

Mr. Walter Rondóns. General Attorney Diana Salazar

Prosecutor of the Public Prosecutor's Office

Providence of Jujuy

Argentina

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Dear Mr. Prosecutor:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the criminal charges brought against Nahuel Morandini, Roque Villegas, and Lucía González for referring ironically to Jujuy's former First Lady. I am concerned that all the evidence against them is their posts on social media or even in private messaging platforms.

International Human Rights Law protects the right to freedom of expression, including opinions that may be regarded as shocking, offensive or disturbing. The UN Human Rights Committee has further clarified that public officials should tolerate more criticism and that the mere fact that forms of expression may be considered to be insulting to a public figure is not sufficient to justify the imposition of penalties.

Despite the provisional release of Morandini and Villegas and the fact that recently, at the request of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Court ruled that the arrest warrant for Gonzalez should be repealed, I am still concerned that the prosecution against all of them is still ongoing. Moreover, the disciplinary conduct imposed on Morandini and Villegas in pending trial, requiring them to refrain from commenting on the case or the complainants, appears to be an additional excessive and disproportionate restriction.

I respectfully remind you that, under international law, regional and local authorities are equally obliged to comply with Argentina's human rights obligations. Criminal charges restricting the right to freedom of expression can have a disproportionate impact and a wider chilling effect across society. **Given the international obligations of the Argentine State to respect, protect and guarantee human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, I call on you to drop the charges against Nahuel Morandini, Roque Villegas and Lucía González as these stems solely from their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression.**

Sincerely,