

## **Committee of Experts welcomes the decision of the Comptroller related to the protocol of conscientious objection in Chile**

The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the [Belém do Pará Convention](#) (MESECVI) welcomes the fact that the Comptroller General of Chile considers that the conscientious objection of protocol contained in the law decriminalizing abortion on three grounds does not comply with the law, noting that "public health enactments cannot invoke conscientious objection as it is the State's role to guarantee free and equal access to health". Therefore, private institutions that have made an agreement with the State cannot be accepted as objectors, because while they receive public financing, it is understood that they are establishments that substitute Health Services and form part of the Public Health Network.

In this regard, the Committee welcomes the decision of the Comptroller General, which constitutes a step towards the fulfillment of international obligations and commitments regarding the effective implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention, an international instrument signed and ratified by the State of Chile. In addition, this decision is in line with the national standards of the international *corpus juris* for the protection of the rights of women and girls.

It should be remembered that 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 freedoms embodied in regional and international human rights instruments. These rights include, among others, the right to have her physical, mental and moral integrity respected.

Because of this, the Committee of Experts, through the [Declaration on Violence Against Women, Girls and Adolescents and their Sexual and Reproductive Rights](#), states that "access to health services in general, and services for the interruption of pregnancy in particular, must be confidential and that the conscientious objection of health personnel under any circumstances may result in the violation of women's human rights.

In April 2018, as a result of the modifications to the protocol by the government, through a letter sent to high authorities, the Committee pointed out that the right to conscientious objection cannot limit, diminish, affect or reduce the human rights of women and girls under any circumstances.

\*The letters sent can be downloaded at the following links (only in Spanish): President of the Republic of Chile, Sebastián Piñera; Minister of Health, Emilio Santelices and Minister of Women and Gender Equity, Isabel Plá.

\* The complete document shared by the Comptroller can be downloaded at the following [link](https://www.contraloria.cl/pdfbuscador/dictámenes/011781N18/pdf) (only in Spanish):  
<https://www.contraloria.cl/pdfbuscador/dictámenes/011781N18/pdf>

*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 from among its nationals, who exercise their functions in a personal capacity.*