Regarding her specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is her mother tongue and that she has an advanced level of English.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

d) Mauricio Herrera Ulloa

The Panel finds that candidate Mauricio Herrera Ulloa²¹ meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from the Universidad de Costa Rica and master's degrees in Journalism from the Universitat de Barcelona and Columbia University, and in Political Science from the Universidad de Costa Rica.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character. Likewise, the Panel has taken note that the candidate has received several awards for his work as a journalist and for his defense of freedom of expression.

²⁰ For more information on Areté, Communication Consulting, see: <https://consultingarete.com/>

²¹ Panel member Catalina Botero recused herself from participating in the evaluation of candidate Mauricio Herrera Ulloa in order to avoid a potential appearance of a lack of impartiality, given that the candidate served as a consultant to the Special Rapporteurship for several months between 2010 and 2012 while she was Rapporteur.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience in freedom of expression matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies, having served as a consultant to the SRFOE from 2010 to 2012, as well as a human rights consultant for various organizations.

From 1992 to 2009, he worked as a political and investigative journalist. He has also worked in the civil society sphere as Director of Communications for the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and as a consultant on human rights and freedom of expression issues for UNFPA, UNESCO, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, among others. From 2015 to 2018 he served as Costa Rica's Minister of Communication, and from 2018 to 2022 he was Costa Rica's ambassador to Honduras. He currently works as a communications consultant and teaches courses on Inter-American standards on freedom of expression at the Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (Honduras). The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in human rights and freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in his curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of freedom of expression.

Among his proposals, if elected, the candidate emphasized: combating impunity for crimes against journalists and citizens exercising freedom of expression, through diligent investigations and effective prevention and protection mechanisms; the ongoing dialogue with civil society, academia, and justice operators; continuity of the lines of work already established at the Rapporteurship, including the promotion of media pluralism, the fight against censorship, and the defense of social protest; and addressing deliberate disinformation through democratic debate, underscoring the need to develop standards that respond to this challenge without affecting freedom of expression.

Regarding his specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is his mother tongue and that he has an advanced level of English.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify him from being elected Rapporteur.

e) María Dolores Miño Buitrón

The Panel finds that candidate María Dolores Miño Buitrón meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate is a lawyer from the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador, and holds a master's degree in International Legal Studies from American University Washington College of Law, in the United States. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in Law at the Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. Her professional experience includes having been an intern and lawyer at the IACHR from 2007 to 2008. Additionally, she has carried out consulting work for the OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation, and in 2008 she worked at the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the OAS. She also served as a litigation assistant in the National Directorate of Human Rights of the Office of the Attorney General of Ecuador. She has taught at various universities in the region in the areas of international law, constitutional law, and the Inter-American Human Rights System. She currently serves as executive director of the Observatorio de Derechos y Justicia, from which she coordinates activities and advocacy on human rights and, more specifically, on corruption, integrity, and judicial independence. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. From 2012 to 2014 she served as Coordinator of the human rights protection and promotion area at the Andean Foundation for Media Observation and Study (Fundamedios).²² Likewise, during this year she has prepared three reports on issues relating to freedom of expression, including access to information, for the Fundación Periodistas Sin Cadenas.²³ The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of human rights and freedom of expression.

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate emphasized two thematic areas: the impact of organized crime on investigative journalism, advocating for joint work with States and journalists to develop protection and early-detection mechanisms; and the impact of artificial intelligence on the region's democratic ecosystem, proposing that the Rapporteurship work together with States, civil society, academia, and businesses to develop legal frameworks in this area. She also proposed incorporating digital case-management and law-office mechanisms similar to those used by major law firms in the region, with the aim of reducing procedural backlog, easing the workload of the Rapporteurship's staff, and offering a faster, more timely, and more efficient service.

The candidate has not indicated her specific language competencies in her curriculum vitae.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

²² According to the information available on its website, Fundamedios is an organization that defends and promotes freedom of expression, digital rights, and information integrity. See: <https://fundamedios.org.ec/quienes-somos-fundamedios/>

²³ According to the information available on its website, Fundación Periodistas Sin Cadenas is made up of a group of journalists and photographers in Ecuador whose mission is to defend freedom of expression and of the press, the free exercise of journalism, transparency, and the guarantee of free access to public information, and to strengthen quality investigative journalism, particularly in the country's peripheral regions. See: <https://periodistassinadenas.org/quienes-somos/>

In addition, the Panel notes that the candidate appears as a founding partner of Gentium Law²⁴, a position that could give rise to a conflict of interest were the candidate to retain it if elected.

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

f) Alejandra Negrete Morayta

The Panel finds that candidate Alejandra Negrete Morayta²⁵ meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate is a lawyer from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and obtained a master's degree in Legal Argumentation from the Universidad de Alicante, in Spain.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. Her curriculum vitae reflects a professional career that includes one year working at the IACtHR, where she served as a lawyer and advisor to the President; experience as a consultant for the IACHR and human rights specialist for the SRFOE; and experience as a specialist in gender, violence against women, and human rights at the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). The candidate has also held various positions in Mexican public institutions, where she has worked across different areas of human rights. Between 2013 and 2018, she served as National Commissioner for Preventing and Eradicating Violence against Women (CONAVIM) at Mexico's Ministry of the Interior, and between 2012 and 2013, she was an advisor to the Office of the Presidency of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, among other positions. Since 2024, she has served as head of the Directorate of Civic Justice at the Legal Counsel and Legal Services Office of the Government of Mexico City, where she has worked on freedom of expression in civic space, and as chair of the Ethics Committee of the Government of Mexico City. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. During 2025, she served as a consultant for the UNESCO Office and Representation in Mexico for the Freedom of Expression Department. Likewise, since 2024, she has been listed as a freedom of expression specialist for Global Freedom of Expression²⁶, an initiative of

²⁴ According to what the candidate herself indicated in her curriculum vitae, Gentium Law is a law firm focused on litigation and consulting in the areas of constitutional law, international law, criminal law, municipal law, family law, and public law.

²⁵ Panel member Catalina Botero recused herself from participating in the evaluation of candidate Alejandra Negrete Morayta in order to avoid a potential appearance of a lack of impartiality, given that the candidate was an official of the Rapporteurship while she was a consultant, and they have subsequently collaborated on several projects.

²⁶ According to the information available on its website, Global Freedom of Expression seeks to strengthen freedom of expression around the world by advancing the understanding of the international and domestic norms and

Columbia University. Her résumé also lists her as a member of the drafting group for the Inter-American Model Law on Access to Public Information and notes that she has taught courses and seminars related to freedom of expression. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications and *amicus curiae* briefs in the field of human rights and freedom of expression.

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate emphasized three priorities: the protection of journalists and media workers against violence, threats, and displacement; consolidating the Rapporteurship's leadership in the face of the challenges of the digital environment, ensuring that Inter-American standards continue to offer solid, independent, and up-to-date responses; and strengthening local capacities to implement the standards in accordance with the region's different realities, working with government authorities, academia, and civil society organizations.

The candidate has not indicated her specific language competencies.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

In addition, the Panel notes that the candidate appears as a freedom of expression specialist for Global Freedom of Expression, a position that could give rise to a conflict of interest were the candidate to retain it if elected.

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

g) Matías Ponce

The Panel finds that candidate Matías Ponce meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a degree in Communication Sciences, International Relations, and Political Science from the Universidad de la República of Uruguay; a master's degree in Political Science, Institutions and Political Processes from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile; and a master's degree in Government and Public Policy from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. He also holds a doctorate in Political Science from the Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character.

institutions that best protect the free flow of information and expression in an interconnected global community. See: <https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/es/about/mission/>

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. Between 2019 and 2022, he served as Head of Communications, Advocacy and Media and institutional spokesperson for the IACtHR. In addition, at various points between 2022 and 2025, he worked as a media and advocacy advisor for various United Nations mechanisms, including the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua. Previously, between 2017 and 2019, he was spokesperson and Head of Communications for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. He also worked between 2015 and 2017 at the Office of Planning and Budget of the Presidency of the Republic of Uruguay, and was an Electoral Observation and Institutional Relations assistant at the OAS Regional Office for the Southern Cone (2005-2008).

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. Since 2023, he has served as Regional Coordinator for Communications, Public Engagement and Partnerships at the UNESCO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, an agency whose mandate includes the promotion of freedom of expression and access to information. In addition, between 2005 and 2018 he taught at various universities in Uruguay, where he gave courses related to political communication, transparency and access to public information, democracy, and digital citizenship, among others. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in his curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of freedom of expression.

Among his proposals, if elected, the candidate proposed adopting a 2026-2029 Strategic Plan with quantifiable objectives, as well as streamlining the processing of petitions, cases, and precautionary measures, with the goal of increasing the number of hearings held annually from 25 to 50. Among his priorities, he highlighted the safety of journalists and the situation of displaced journalists, bringing the Rapporteurship closer to the different territories, particularly the Caribbean, and the creation of an Inter-American Initiative for Freedom of Expression and of a space called Libertad Lab to create strategies with universities and civil society. He also proposed addressing information integrity, digital platform governance, and artificial intelligence through consultations and model laws, as well as strengthening the Rapporteurship's media presence.

Regarding his specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is his mother tongue, that he is fluent in English and Portuguese, and that he has a basic level of French.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify him from being elected Rapporteur.

h) César Ricaurte

The Panel finds that candidate César Ricaurte meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a degree in Social Communication (Journalism) from the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Human Rights from the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR), Spain.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character. Likewise, the Panel has taken note that the candidate has received several awards for his work in human rights and in the defense of freedom of expression.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies, having participated in numerous hearings and advocacy activities before the IACHR as founder and Executive Director of Fundamedios since 2006. In addition, between 2014 and 2019 he co-founded the Platform for Democracy and Human Rights in Ecuador. He also served as viewer Ombudsman at Ecuavisa, an Ecuadorian television channel, between 2007 and 2009. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. In addition to founding and directing an organization dedicated to the defense of freedom of expression, the candidate has co-founded other initiatives related to the same subject matter. In 2017 he co-founded, and is a current member of, the regional network Voces del Sur,²⁷ dedicated to monitoring and documenting attacks on the press. He is also founder and Executive Director of Ecuador Chequea,²⁸ a fact-checking platform. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in his curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of freedom of expression and human rights.

Among his proposals, if elected, the candidate referred to the 2009 Hemispheric Agenda and proposed the participatory drafting of a new agenda incorporating emerging challenges such as organized crime, the closing of civic space, and threats to information integrity, with three priorities: prevention, protection, and shared responsibility. He also highlighted the need to address the situation of women journalists and of less visible regions, such as the Caribbean, Central America, and the Andean region.

Regarding his specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is his mother tongue and that he has professional working proficiency in English.

²⁷ According to the information available on its website, the Voces del Sur Network is a group of seventeen civil society organizations working to promote and defend freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and access to information throughout Latin America. See: <https://vocesdelsurunidas.org/>

²⁸ According to the information available on its website, Ecuador Chequea is a media outlet dedicated to news coverage, long-form journalism, and fact-checking. See: <https://ecuadorchequea.com/category/quienes-somos/>

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify him from being elected Rapporteur.

i) María Daniela Rivero Gutiérrez

The Panel finds that candidate María Daniela Rivero Gutiérrez meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate is a lawyer from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello of Venezuela and holds a master's degree in International Law from the University of Notre Dame Law School and a master's degree in Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame, Mendoza College of Business.

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety in the available information, the Panel considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral standing.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. She has been part of the IACtHR's judgment-monitoring team, in addition to having served as an independent consultant for the IACHR between 2022 and 2024 and for its SRFOE for several months on up to three occasions. Additionally, she has experience litigating in human rights matters. From 2015 to 2020 she was a senior associate at the law firm Álvarez Martínez. In the civil society sphere, from 2012 to 2017 she was a professional visitor, legal advisor, and consultant at the Center for Reproductive Rights, and from 2016 to 2017 she was a researcher at the Women's Human Rights Education Institute, among others. In this regard, the Panel SRFOE considers that the candidate has solid legal knowledge of the human rights standards applicable within the IAHR.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression, having been part of a litigation team before the IACtHR in up to three cases relating to the right to freedom of expression. In addition, among her work experience as a consultant, during this year she has carried out consulting work for Media Defence. She currently serves as Director of the organization BASE, The Human Hub²⁹, which she herself founded. Through this organization, the candidate litigates before the IAHR, among other things, in cases relating to the right to freedom of expression, academic freedom, and protest. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the candidate also has teaching experience and several publications in the field of human rights and on the IAHR.

²⁹ According to the information available on its website, BASE specializes in designing and implementing legal and advocacy strategies on human rights, in contexts of conflict and political violence, before regional and international bodies. See: <https://basehh.com/en/about-us/>

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate mentioned the need for the Rapporteurship to strengthen its leadership and preserve its independence. She also identified three priorities: incorporating an intersectional perspective as a cross-cutting theme in the Rapporteurship's work, expanding monitoring and technical cooperation in the Caribbean; working to strengthen the institutional sustainability of the Rapporteurship, collaborating closely with the IACHR and diversifying funding; and innovating in Inter-American standards to offer effective responses to the challenges facing freedom of expression, including those arising from the digital environment, artificial intelligence, and democratic crises.

Regarding her specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is her mother tongue and that she has professional working proficiency of English.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

j) Laura Salas Sánchez

The Panel finds that candidate Laura Salas Sánchez meets the basic criteria established in the applicable legal instruments for holding the position of Special Rapporteur of the SRFOE.

The candidate holds a degree in Journalism from the Escuela de Periodismo Carlos Septién García of Mexico and a master's degree in Human Rights and Democracy from the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

Having identified no record of sanction, ethical misconduct, or professional impropriety in the available information, the Panel considers that the candidate meets the requirement of high moral character.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the candidate demonstrates experience and knowledge in human rights matters, as well as in the procedures of the IAHR bodies. Between 2000 and 2005, she served as Communications Coordinator for the Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, and between 2005 and 2006, she held the same position at the Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan. Since 2013, she has served as Latin America Programs Director for WITNESS³⁰, from which she works on human rights issues at the regional level.

Additionally, the Panel concludes that the candidate's professional career shows experience in matters relating to the right to freedom of expression. Between 2006 and 2011, she worked in advocacy coordination for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) for Latin America. Subsequently, between 2011 and 2013, she served as Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Human Rights

³⁰ According to the information available on its website, WITNESS is a global organization that helps people around the world harness the power of video and audiovisual technology to tell their stories, document the truth, and defend human rights. See: <https://www.witness.org/about/>

Commission of Mexico City. She has also been a co-founder and is currently a board member of La Sandía Digital,³¹ a communications organization that works on human rights and women's rights issues, among others. The Panel may conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the criterion of demonstrated competence in freedom of expression matters at a later stage of the process, should such a stage take place.

According to the information available in her curriculum vitae, the candidate has several publications in the field of freedom of expression and human rights.

Among her proposals, if elected, the candidate frames freedom of expression as a fundamental pillar of the exercise of human rights and proposes a three-dimensional framework for addressing current challenges: physical safety, including protection against incitement and threats to journalists; institutional and legal action, including access to government-held public information; and the digital environment, including access to the internet and the impact of algorithms on media pluralism. She also emphasizes that the Rapporteurship's reports and analyses should not only document violations but also formulate specific recommendations based on Inter-American standards.

Regarding her specific language competencies, the candidate has indicated that Spanish is her native language, that she is fluent in English, and that she has a conversational level of Portuguese.

The Panel has not identified any impediment affecting the candidate's independence or impartiality that would disqualify her from being elected Rapporteur.

In addition, the Panel notes that the candidate appears as a Board member of La Sandía Digital, a position that could give rise to a conflict of interest were the candidate to retain it if elected.

The Panel highlights the contribution this candidacy would make to gender parity, taking into account the historical gender representation in the office of the SRFOE.

³¹ According to the information available on its website, La Sandía Digital is a feminist organization focused on collaborative audiovisual production, training, and strategic communication that believes in the transformative power of narratives to change realities, and that works in support of socio-environmental and gender justice and human rights. See: <https://lasandiadigital.org.mx/>

ANNEX

1. – Biographies of Experts

Catalina Botero Marino

Catalina Botero Marino is a lawyer, Director of the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression at Universidad de Los Andes, and an expert with Columbia University's Columbia Global Freedom of Expression project. She is a member of BID Invest's external transparency panel, a Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists, a member of the Advisory Council of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), and an arbitrator at the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce. She has been an adjunct professor at American University's Academy on Human Rights and a visiting professor at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law. She previously served as Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights/OAS, Dean of the Law School at Universidad de Los Andes, Co-Chair of Meta's Oversight Board, and an ad hoc Justice on the Constitutional Court and the Council of State of Colombia.

Santiago A. Cantón

Santiago A. Cantón is a jurist with an extensive record in promoting human rights, the rule of law, and democracy, and currently serves as Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists. He previously served as Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and Executive Director of the human rights program at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights. He also chaired the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He served as Secretary of Human Rights of the Province of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and, in 2005, received the Inter American Press Association's Grand Prize Chapultepec for his contributions to the promotion, development, strengthening, and defense of the principles of freedom of expression. He has been a Senior Fellow with the Peter D. Bell Rule of Law Program at the Inter-American Dialogue and an international visiting professor at American University Washington College of Law.

Daniela Salazar

Daniela Salazar is a professor at the School of Law of Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). She served as a Justice of the Constitutional Court of Ecuador between 2019 and 2025, and as its Vice President between 2019 and 2022. She was the rapporteur for several judgments concerning freedom of expression. Until 2019, she served as Associate Dean and Co-Director of the Legal Clinic at USFQ, where she litigated cases involving freedom of expression. From 2005 to 2009, she worked as a human rights specialist at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). She earned her law degree from Universidad San Francisco de Quito and her master's degree (LL.M) from Columbia University in New York. She has published articles on constitutional law and international human rights law, including on freedom of

expression. She serves on the Board of the Center for Studies on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information (CELE).