



Amnesty International checklist for selection of candidates for the mandate of UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Proposed candidates for the mandate should be put forward on the basis of technical, professional and other requirements.

Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 5/1 sets general criteria that are of 'paramount importance while nominating, selecting and appointing mandate-holders: (a) expertise; (b) experience in the field of the mandate; (c) independence; (d) impartiality; (e) personal integrity; and (f) objectivity.'

HRC decision 6/102 establishes four technical and objective requirements (qualifications, relevant expertise, established competence and flexibility/readiness and availability of time) to be considered in the selection of Special Procedures mandate-holders.

The following checklist is intended as an interpretive aid for those requirements:

1. Qualifications (and skills): relevant educational qualifications and equivalent professional experience in the field of human rights; good communications skills in two of the official languages of the United Nations.

Checklist:

- A post-graduate university degree or equivalent in a discipline directly related to the mandate, preferably with a substantial focus on public international law, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and/or international criminal law;
- Academic publications or other published material, including for NGOs (articles, studies, reports, research papers or any similar written material demonstrating in-depth knowledge) on human rights issues relevant to the mandate;
- Excellent oral and written communications skills in at least two of the UN working languages (English, French and Spanish – knowledge of other widely-used or official UN languages, such as Arabic, Chinese or Russian, would be an asset);
- Forensic knowledge and experience in the investigation of violent deaths, including the exhumation of graves;
- Extensive experience in public speaking (for example, in expert seminars), and ideally also communicating with the media, governments, and other relevant stakeholders.

2. Relevant expertise: knowledge of international human rights instruments and standards; knowledge of institutional mandates related to the UN or other international or regional organizations' work in the area of human rights; proven work experience in the field of human rights.

Checklist:

- Extensive knowledge of international human rights law and standards and international humanitarian law;
- At least 10 years of work experience in the field of human rights, in particular in work on or around protecting persons at risk and/or supporting potential victims of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the families of such victims and

- witnesses to such executions, and in conducting or monitoring human rights investigations, particularly involving extrajudicial executions and political killings;
- Excellent knowledge of international and regional legal frameworks and case law relevant to the prohibition of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the right to life; safeguards and restrictions related to imposition of the death penalty; enforced disappearances; fair trial rights; international standards on the use of force; reparations, including compensation for the families of victims; prosecution and sanction of perpetrators, as well as of institutional mandates of the UN or other international or regional organizations in the area of human rights.

3. Established competence: nationally, regionally or internationally recognised competence related to human rights.

Checklist:

- Knowledge of human rights-based methodologies for investigating suspected cases of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and practical experience in this field, including in difficult circumstances in various;
- The ability to conduct both theoretical and field research required in conducting fact finding missions;
- Experience in critically analysing information and data, in order to be able to review individual cases as well as identify trends and make effective recommendations;
- Experience in interacting with the families of victims of and witnesses to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- Experience in working with authorities responsible for persons who may be responsible for extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, including relevant military, police and prison officials;
- Sensitivity to the political nuances and challenges that may be faced in seeking to investigate instances of suspected extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- Awareness of the particular vulnerabilities of specific individuals and groups (such as members of minorities, opposition supporters, detainees, who may face a heightened risk of becoming a victim of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions);
- Commitment to work closely with a range of stakeholders, including NGOs.

Experience in investigating, litigating or otherwise handling cases of suspected extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions before judicial and quasi-judicial bodies would be an asset.

4. Flexibility/readiness and availability of time to perform effectively the functions of the mandate and to respond to its requirements, including conducting country visits, writing reports in a timely fashion and attending Human Rights Council and General Assembly sessions.

Checklist:

- Willingness and ability to conduct in-country investigations, in all regions of the world, into alleged cases of, and phenomena conducive to, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution;
- A demonstrated commitment to international human rights law, standards and values, including a principled approach to the right to life and other human rights affected by extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. A commitment to uphold the integrity, independence and impartiality of the Special Rapporteur's mandate;
- Willingness and ability to devote a substantial proportion of working hours to fulfilling the mandate, which includes undertaking two to three country missions per year, preparing and presenting reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly (including annual and country mission reports), and attending seminars and other UN meetings;
- Willingness and ability to act urgently on cases or situation requiring immediate attention.

While Amnesty International considers commitment to universal human rights, relevant experience and competence, and personal integrity to be obligatory requirements for any

individual to become an eligible candidate for this mandate, the organization does not consider that a mandate holder must meet each and every specification in the above checklists. However, the strongest candidates should meet a substantial number of them. Please note also that these checklists are not intended to be exhaustive as to the desirable qualifications of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Prospective mandate holders should be aware that this is a voluntary, unpaid role. Reasonable expenses for mandate related work will be paid, but no salary is available. It will require a substantial time commitment from the individual, including readiness to respond to urgent situations, as explained above.

NGOs and others wishing to nominate candidates should send the names of eligible candidates to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) by **31 March 2010** at the latest for inclusion in the public list (roster), used as a basis for the appointment.¹ Please check with the individuals concerned before submitting their name to the OHCHR.

March 2010

¹ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/special/nominations.htm>