



Human Rights
Institute

United Nations Human Rights Council
Geneva, Switzerland

Item 2: General debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner, reports on OHCHR activities in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras, OHCHR oral update on Cyprus

4 March 2024

Oral Statement

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) supports Guatemala's transfer of power despite attempts to overturn the electoral results and stands firm in support of democracy and Rule of Law in the country.

A fundamental aspect of the Rule of Law is access to justice and the independence of legal professions. Lawyers, judges and prosecutors must be able to carry out their professional duties without harassment, intimidation or improper interference.

In Guatemala, under the previous government, lawyers were often faced with surveillance, attacks, and subjected to or threatened with prosecution when working on politically sensitive cases. Multiple lawyers or their families have had to leave the country in response to the threats they received. Similarly, more than 40 judges and prosecutors had to exile to avoid being arbitrarily arrested following mock trials.

The IBAHRI encourages Guatemala's new government to work towards the strengthening of institutions, the protection of the Rule of Law and access to justice, respect for human rights and the promotion of equality and respect for diversity. Immediate measures to safeguard the independence of the legal profession and to provide protection against any form of undue interference with their work should hopefully lead to a return to the country of the legal actors forced to exile.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:

Eleonora Scala

Programme Lawyer

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Eleonora.scala@int-bar.org

For more information, please contact:

Francesca Restifo

Senior Human Rights Lawyer and UN Representative

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Francesca.restifo@int-bar.org