



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts expresses concern about the high rates of femicides/feminicides in the region

Washington DC, March 8, 2020. Within the framework of International Women's Day, the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women, "[Belém do Pará Convention](#)" ([MESECVI](#)), expresses its concern about the high numbers of femicides/feminicides registered in all the States Parties to the Convention. This is an alarming reality because, despite the efforts that have been made to prevent and eradicate it, the figures indicate a sustained upward trend in the most extreme form of violence against women and girls.

During the current Follow-up Phase of the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round of the MESECVI, this Committee has found on average that 16% of the gender-based violence cases are sentenced; in cases of femicide, this average rises to 29%. In some reports, the Committee has observed long time lags between the initiation of the investigation or prosecution and the judgment of the cases. These figures also account for the high levels of impunity present in the region. Likewise, it is necessary to take into account that independent observers of gender violence have shown important underreporting of existing cases of violence against women and femicide/feminicide.¹

In this regard, the Committee of Experts has recognized that 18 countries in the region have typified or aggravated the homicides of women because of gender; however, legislative prolixity has not had a real impact on reducing violent deaths of women. For the laws that punish femicide to fulfill their objectives, it is necessary that these crimes be easily verified and that, both the investigation and the judicial adjudication of cases, do not continue with patterns of impunity, and do not use gender stereotypes that revictimize and blame women and thus limit their access to justice.

In addition to the appropriate classification and adjudication of cases of femicide, it is necessary that violence against women in general and femicide in particular, be faced with comprehensive actions that address the roots of this problem through effective policies of prevention, attention, investigation, sanction and reparation. These deaths of women due to gender are preventable because, in most cases, they are not unrelated expressions of violence but are derived from a situation of continuous violence against women for gender reasons.

¹ Technical Secretariat of the MESECVI. Follow-up phase Third Round of MESECVI, 2019.

In response to this need to generate comprehensive actions and avoid impunity, which remains the rule in cases of femicide/feminicide, the Committee of Experts, through the approval of the [Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate the Violent Death of Women and Girls \(Femicide/Feminicide\)](#) has proposed a more comprehensive approach to this problem based on the description of the minimum legal standards that must be incorporated into domestic legislation to help guarantee the rights of women.

In effect, the Model Law focuses on public action regarding prevention, adjudication of criminal behavior, investigation, prosecution, sanction and reparation, as well as the importance that in these procedures, authorities focus their efforts in the needs of the victims and their families in such a way that there is true access to justice and that the process itself is reparative and dignified.

For all the above, this Committee of Experts makes an emphatic call to the States, particularly Caribbean states where, to date, there is no recognition of femicide/feminicide in the legislative framework on gender-based violence against women, to incorporate the precepts contained in the Model Law in their internal legislation and to take, without delay, all the necessary measures to prevent, attend, investigate and punish these crimes, under the highest standards of due diligence and access to justice, including fair reparation for victims.

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