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El Salvador: Pressing commitments for the next government

Candidates for the presidency must publicly undertake to protect the human rights of the men and women of El Salvador. Human rights permeate every aspect of public life and are a fundamental requirement for human dignity, said Amnesty International today in an open letter to presidential candidates in El Salvador.

Included in Amnesty International's recommendations to the four candidates to the presidential elections to be held on 21 March are concrete measures to end impunity with regard to human rights violations, past and present.

"In a country with so many human rights problems, from a General Amnesty law for human rights abuses, to the case of thousands of 'disappeared' boys and girls, to the weaknesses of the judicial system and the imposition of highly controversial legislation – such as the Anti-Maras law – is it vital that the candidates commit to including human rights in their government programmes", stressed Amnesty International.

Similarly, in view of the hundreds of complaints of physical, sexual and psychological violence towards women and girls, the organisation is drawing candidates' attention to the urgent need to promote, prioritise and implement a plan to guarantee respect of their rights.

"Concrete measures, such as implementing international legislation at national level, organising an effective complaints system, providing training for government officials and working together with non-governmental organisations, could make a big difference to the lives of thousands of women and girls who are subjected to violence on a daily basis", stressed the organisation.

"We are not suggesting anything new or impossible, simply enforcement of the law and international commitments in order to end impunity, reinforce the justice system and respect the independence of the judiciary once and for all," concluded Amnesty International.

For a copy of "El Salvador: open letter to the presidential candidates" please see:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ESLAMR290042003>

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