



Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General  
United Nations, S-3800  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

12 May 2008

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,



We write to you concerning the selection and appointment process for the new High Commissioner for Human Rights. In particular, we welcome your letter dated March 24 asking Member States for suggestions on candidates, and expressing your intention to consult with the “human rights support community” before making this important appointment.

We welcome your demonstrated commitment to selecting a High Commissioner of the highest international professional standing who will act courageously and independently under the Office’s mandate, as indicated by the criteria set out in the aforementioned letter. We also appreciate your commitment to ensuring a transparent selection process, including by establishing a selection panel to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and by pledging to undertake consultations with the human rights support community. We strongly support these decisions.

Civil society’s human rights defenders around the world play a crucial role in the UN’s and High Commissioner’s efforts to promote and protect human rights. Our views should therefore be considered in selecting the UN’s principal human rights officer. A transparent and inclusive selection process also lays the foundation for a productive working relationship with the human rights support community during the appointee’s tenure.

As part of the human rights community, we look forward to engaging effectively in this process. We would therefore like to urgently request a meeting with your Office to discuss how we can contribute to your deliberations. We are available to meet at your earliest convenience. We would welcome participation by other members of the human rights community, should you wish to expand the group beyond the undersigned.

Please contact us through Mr. William Pace of the Institute for Global Policy, at 646-465-8531.

Yours respectfully,

Souhayr Belhassen, President  
International Federation for Human Rights

Jarrett Blanc, Senior Policy Analyst for Multilateral Affairs  
Open Society Institute

Steve Crawshaw, UN Advocacy Director  
Human Rights Watch

Dokhi Fasshian, Acting Executive Director  
Democracy Coalition Project

William R. Pace, Executive Director  
Institute for Global Policy

Isabelle Scherer, Director  
International Service for Human Rights

Yvonne Terlingen, Representative at the United Nations  
Amnesty International