The Honorable Eloy Alfaro de Alba
Ambassador of Panama to the UN
Permanent Mission of Panama to the UN
10 Grand Central
155 East 44th Street, 26th Floor
New York, NY 10017

19 May 2026

Dear Ambassador Alfaro de Alba,

We write to express serious concern regarding the candidacy of Michelle Bachelet 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 Ms. Bachelet's 2018-2022 term as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, she 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 her 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 your government to ask Ms. Bachelet to clarify her record, including on the following:

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

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

- **China: Bachelet Silent on Abuses, Persecution of Uyghurs, Reprisals.** During her four-year term, why did Ms. Bachelet fail to meaningfully address Beijing's broader human rights violations, including forced labor, arbitrary detention, and abuses in Tibet? Why did she fail to initiate a single statement on the detention of more than one million Uyghurs until the final hour of her mandate, despite repeated appeals by UN Watch and widespread international concern? Why did Ms. Bachelet 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: Bachelet Silent on Persecution of Women and Dissidents.** Why did Ms. Bachelet fail to initiate a single statement on Iran's forced hijab laws and systemic discrimination against women? Why did she remain silent regarding attacks and persecution directed at prominent Iranian dissidents abroad, including women's rights activist Masih Alinejad?

- **Saudi Arabia: Bachelet Silent on Imprisonment of Women's Rights Activists.** Why did Ms. Bachelet 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: Bachelet Silent During Historic Democracy Protests.** Why did Ms. Bachelet criticize Cuba only once during her four-year term, and this only after widespread international attention and repeated appeals during the July 2021 pro-democracy protests?

- **Turkey: Bachelet Silent on Domestic Repression.** Why did Ms. Bachelet 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?

- **Bachelet Condemned U.S. More Than Venezuela's Maduro Regime.** During her four years in office, Ms. Bachelet 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: Bachelet Made Only One Statement.** Why did Ms. Bachelet 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 she treated democratic Australia, Spain and the European Union?

- **Antisemitic Violence: Bachelet Silent on Deadly Attacks.** Why did Ms. Bachelet 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 she 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 her comparable public attention?

Before extending any support to Ms. Bachelet's candidacy, we respectfully urge your government to seek clear answers to the questions outlined above, and to carefully assess whether her record on critical human rights issues reflects the standards expected of a future Secretary-General.

Sincerely,

Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director