

**Human Rights Council - 56th Regular Session – 18 June to 12 July 2024**

**Agenda Item 3 -** *Oral Statement in the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers*

Thank you, President

Special Rapporteur,

Consistent with the assessment contained in your report, the ICJ has observed and documented a trend in countries around the world of erosion of the rule of law, marked by threats to judicial independence and the failure of check and balances coming from clear separation of governmental powers.

Recent attacks against the International Criminal Court signal that international justice systems have not escaped this trend.

Regarding **Guatemala**, the ICJ condemns the various forms of attack and harassment, including through spurious criminal investigations, faced by independent judges, prosecutors and lawyers. The Office of the Prosecutor General, led by María Consuelo Porras Argueta, has played a leading role in the criminalization of justice sector authorities and in the attempts to undermine the results of the electoral process ~~carried out~~ in 2023.

The ICJ denounces the pervasive executive interference in **India** concerning the selection and appointment of judges to constitutional courts (Supreme Court and High Court) and stalling of judicial appointments by the executive, whereby appointment recommendations are returned to the Supreme Court.

Concerning **Tunisia**, two years after the President’s dismantlement of the judiciary’s institutional independence and his arbitrary dismissal of 57 judges and prosecutors, the executive continues to pursue suspensions and punitive transfers against judges and prosecutors who oppose executive overreach and abide by the principles of integrity and objectivity in their work, with adverse consequences for the protection of human rights.

In various countries, the justice system is also instrumentalized to target judges and lawyers.

Special Rapporteur, how can we better protect those who act as the last line of defense of the rule of law?

I thank you.

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