Michelle Bachelet
Founder
Fundación Horizonte Ciudadano
Capitán Fuentes 99
Ñuñoa, Santiago
Chile

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Dear Ms. Bachelet,

We write to express serious concern regarding your candidacy for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. Pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 79/327, the Secretary-General should embody "the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity." The UN further states that this person shall "uphold the values and moral authority of the United Nations" and serve as "a spokesperson for the interests of the world's peoples, in particular the poor and vulnerable among them."

However, as documented by UN Watch in its September 2022 report, Blind Eye to Dictatorships, during your 2018-2022 term as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, you systematically failed to confront egregious human rights abuses by some of the world's worst regimes, including China, Russia, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea.

Moreover, under your tenure, the UN human rights office (OHCHR) applied grossly disproportionate attention to criticizing liberal democracies, those that possess internal checks and balances, while giving a free pass to authoritarian regimes that systematically suppress dissent and lack any meaningful internal accountability, and which therefore desperately require scrutiny from international bodies.

UN Watch urges you to clarify your record, including on the following:

- **Russia: You Were Silent on Political Prisoners.** Why did you fail to initiate a single statement on Russian political prisoners, including dissident Vladimir Kara-Murza? Why, despite repeated appeals by human rights organizations, did you remain publicly silent regarding the arrest and attempted poisoning of Alexei Navalny, until after his sentencing in February 2021?

- **Ukraine: You Were Silent on Russia's 2014-2022 Aggression.** Why did you turn a blind eye to Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea, including persecution of Crimean Tatars and attacks on journalists? Why did you fail to speak out on arbitrary arrests, politically motivated kidnappings, and torture in Russian-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk?

- **China: You Were Silent on Abuses, Persecution of Uyghurs, Reprisals.** During your four-year term, why did you fail to meaningfully address Beijing's broader human rights violations, including forced labor, arbitrary

detention, and abuses in Tibet? Why did you fail to initiate a single statement on the detention of more than one million Uyghurs until the final hour of your mandate, despite repeated appeals by UN Watch and widespread international concern? Why did you fail to initiate a single statement on China's reprisals against human rights defenders who cooperated with UN mechanisms, despite repeated documentation in the Secretary-General's annual reprisals reports and repeated appeals from civil society?

- **Iran: You Were Silent on Persecution of Women and Dissidents.** Why did you fail to initiate a single statement on Iran's forced hijab laws and systemic discrimination against women? Why did you remain silent regarding attacks and persecution directed at prominent Iranian dissidents abroad, including women's rights activist Masih Alinejad?

- **Saudi Arabia: You Were Silent on Imprisonment of Women's Rights Activists.** Why did you fail to consistently speak out against Saudi Arabia's imprisonment of women's rights activists, its repressive male guardianship system, and its persecution of dissidents and political prisoners such as Raif Badawi?

- **Cuba: You Were Silent During Historic Democracy Protests.** Why did you criticize Cuba only once during your four-year term, and this only after widespread international attention and repeated appeals during the July 2021 pro-democracy protests?

- **Turkey: You Were Silent on Domestic Repression.** Why did you fail to initiate a single statement on Turkey's domestic human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, attacks on journalists, restrictions on civil liberties, and persecution of academics and human rights defenders?

- **You Condemned U.S. More Than Venezuela's Maduro Regime.** During your four years in office, you initiated more stand-alone criticisms of the United States than of Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro regime, despite extensive evidence of arbitrary detention, torture, and repression in Venezuela documented by UN mechanisms and OHCHR itself. Why did a democracy with internal checks and balances receive greater scrutiny than an authoritarian regime lacking those safeguards?

- **North Korea: You Made Only One Statement.** Why did you initiate only one stand-alone criticism of North Korea, treating one of the world's most severe and systematic human rights violators similarly to how you treated democratic Australia, Spain and the European Union?

- **Antisemitic Violence: You Were Silent on Deadly Attacks.** Why did you fail to initiate a single stand-alone statement following major antisemitic attacks, including the synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway and the hostage-taking at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, even as you did publicly speak out on other forms of racist violence, including anti-Black racism in the United States?

Why did violent antisemitic attacks not receive your comparable public attention?

Before any government can consider supporting your candidacy, we respectfully urge you to provide clear answers to the questions outlined above, and to carefully assess whether your record on critical human rights issues reflects the standards expected of a future Secretary-General.

Sincerely,

Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director