

## **Committee of Experts Expresses Concern about Femicides and Attacks against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia**

The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the [Belém do Pará Convention \(MESECVI\)](#) expresses its concern about the lack of protection and risk faced by women leaders and human rights defenders in Colombia, who have reported being harassed, threatened and even murdered in due to their participation in peacebuilding processes in the country. The Committee's concerns are exacerbated when it finds that there are cases of community defenders, Afro-Colombians, indigenous, environmentalist and peasant women defenders, journalists, LGBTI activists and defenders of women's rights, who, because they are women, are exposed to additional risks such as sexual violence.

This Committee of Experts recognizes the efforts that the Colombian State has implemented in this area, such as the [Comprehensive Program of Guarantees for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders](#) (available in Spanish), which includes specific measures for the protection and integrity of these women, as well as progress in identifying the perpetrators of these attacks. However, the measures implemented have not been sufficient, since women continue to experience violence and obstacles to exercise their public and political duties. In addition, these cases represent high levels of impunity.

Article 4 of the Belém do Pará Convention states that every woman has the right to the recognition, enjoyment, exercise and protection of all human rights and that these rights include, among others, the right to have her life respected, her physical, psychic and moral integrity, the right to have equal access to the public services of their country and to participate in public affairs, including decision-making. In this line, article 5 establishes that every woman may freely and fully exercise her civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and shall enjoy the full protection of those rights enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments.

Based on the foregoing, in 2017 the Committee of Experts approved the [Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life](#), which indicates that violence exercised against women in political life it constitutes a violation of their human rights and is a threat to democracy. Article 6 of this Model Law states that acts of violence against women in political life, among others, are those actions, conduct or omissions against women who, based on their gender, threaten, assault or incite violence against women. the defenders of human

rights for reasons of gender or against those women defenders who defend the rights of women.

In this regard, it should be remembered that during the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round of the MESECVI, through the [Third Hemispheric Report on Prevention](#), the Committee of Experts has recommended that the States Party guarantee the active, permanent and structured participation of women's movements, as well as strengthening access to justice and investigations to reduce the high degree of impunity of those who exercise violence against them, as well as to reduce the gap between the complaints received and the sentences handed down and their reparations.

For all the above, this Committee of Experts urges the Colombian authorities to take all necessary measures to eradicate acts of violence that affect the life or physical or mental integrity of human rights defenders. Likewise, as established in articles 7 and 8 of the Convention of Belém do Pará, the State is urged to adopt policies aimed at preventing, punishing and eradicating violence against women, acting with due diligence to investigate this violence, and adopting specific measures to offer women victims of violence access to effective rehabilitation and training programs that allow them to participate fully in public, private and social life.

*The [Committee of Experts](#) is the technical body of the MESECVI responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Belém do Pará Convention. It is composed of independent experts, appointed by each of the States Party among its nationals, who exercise their functions in a personal capacity.*