



Comunicado Comité de Expertas

Committee of Experts expresses rejection and concern over acts of extreme violence against women in La Libertad, Peru

Washington, DC, July 14, 2022. The Committee of Experts of [the Follow-up Mechanism of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women](#) "Belém do Pará Convention" (MESECVI) expresses its most profound rejection of and concern regarding the events that occurred in the department of La Libertad, Peru, where peasant groups kidnapped and tortured a group of women accusing them of witchcraft.

According to news reported by the media¹, later confirmed by the authorities, the women held unlawfully for days in the town of Chilia were subjected to practices considered by this Committee as torture under the Belém do Pará Convention and various international human rights treaties. They were forced to remain naked in public, beaten up, hung from the ceiling, and threatened with death, among other violations of their human rights.

The Committee of Experts recalls that according to article 2 of the Belém do Pará Convention: "Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence: b. that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place."

Although the victims have been released, the Committee considers it of the utmost importance to reiterate the obligation of the State to investigate, punish and determine responsibilities around the events in question. According to article 7 of the Belém do Pará Convention, the States Parties are obliged to "act with due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women."

Hence, the Committee of Experts welcomes the condemnation of the facts by the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, as well as by the Ombudsman of Peru, and supports their call for a thorough and prompt investigation. Likewise, this Committee exhorts the public authorities to take the necessary measures for the protection of the victims and the non-repetition of these acts of violence.

¹ "Defensoría afirma que rondas campesinas torturaron a mujeres acusadas de "brujería" en Pataz". Source: Infobae. <https://www.infobae.com/america/peru/2022/07/12/defensoria-afirma-que-rondas-campesinas-torturaron-a-mujeres-acusadas-de-brujeria-en-pataz/>

In this regard, the Committee of Experts considers it pertinent to recall “the right of women to be valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination”².

To this end, the Committee of Experts underlines the need to implement measures to counteract the stereotypes that fuel violence against women, adolescents, and younger girls. As stated in article 8 of the Belém do Pará Convention: “The States Parties agree to undertake progressively specific measures, including programs: b. to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, including the development of formal and informal educational programs appropriate to every level of the educational process, to counteract prejudices, customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on the stereotyped roles for men and women which legitimize or exacerbate violence against women.”

The Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the State of Peru for any technical support it may require in its efforts to prevent, punish, and eradicate acts of violence against women, such as those in question.

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

² Article 6. Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/texto-de-la-convencion-INGLES.pdf>