

## REGIONAL MEETING

# JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE IN THE AMERICAS: LISTENING TO JUDGES' VOICES

Virtual Event  
October 11, 2022  
4 p.m. Chile

### Background

Judicial independence is one of the priority challenges related to strengthening democratic systems in the countries of the Americas. In an effort to address this topic, the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) is organizing the regional meeting “**Judicial Independence in the Americas: Listening to Judges’ Voices**” in collaboration with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Latin American Magistrates’ Federation (FIM), the Chilean Judges’ Association and the World Justice Project, with the support of Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

### Context

The Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) recently developed its new 2022- 2026 Strategic Plan through a broad, inclusive and participatory process that involved 760 people who represent the justice institutions of the Americas, civil society, academia and international organizations.

Through the development of the aforementioned plan, a series of challenges faced by justice systems in the Americas were identified, including “...the role that they should play in the defense and strengthening of democracy in the region.” (Our translation.) *In effect, “...effective democracy requires independence of the various branches of government and respect for the rule of law.”* (Our translation.)

Although they recognize that justice systems and particularly judiciaries play a role in the defense and strengthening of democracy, the participants in the consultative processes that JSCA conducted also assert that “...there are internal and external threats to the independence of justice institutions that manifest on different levels and in different ways ranging from open and clearly illegitimate to subtle and veiled in a context of political polarization.” (Our translation.)

There are two types of threats to judicial independence. The first is “external” threats including efforts to improperly influence judicial officials’ appointment mechanisms or to limit or hinder the budgetary management of judiciaries. There are also “internal” pressures and risks within judiciaries that impact the professional careers of judges and other officials, including the selection, appointment, evaluation, confirmation and removal of judges.

### Objective

To establish the current state of judicial independence in Latin American countries. To identify



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Asociación Nacional  
de Magistradas y Magistrados  
del Poder Judicial de Chile



World Justice  
Project

and describe -listening to judges' voices- the explicit or implicit obstacles to their work in order to reinforce mechanisms for protecting independence as an essential pillar of democracy.

### Target audience

Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, litigators, administrative staff of justice institutions, policymakers who work on justice and the strengthening of democracy, and the academic sector. The legal community in general.

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Time	Topic	Participants
4:00-4:05 p.m.	Opening Remarks	Nataly Ponce Executive Director, JSCA
4:05-4:25 p.m.	Mechanisms for Appointing Judicial Officials and Superior Court Judges	Adriana Orocu President of the Costa Rican Judiciary Association President of the Latin American Magistrates' Federation (FLAM)
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>		
4:25-4:45 p.m.	Strengthening the Judicial Career	Walter Barone President of the Ibero-American Group of the International Magistrates' Union (UIM)
4:45-5:05 p.m.	Mechanisms for Evaluating Judges in the Context of Judicial Independence	Alejandro Vera Director of the Chilean Judges' Association Judge, Court of Appeals of Temuco, Chile
5:05-5:25 p.m.	Standards and Rulings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on Judicial Independence	Joel Hernández García Commissioner Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
5:25-5:45 p.m.	The Rule of Law Index as a Basis for Developing Judicial Independence in the Americas	Daniela Barba Director of Research on Access to Justice World Justice Project
5:45-6:15 p.m.	Reflections and Questions Nataly Ponce Executive Director, JSCA	
6:15-6:20 p.m.	Closing Remarks representative of JSCA Board of Directors	