

CHAPTER I

ACTIVITIES OF THE IACHR IN 2016

A. Election of the Executive Secretary

1. Announcement of the Opening

1. This year the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights elected the new Executive Secretary. The term of Executive Secretary Emilio Álvarez Icaza Longoria ended on August 15, 2016, as he decided not to seek re-election. In keeping with the procedure established at Article 11 of the IACHR's Rules of Procedure, on January 9, 2016, the job announcement was published for the Executive Secretary position for the period from August 2016 to August 2020.

2. Selection

2. The selection process was open, participatory, and transparent. More than 90 candidates applied. For one month the IACHR posted the curriculum vitae of the finalists on its website for the purpose of receiving observations.

3. The five finalists were interviewed during a working meeting in Washington D.C. July 18 to 29, 2016. The finalists were: Elizabeth Abi-Mershed, of the United States; Paulo Abrão, of Brazil; Renzo Pomi, of Uruguay; Michael Reed Hurtado, of Colombia; and Lisa M. Shoman, of Belize.

3. Profile of Executive Secretary Paulo Abrão

4. On July 27, 2016 the IACHR selected Paulo Abrão as its new Executive Secretary. Paulo Abrão completed a doctorate in law at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro and did graduate studies in human rights and processes of democratization at the Universidad de Chile. Paulo Abrão is also a professor of law teaching political and legal sciences at the Universidad Pablo Olavide in Spain and professor of law at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. Paulo Abrão has professional experience in administration of public policies, financial policies, budgetary policies, fundraising, and directing projects funded by international cooperation. Before assuming his current position Paulo Abrão was the Executive Secretary of the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights of Mercosur, as well as the Chairman of the Brazilian Amnesty Commission. In Brazil he also held the positions of National Secretary for Justice, Chairman of the National Committee for Refugees and of the National Committee against Human Trafficking.

5. The IACHR is grateful for the participation of all those who applied, and the finalists in particular are acknowledged for their capacity and their lofty professional and moral standing.

B. Financial crisis and efforts to address it

1. Announcement of the financial crisis

6. At the Permanent Council session of May 23, 2016, the IACHR announced the extreme financial crisis it underwent this year. At that time the IACHR risked losing almost 40% of its staff due to the lack of funds for renewing the contracts. The instability and lack of resources was such that it could have put at risk the capacity to carry out its mandate and perform its basic functions, since the flow of work continued

increasing. Planned visits were suspended, as was the period of sessions scheduled for October, due to lack of funds.

7. The IACHR considers that a new financial crisis could be avoided if the member states approve an adequate regular budget, for the insufficient financing is structural and systematic. It is essential to solve the mismatch between the mandate that the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) have assigned to the IACHR and the financial resources they allocate to it.

2. Efforts by the President of the IACHR

8. Before the announcement of the financial crisis, the IACHR President James Cavallaro began to take initiatives and engage in dialogues with member countries and the Inter-American Court. This took up a large part of the President's agenda. He, together with Executive Secretary Alvarez Icaza and then with Executive Secretary Abrão, directed the staff of the Executive Secretariat to design the campaign to address the crisis, and to pursue political and diplomatic agendas with high-level authorities to explain the impact of the crisis on the inter-American human rights system.

9. The formal announcement of the serious financial crisis, on May 23, sparked various reactions from 16 states, which recognized the importance of the IACHR's work. One could perceive two approaches in the statements by the states, solidarity, and the call for a debate on the causes of the crisis.

10. During the forty-sixth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 13 to 15, the President of the IACHR participated with a communication strategy on the financial crisis; he met with civil society representatives, and representatives of the states. He also participated in a civil society roundtable on the financial crisis of the inter-American human rights system in a dialogue that preceded the General Assembly.

11. In June 2016 the President attended the Annual Meeting of Chairpersons of Human Rights Treaty Bodies (United Nations) in New York. Although the meeting was not about the economic crisis of the IACHR, the representatives of the United Nations took up the matter and announced that a press release had been approved expressing support for the IACHR.

12. Also in June 2016, the President travelled to Vienna at the invitation of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to participate in the Fundamental Rights Forum. At that activity President Cavallaro engaged in conversation with Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the European Agency of Fundamental Rights and with Paul d'Auchamp, Deputy Regional Representative for Europe of the OHCHR.

13. In October the President of the IACHR participated in a meeting of the Working Party on Latin America and the Caribbean (COLAC) of the European Parliament, where he reported on the situation of crisis affecting the IACHR. During that stay in Europe the President also met with the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis; the Head of Division for Regional Affairs for the Americas, Manfredo Fanti; and other EU officials from the Department of Human Rights of the EEAS (GLOBAL.1), from the European Commission (DEVCO), and from the geographic divisions of the Americas.

14. The President promoted a strategic alliance with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Thanks to the dialogue between both organs, on September 30 both presented to the OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro, a proposal for financing that seeks to improve the financial situation of the inter-American system.

15. The proposal of the IACHR in response to this year's serious financial crisis includes medium- and long-term measures to adapt the budgetary outlay so that the member states of the Organization of American States will be the main funders of both organs of the system. The proposal was included in the Program Budget of the OAS to be approved during the General Assembly on October 31, 2016. The decision on the matter was not made during the period covered by this report.

16. The new budget would ensure the stability and sustainability of the funds available for the two organs of the system, and consequently would improve their capacity for planning and management. It is proposed that the annual budget for the inter-American system should be US\$18,204,450, US\$11,228,250 would be earmarked for the IACHR, and US\$6,976,200 for the Court.

3. Voluntary contributions and support for the IACHR

17. After the first announcement on the economic crisis and its effects the IACHR received commitments of financial support from several member states. The IACHR expresses gratitude to the following states for their extraordinary contributions: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United States, and Uruguay.

18. IACHR would also like to express its gratitude for the contributions received, as of October 31st, 2016, from the following Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, United States, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay; from Permanent Observers: Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, European Union; and from non-member states and others: UNHCR, Avinna, Arcus Foundation, University of Notre Dame, and Stanford University.

19. Special mention should be made of the moral support from hundreds of national, regional, and international human rights organizations and associations of youths, indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, women, writers, monitors, students, universities, and other educational institutions, as well as victims whose cases were processed by the IACHR, and their family members and representatives. The IACHR also appreciates the work done by its Executive Secretariat, which made it possible to get through this crisis.

20. The IACHR wishes to especially thank the State of Chile and the State of Panama for their support, which that made it possible to hold the 158th and 159th periods of sessions, respectively.

4. Announcement of the end of the financial crisis

21. Thanks to the fundraising efforts, and the swift and effective response on the part of the states and donors, the IACHR celebrated the announcement that the crisis had been surpassed on September 30, 2016. The IACHR expresses its profound recognition to the member states and donors for their financial efforts, which made it possible, among other things, to renew the contracts of its staff for the next year and to turn its attention back to its activities and its mandate.

C. Periods of sessions of the IACHR held in 2016

22. In the course of 2016 the IACHR held four periods of sessions:

Period of sessions	Date	Place
157 th period of sessions	April 2 to 15	Washington, D.C.
158 th special period of sessions	June 6 to 10	Santiago, Chile
159 th period of sessions	November 27 to December 7	Panama City
160 th special period of sessions	December 9 and 10	Washington, D.C.

23. The figures of the number of reports on cases adopted in 2016 are as follows:

	Merits	Friendly Settlement	Admissibility	Inadmissibility	Publication	Archive
Reports approved	16	8	43	2	5	77

1. 157th regular period of sessions (Washington, D.C.)

24. The IACHR held its 157th regular period of sessions from April 2 to 15, 2016, at its headquarters.

25. The election of authorities at the beginning of the sessions resulted in the following composition of its board of officers: James L. Cavallaro, President; Francisco Eguiguren Praeli, First Vice President; and Margarette May Macaulay, Second Vice President. The other Commissioners are: José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Paulo Vannuchi, Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, and Enrique Gil Botero.

26. During the 157th period of sessions 49 public hearings were held, as well as 34 working meetings with states and civil society organizations.

27. The IACHR received information from more than 19 countries and on a regional basis on various human rights issues. Of the 49 hearings held, seven were to receive arguments from the parties on cases in the merits stage, five of which were at the request of member states, namely Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. Civil society representatives requested 40 of the hearings held; and five were held at the initiative of the IACHR.

28. During this period of sessions, the IACHR presented five thematic reports:

- Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendent Communities, and Natural Resources: Human Rights Protection in the Context of Extraction, Exploitation, and Development Activities
- Violence, Children and Organized Crime
- Legal Standards: General Equality and Women's Rights
- Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons in the Americas
- Criminalization of Human Rights Defenders

29. The IACHR had more than seven millions views through social networks and the live broadcast of its hearings. The IACHR is grateful for and values the public's growing interest in human rights in the region and the mechanisms of the inter-American system.

30. The IACHR appreciates the participation of agencies of the United Nations during the period of sessions and highlights the importance of the work of the universal and regional systems for promoting and protecting human rights more effectively in the Americas. Several United Nations rapporteurs participated in the 157th period of sessions:

- Regional civil society consultation organized jointly by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Court, and the IACHR. The session was opened by Ivan Šimonović, United Nations Deputy Secretary General for Human Rights; the Vice President of the Inter-American Court, Eduardo Ferrer MacGregor; and the President of the IACHR, James Cavallaro. This activity included the participation of more than 80 organizations of human rights defenders, as well as United Nations special rapporteurs such as Dubravka Šimonović, Rapporteur on violence against women; Juan Méndez, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Mónica Pinto, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and Ariel Dulitzky, member of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

- Meeting with a delegation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights led by Iván Šimonović and made up of Amerigo Incalcaterra, Representative of the Regional Office for South America, and Vladlen Stefanov, Chief of the National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section, as well as human rights officers Claudia Gerez and Liza Sekaggya. That meeting was held following up on the joint declaration of cooperation signed in 2014.
- Dialogue on fiscal policy and human rights in times of austerity, attended by, among other experts, Ricardo Martner of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Rodrigo Uprimny, member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations.
- The letter sent by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, who saluted the holding of the hearing “Situation of the right of association in the Americas.” In this context, the Special Rapporteur filed an *amicus curiae* brief with the Constitutional Court of Bolivia in May 2015 related to the requirements for establishing civil society organizations and for their operations which, in his opinion would be incompatible with international human rights standards.

31. During the sessions the IACHR met with the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), which worked in Mexico in the investigations into the case of the 43 students who disappeared from Ayotzinapa and with high-level representatives of the Mexican State and family members of the victims. In these meetings the IACHR decided to create a special mechanism for follow-up, at the request of the victims’ family members, to give continuity to the important work of the GIEI.

32. The Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, supported the request for the creation of a group of independent experts to investigate the assassination of human rights defender Berta Cáceres. Berta Cáceres was the leader of her indigenous community and the general coordinator of the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH), as well as the beneficiary of precautionary measures issued by the IACHR. Berta publicly denounced to the authorities her situation of risk and grave threats, yet Honduras failed to implement the precautionary measures recommended by the IACHR. The assassination of Berta Cáceres in March 2016 confirms the grave situation of human rights defenders in Honduras and the failure of the State to implement the requests for precautionary measures adopted by the IACHR.

33. The situation of risk faced by human rights defenders occupied the attention of the IACHR, in particular the acts of harassment, threats, assaults, and assassinations in Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, among others. Some of the human rights defenders who participated in the hearings during the 157th period of sessions have been threatened upon returning to their countries. These lamentable incidents have recurred, for impunity is common in these cases. In several countries public accusations have been directed against them, and they have been targeted by defamatory campaigns and criminalization. The IACHR reiterates the obligation of the states to prevent any attack on the life and physical integrity of human rights defenders and to guarantee, in all circumstances, that they can pursue their legitimate human rights activities without fear or reprisals and free of any restrictions. It is a duty of the states to guarantee the security of groups of human rights defenders in special situations of risk, and to adopt specific measures adapted to their needs, for example, through specialized protocols.

34. The IACHR appreciates the major progress achieved in the peace negotiations Colombia. Even though, unfortunately, the peace agreement was not approved in the respective plebiscite, the IACHR recognizes the efforts of the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) over the last four years of negotiations. This was a major step along the path of consolidating peace in Colombia and will be essential for the continuity of the negotiations. Peace in Colombia is essential for protecting human rights in the country and to ensure that crimes against human rights that took place during the conflict not remain in impunity. The IACHR urges all the parties to continue working to optimize the agreement, making it more just and objective for all.

2. 158th special period of sessions (Santiago, Chile)

35. The IACHR held its 158th special period of sessions in Santiago, Chile, June 6 to 10, 2016, at the invitation of the State of Chile. While in Chile the IACHR held meetings with high-level authorities of the host country and Chilean and regional civil society organizations. Ten public hearings were held, as well as different events for promoting human rights.

36. The IACHR is profoundly grateful to the Government of Chile for the invitation to hold its special period of sessions in the country, and for the facilities provided. The Commission is especially grateful to the Legislative branch, the Judicial branch, the National Human Rights Institute, and civil society organizations and the people of Chile for their warm hospitality and assistance.

37. While in Chile the IACHR held high-level meetings with authorities of the State. It engaged in a dialogue with the President of the Republic, Michelle Bachelet; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heraldo Muñoz Valenzuela; the President of the Senate, Ricardo Lagos Weber; the President of the National Congress, Osvaldo Andrade Lara; the Minister of Justice, Javiera Blanco Suárez; and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Hugo Enrique Dolmetsch Urra.

38. The IACHR also held meetings with persons who participated on their own behalf. The various meetings addressed the following topics: general human rights situation in Chile; human rights situation of persons deprived of liberty, migrants, women, children and adolescents, indigenous persons, Afrodescendants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex persons, human rights defenders, and judicial officers; as well as the situation of the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of assembly, association, and public protest, economic, social, and cultural rights, and the rights to water, health, and education.

39. The organizations that participated in these meetings were: 81 Razones, Agrupación Lésbica Rompiendo el Silencio, Caritas Chile, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas, Centro de Estudios en Seguridad Ciudadana, Corporación Fundamental, Corporación Opción, Fundación Iguales, Fundación PIDEE, Instituto de Estudios Internacionales Universidad Arturo Prat, Instituto de la Mujer, Litigación Estratégica para el Sur (LEASUR), Londres 38, Movilizándonos, Movimiento Acción Migrante, Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual (MOVILH), Observadores DDHH Casa Memoria, Observatorio Ciudadano, Oro Negro, Pastoral Carcelaria Nacional, Red CELAR, Red CELAM/SELACC (Latin American Bishops Council/Secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean of Caritas), Red de Organizaciones de Infancia y Juventud (ROIJ), Red Nacional de ONGs de Niñez y Adolescencia, and Visibles.

40. During the special period of sessions the IACHR participated in three academic promotion activities:

- Panel discussions on the gains made and challenges faced by the IACHR, right to truth, justice, and reparation, and inter-American standards on equity and non-discrimination, at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights.
- Colloquium on States, Businesses and Human Rights, organized by the Human Rights Center of the Universidad Diego Portales, at the National Human Rights Institute.
- Colloquium on enforcement of treaty obligations by domestic law judges (“control of conventionality”) with members of the Human Rights Committee of the Judicial branch, at the offices of the Institute of Judicial Studies (Instituto de Estudios Judiciales).

41. In the context of the sessions in Chile, the IACHR held a working luncheon with representatives of United Nations agencies in Chile in order to share experiences and coordinate in planning their work.

3. 159th regular period of sessions (Panama City, Panama)

42. The IACHR held its 159th regular period of sessions in Panama from November 28 to December 7, 2016, at the invitation of the Panamanian State. The IACHR thanks the State for all the facilities provided, as well as the civil society organizations and the people of Panama for their hospitality and support.

43. This was the first period of sessions with the participation of the new Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão. Since then he has channeled the efforts to put together the Commission's Strategic Plan 2017/2020.

44. During the sessions the IACHR held 37 public hearings, and 32 working meetings on precautionary measures and friendly settlements. It also engaged in consultations on its first thematic report on poverty and human rights and announced the decision to start up its Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

45. The following promotional activities were undertaken in the context of the sessions in Panama:

- Presentation of the report "Criminalization of the work of human rights defenders."
- Workshop on friendly settlement mechanism for Panamanian public servants.
- Course for journalists co-organized with the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Panama.

4. 160th special period of sessions (Washington, D.C.)

46. The IACHR held its 160th special period of sessions in Washington, D.C., on December 9 and 10, 2016. The IACHR expresses its gratitude to the United States for the additional financing that made it possible to organize this special period of sessions at the Commission's headquarters.

D. Activities of the IACHR in relation to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

47. In 2016 the IACHR continued exercising its mandates under the Convention and the Rules of Procedure vis-à-vis the Inter-American Court. Next is a summary of the IACHR's activities before the Court.

1. Submission of contentious cases

48. Pursuant to Article 51 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 45 of its Rules of Procedure the IACHR submitted 16 cases to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court.

a. **Gómez Murillo et al. (*In vitro* fertilization) v. Costa Rica (submitted January 18, 2016)**

49. The case is related to the violation of the rights to humane treatment, personal liberty, private and family life, and to establish a family, and to equality and non-discrimination, enshrined at Articles 5, 7, 11, 17, and 24 of the American Convention in relation to Articles 1(1) and 2 of the same instrument, to the detriment of Daniel Gerardo Gómez Murillo, Aída Marcela Garita Sánchez, Roberto Pérez Gutiérrez, Silvia María Sosa Ulate, Luis Miguel Cruz Comparaz, Raquel Sanvicente Rojas, Randall Alberto Torres Quirós, Geanina Isela Marín Rankin, Carlos Edgardo López Vega, Albania Elizondo Rodríguez, Miguel Acuña Cartín, and Patricia Núñez Marín.

50. Those violations occurred as the result of a general prohibition on the technique of assisted reproduction known as *in vitro* fertilization, which has been in force in Costa Rica since the year 2000 after a decision handed down by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court. As indicated in report on the

merits 1/15, by virtue of the principle of procedural economy and as it is a matter general in scope already resolved by both organs of the inter-American system, the IACHR determined the international responsibility of the State of Costa Rica with reference to the analysis of law and articles applied both in its report on the merits 85/10 with respect to case 12,361 - *Artavia Murillo et al.*, and in the Judgment on Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations and Costs issued by the Inter-American Court in the same case.

b. Ramírez Escobar et al. v. Guatemala (submitted February 12, 2016)

51. The case is related to a series of violations of the American Convention as a result of the process of international adoption by a procedure before a notary of two children, ages 7 and 2 years respectively, in June 1998, after the institutionalization of the two brothers as of January 9, 1997 and the subsequent declaration of a supposed state of abandonment.

52. The IACHR concluded that the initial decision of institutionalization and the judicial declaration of the state of abandonment did not meet with the minimal substantive and procedural obligations to be able to consider them in keeping with the American Convention. Specifically, the IACHR determined that there was no immediate investigation of the situation from the moment the anonymous report was received on the alleged situation of abandonment; after the visit with the children it was automatically ordered that they be institutionalized at the Hogar Asociación without any reference to the possibility of taking measures to support the mother or the possibility of looking for the father or the extended family for their care; it was found that throughout this process there was a general failure to seek alternatives less harmful than institutionalization and subsequent adoption; and that from the visit to the home of Ms. Ramírez up to the declaration of a state of abandonment of her two children there were numerous irregularities and evidentiary omissions. These include the failure to consult one of the children about his situation and that of his brother; the failure to consider Ms. Ramírez's arguments once she went before the Court to request that her children be turned over to her; and the errors in the reports of the authorities (the Procuraduría) about the situation of the children and the delegation to the Hogar Asociación to perform the respective social studies without guarantees of independence or suitability, which was reflected in the motivations and conclusions of those studies.

53. As regards the adoption process, the IACHR took into account the concern that the different international organizations showed with respect to the legislation in force at the time of the facts on the process of adopting children, in particular, that the extrajudicial adoption process did not require any major investigation, red tape, or procedures, nor was it subject to obligatory judicial review. In addition, it did not have the minimum procedural or substantive safeguards to ensure that all possible alternatives would be explored before proceeding to the adoption, nor was the presence or declaration of consent of the parents made in keeping with the standards described in the report. Also of concern was the fact that it was not required that the children be heard from, or that their opinion be weighed commensurate with their maturity. The IACHR determined that these problems in the existing regulations and practices in adoptions at the time of the facts were clearly present in this case.

54. Specifically, the IACHR concluded that: (i) the court that ordered the adoption did not analyze whether there were remedies pending in the proceeding; (ii) no type of measure was ordered for the purpose of analyzing Ms. Ramírez's situation; (iii) no investigative steps were taken nor was the possibility considered of decreeing that the children would be placed in the care of their extended family; (iv) even though international adoption should be exceptional, in this matter the court failed to analyze the possibility of exploring an adoption in Guatemala, but rather requested international adoption to the United States on an expedited basis; (v) nor did the court weigh the suitability of the adopting families in relation to the specific needs of the children, who were separated from one another, even though they are brothers; and (vi) there was no effort to check whether they had been heard during the adoption process.

55. Finally, the IACHR concluded that the motion for review (*recurso de revisión*) filed was not an effective remedy to address the human rights violations that took place in the context of the proceedings on declaration of abandonment and international adoption. In addition, the IACHR determined that the remedy was not resolved within a reasonable time.

c. Rocío San Miguel Sosa et al. v. Venezuela (submitted March 8, 2016)

56. The case is related to the arbitrary dismissal of Rocío San Miguel Sosa, Magally Chang Girón, and Thais Coromoto Peña from their respective public positions in the National Council of Borders on March 12, 2004 after having signed the call for a referendum to revoke the presidential mandate of then-President Hugo Chávez Frías.

57. This political process took place in a context of significant polarization in which the then-President of the Republic and other high-level state officials made contemporaneous statements, either at the time of signing, or in presenting them to the National Electoral Council, whose contents clearly reflect that these were forms of pressure for them not to sign, threats of reprisals and even unfounded accusations that those who signed were terrorists. Part of the context of the signatures and the dismissal has to do with the creation and publication of the so-called “Tascón list,” which included the persons who signed the call to the referendum to revoke the presidential mandate. The drawing up of that list was entrusted by the President of the Republic to a legislator with the aim of “showing the faces” (“*que salgan los rostros*”) of what was called a supposed “mega-fraud.” In addition, a process of “misgivings” (“*reparos*”) of signatures was carried out that was not limited to correcting possible fraudulent uses of signatures and identities, but that included a general call to those persons who had validly signed to retract.

58. In addition to all these contextual elements, the IACHR took note of: (i) the declarations of three victims, in particular that of Rocío San Miguel Sosa, who made reference to and produced the transcript of a conversation with the Executive Secretary of the National Border Council and with the office of legal counsel of the Vice Presidency from which it is apparent that the reason for the dismissal was having signed the call for the revocation referendum; (ii) the fact that of the 23 employees of the National Border Council, the only four persons dismissed were the ones who signed the request for the revocation referendum; (iii) the various references that the State did not controvert that indicate that of these four persons the only one that was able to keep his or her job was precisely one who objected to his or her signature; (iv) the fact that three victims had had their contracts renewed repeatedly for periods of eight, seven, and four years respectively; and (v) the information that indicates that in the case of Rocío San Miguel Sosa, Magally Chang Girón, and Thais Coromoto Peña, it was not an isolated case but rather multiple reports were documented of dismissals in the public sector as retaliation for having signed the call for the revocation referendum.

59. The IACHR considered that all the elements described are mutually consistent and allow one to reach the conviction that the termination of the contracts of Rocío San Miguel Sosa, Magally Chang Girón, and Thais Coromoto Peña was an act of abuse of authority in which the existence of a discretionary power in the contracts was used as a veil of legality to conceal the real motive, i.e. to punish the victims for the expression of their political opinion by signing the call for the revocation referendum. The IACHR determined that this implicit sanction was a violation of political rights, discrimination on grounds of political opinion, and an indirect restriction on the freedom of expression.

60. Finally, the IACHR concluded that neither the writ of *amparo* nor the criminal investigation, including the motion appealing the dismissal, constituted effective remedies for examining an abuse of authority materialized in concealed discrimination. The IACHR also determined that the writ of *amparo* was not resolved in a reasonable time.

d. Xucurú Indigenous People and its members v. Brazil (submitted March 16, 2016)

61. The case is related to the violation of the right to collective property of the Xucurú indigenous people as a result of (i) the delay of more than 16 years, from 1989 to 2005, in the administrative process of recognition, titling, demarcation, and delimitation of their ancestral lands and territories; and (ii) the delay in totally clearing title to those lands and territories, such that the said indigenous people could peacefully exercise that right. The case also established the violation of the rights to judicial guarantees and judicial protection as a result of the failure to guarantee a reasonable time in that administrative procedure,

as well as the delay in resolving the civil actions brought by non-indigenous persons in relation to part of the ancestral lands and territories of the Xucurú indigenous people.

e. Víctor Manuel Isaza Uribe v. Colombia (submitted April 3, 2016)

62. The case refers to the forced disappearance of Víctor Manuel Isaza Uribe as of November 19, 1987 while he was detained at the jail in Puerto Nare, Antioquia. Mr. Isaza Uribe was a member of the trade union Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Industria de Materiales de la Construcción (SUTIMAC) in Puerto Nare, as well as a sympathizer of the Unión Patriótica political party. The IACHR recalled that when a person is under the custody of the state, the state is under an obligation to offer a satisfactory explanation of what happened in those circumstances. This did not happen in the instant case, for the State limited itself to validating the official version that he had escaped without adequately and exhaustively investigating the facts, taking into account all the indicia pointing to the hypothesis of forced disappearance. With respect to those indicia, the IACHR emphasized first the declaration of one of the detainees, who indicated he had recognized one of the persons who entered the jail as a member of a paramilitary group. Second, the IACHR took into account that as of that date there was a concurrence of multiple contexts that made it evident that Mr. Isaza Uribe faced a grave risk of being attacked by paramilitaries who were presented in the area. Those contexts include the situation of violence by agents against persons associated with the Unión Patriótica political party; the context of persecution and even extermination of trade unionists precisely of the organization Mr. Isaza Uribe belonged to and specifically in the municipality of Puerto Nare; and the existence of patterns of joint action by the armed forces and National Police and paramilitary groups in the zone. Third, the IACHR determined that the State maintained in force legal frameworks with respect to paramilitarism and identifying trade unionists as being encompassed within the notion of internal enemy. The IACHR noted that in the report *Huellas y Rostros de la Desaparición Forzada*, by the National Center for Historical Memory (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica), the case of Mr. Isaza Uribe is featured as emblematic of the forced disappearance of trade unionists at a particular time of the Colombian armed conflict. To date no further information has come to light on the fate or whereabouts of Víctor Manuel Isaza Uribe.

63. The IACHR established that the international responsibility of the State was also triggered by the domestic proceedings into these facts. Specifically, it determined that the State has not provided information on specific actions taken immediately to determine the whereabouts of Mr. Uribe and to protect his life and integrity. In addition, the IACHR indicated that the criminal proceeding has been subject to unwarranted delays and that more than 27 years after the facts they have yet to be clarified, and the criminal investigation continues in the preliminary investigative phase. The IACHR also concluded that lines of investigation were not developed and followed with respect to the multiple contexts operating at the same time in the zone, and that were clearly relevant in any investigation into what happened to the victim.

f. Gustavo Giraldo Villamizar Durán et al. v. Colombia (submitted April 14, 2016)

64. The case is related to the extrajudicial executions of Gustavo Giraldo Villamizar Durán, on August 11, 1996; Elio Gelves Carrillo, on May 28, 1997; Carlos Arturo Uva Velandia, on June 21, 1992; and Wilfredo Quiñónez Bárcenas, José Gregorio Romero Reyes, and Albeiro Ramírez Jorge, on September 4, 1995. The IACHR established that the deaths occurred at the hands of state security agents and that they took place in the context of the so-called “false positives,” consisting of extrajudicial executions in the context of the armed conflict. El *modus operandi* is characterized by the execution of civilians during operations, and subsequently presenting them to the public as members of illegal armed groups killed in combat, using various mechanisms to distort the crime scene and the circumstances of manner, time, and place in which the facts occurred. In addition to the determination of the arbitrary deprivation of the right to life, in the cases of Gustavo Giraldo Villamizar Durán and Elio Gelves Carrillo, the IACHR also found a violation of the right to honor and dignity since they were presented as members of illegal armed groups. In addition, in the cases of Elio Gelves Carrillo, Carlos Arturo Uva Velandia, Wilfredo Quiñónez Bárcenas, José Gregorio Romero Reyes, and Albeiro Ramírez Jorge, the IACHR determined that since their deaths were preceded by a deprivation of liberty in which they could foresee their fatal destiny, these persons were also victims of the violation of their rights to humane treatment and personal liberty.

65. The IACHR concluded that in all the cases there were multiple factors of impunity, including: (i) knowledge of the facts by the military justice authorities; (ii) breach of the duty to investigate with due diligence; and (iii) failure to uphold the guarantees of reasonable time. Specifically in the cases of Wilfredo Quiñónez Bárcenas, José Gregorio Romero Reyes, and Albeiro Ramírez Jorge, the IACHR concluded that the State also breached its duty to investigate with due diligence the possible torture they suffered prior to their deaths.

g. Vladimir Herzog et al v. Brazil (submitted April 22, 2016)

66. The case involves the international responsibility of the State of Brazil for the arbitrary detention, torture, and death of journalist Vladimir Herzog on October 25, 1975, during the military dictatorship in that country, as well as the situation of impunity in relation to those events because of the amnesty law promulgated during the dictatorship.

67. In its report on the merits, the IACHR established that journalist Vladimir Herzog was detained, tortured, and assassinated by state agents while under the custody of and in a facility of the State. The IACHR noted that the facts took place in the context of the serious human rights violations that occurred during the dictatorship and, in particular, as part of a recognized systematic pattern of repressive actions against the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB), in which dozens of activists and at least 12 journalists were detained and tortured for their real or suspected activism in the PCB. The IACHR determined that Brazil is responsible for violating the rights to personal liberty, to humane treatment, and to life of journalist Herzog.

68. In addition, the IACHR considered that the actions of the State sought to impede his political activism and his work as a journalist, thus they were also unlawful restrictions on his right to freedom of expression and freedom of association for political purposes. The Commission also found that those violations had an intimidating and chilling effect for other journalists critical of the military regime and their colleagues at work, as well as for the community of persons actively involved in the PCB or that sympathized with its outlook.

69. The IACHR also found the State responsible for violating the right of access to justice of the family members of Vladimir Herzog.

70. As regards the investigation in the military jurisdiction, the Commission considered that it impeded clarification of the facts and violated the right of the victim's family members to know the truth of what had happened. In effect, the report on the merits shows that the military regime concocted a false version of the death of Vladimir Herzog, attributing it to suicide. The preliminary investigation begun in the military criminal jurisdiction was aimed at making impossible any critique of that version, ensuring impunity for what had happened. With respect to the civil declaratory action filed by his wife Clarice Herzog and their children, the Commission noted that it did not proceed in a reasonable time, nor was it an effective remedy for ensuring the rights of the victim or his next-of-kin. As regards the criminal investigation in the regular jurisdiction, the IACHR concluded that the decisions to close or archive the investigation that stemmed from the interpretation and application of Law No. 6,683/79 (Amnesty Law) and of the application of *res judicata* and prescription of the criminal action have impeded the investigation and criminal prosecution of the facts of the case. Finally, the IACHR noted that the facts in this case resulted in the violation of the psychological and moral integrity of his family members.

h. Noel Emiro Omeara Carrascal v. Colombia (submitted May 21, 2016)

71. The case is related to a sequence of serious human rights violations committed against three members of the same family. Specifically, the attack suffered by Noel Emiro Omeara Carrascal on January 28, 1994 and his subsequent death; the disappearance and execution of Manuel Guillermo Omeara Miraval, the son of the Noel Emiro Omeara Carrascal, as of October 27, 1994; and the attack on and subsequent death of Héctor Álvarez Sánchez, the father-in-law of Manuel Guillermo Omeara Miraval, on October 21, 1994. The IACHR analyzed the facts of the case in light of a context of coordination and acquiescence between members

of the armed forces and National Police and an illegal armed group, which was not refuted by the State by a diligent investigation.

72. As for what happened to Noel Emiro Omeara Carrascal in the context of an attack against a person by the name of Erminson Sepúlveda, the IACHR concluded that the State had the duty to protect that person, and that the breach of the duty to prevent helped create the conditions for the attack. In addition, the IACHR determined that there are sufficient elements to conclude that in addition to breaching the duty to prevent, there was collaboration of state agents for the attack to be able to occur. With respect to the disappearance and subsequent execution of Manuel Guillermo Omeara Miraval, the IACHR determined that he was deprived of liberty by persons who belonged to a paramilitary group that operated in the zone. In addition, the IACHR found multiple indicia of state participation in the facts, thus it determined that what happened to this person was attributable to the State. The IACHR also determined that what happened between the disappearance and execution amounted to torture. With respect to the attack on and subsequent death of Héctor Álvarez Sánchez, the IACHR determined that the State failed to give him the protection he needed, which made it possible for members of a paramilitary group to shoot him several times from a motorcycle, as a result of which he was paraplegic and unable to speak until his subsequent death. As in the three previous cases, the IACHR considered that the State was not able to refute the multiple indicia of its responsibility for the ties with the illegal armed groups that committed these acts.

73. Finally, after the respective analysis of each of the processes and investigations related to the victims of the case, the IACHR considered that the lack of an adequate link among them has made it difficult to clear up the facts and identify the persons responsible. In addition, the IACHR noted that notwithstanding the serious indicia of responsibility of state agents and members of paramilitary groups the State was not able to show that it had conducted a serious, timely, and exhaustive investigation of those indicia. The IACHR also determined that the delays by the State have resulted in some of the alleged perpetrators having already died, and also that even though more than 21 years have elapsed since the facts, to date the truth is not known as to the motives or circumstances in which the violent acts were ordered, or how they may have been coordinated with state agents.

i. V.R.P. and V.C.P. v. Nicaragua (submitted August 25, 2016)

74. The case refers to the rape suffered by the girl V.R.P., who at the time of the facts was 9 years old, and who from the outset of the investigation asserted that the person responsible for those incidents of rape was her father. The IACHR determined that the lack of a response by the State to rape committed by a non-state actor makes it responsible for the violations of the rights to humane treatment, dignity, privacy and autonomy, equality and non-discrimination, and special protection as a child, to the detriment of V.R.P. In this regard, the IACHR determined that the State of Nicaragua is responsible internationally for the breach of the duty to guarantee those rights, in particular breach of the duty to investigate with due diligence, in a reasonable time, and in a manner in keeping with a gender perspective and the reinforced state duties stemming from the victim's condition as a child. The IACHR considered moreover that V.R.P. was gravely re-victimized with a severe impact on the psychological integrity of herself and her mother, and the mother's other children. The IACHR concluded that the acquittal of V.R.P.'s father was the result of a proceeding violative of the international obligations of the State and, therefore, as it is a serious human rights violation, the IACHR recommended continuing the investigation domestically, among other measures of reparation.

j. Vinicio Antonio Poblete Vilches v. Chile (submitted August 27, 2016)

75. The case is related to the various actions and omissions that occurred from January 17 to February 7, 2001, dates on which Vinicio Antonio Poblete Vilches on two occasions entered the public hospital known as Hospital Público Sótero del Río, where he died on the latter date. The IACHR established that the medical personnel at the hospital refrained from obtaining informed consent for making health-related decisions at two moments, first, in the context of a procedure performed on January 26, 2001, the first time he was admitted to the hospital; and second, on making the decision to keep him in "intermediate treatment" in the hours prior to his death after he was admitted to the hospital the second time. The IACHR

also concluded that there are sufficient elements to consider that the decision to discharge Mr. Poblete Vilches and the way in which it was done could have had an impact on the rapid deterioration he suffered in the days immediately following his discharge from the hospital and his subsequent death when he entered again, in very poor health. The IACHR also determined state responsibility for failure to provide the intensive treatment he needed when he was admitted to the hospital the second time. Finally, the IACHR considered that the investigations domestically were not pursued with due diligence or in a reasonable time.

k. Mariana Selvas Gómez et al. v. Mexico (submitted September 17, 2016)

76. The case is related to a series of violates of the American Convention on Human Rights, the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, committed against Mariana Selvas Gómez, Georgina Edith Rosales Gutiérrez, María Patricia Romero Hernández, Norma Aidé Jiménez Osorio, Claudia Hernández Martínez, Bárbara Italia Méndez Moreno, Ana María Velasco Rodríguez, Yolanda Muñoz Diosdada, Cristina Sánchez Hernández, Patricia Torres Linares, and Suhelen Gabriela Cuevas Jaramillo, in the context of detentions and transfer effectuated in police operations that took place in the municipalities of Texcoco and San Salvador Atenco on May 3 and 4, 2006, respectively, in the context of the conflict and protests of the flower growers and other groups.

77. The IACHR established that the detention of the 11 women on May 3 and 4, 2006 was illegal and arbitrary, and that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention or of the respective charges. In addition, the IACHR determined that the 11 women went to give their first statements without having even the minimum of information and without any assistance of counsel whatsoever.

78. After analyzing the evidence available, the IACHR considered it to have been shown that grave acts of physical and psychological violence occurred, including several forms of sexual violence against the 11 women, and rape in the case of Norma Aidé Jiménez Osorio, Mariana Selvas Gómez, Ana María Velasco Rodríguez, Suhelen Gabriela Cuevas Jaramillo, Bárbara Italia Méndez Moreno, Patricia Torres Linares, and Claudia Hernández Martínez. In addition, the IACHR considered it to have been shown that these acts were committed by state agents and took place at the moment of detention, in the context of the transfers and the arrival at the Center for Prevention and Social Readaptation (CEPRESO: Centro Preventivo y de Readaptación Social). Among the forms of physical, psychological, and sexual violence shown are: (i) strong blows to different parts of the body, with punches, kicking, and use of clubs; (ii) threats of rape, death, or disappearance; (iii) touching the gluteus, breasts, and vagina, blows and pinching on those same parts of the body, grabbing, biting, and pinching the nipples, violent removal of underwear, and forced stripping; (iv) penetration of fingers and objects in the vagina and anus, invasion of the vaginal labia with fingers and objects, as well as demands to perform oral sex; and (v) insults and denigrating and humiliating expressions. The IACHR determined that all these acts reflected the special viciousness of the police agents directed against the victims because they are women.

79. The IACHR characterized these facts as torture and determined that the 11 women were the victims of various forms of physical, psychological, and sexual torture in the context of their detention, transfers, and arrival at the detention center. The IACHR also established that the Mexican State breached its duty to investigate these acts of physical, psychological, and sexual torture with due diligence and within a reasonable time. Finally, the IACHR determined that there were violations of psychological and moral integrity to the detriment of the victims' next-of-kin.

l. Maurilia Coc Max et al. (Massacre of Xamán) v. Guatemala (submitted September 21, 2016)

80. The case has to do with the massacre perpetrated by members of the Armed Forces of Guatemala on October 5, 1995 of 11 persons, including three children, who were part of the Q'eqchi', Mam, Q'anjob'al, Ixil, and K'iche indigenous population occupying the Xamán farm after having been refugees in Mexico as a result of the serious human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict. In

those same events 29 persons were wounded, three of whom subsequently died from the wounds suffered. The IACHR determined that while the case was under consideration by the military criminal courts, the State breached its duty to investigate independently and impartially. In addition, the IACHR determined that while the judicial authorities of Guatemala convicted 14 members of the Armed Forces for these facts, throughout the trial that led to this conclusion there were shortcomings and irregularities in violation of the duty to investigate with due diligence and in a reasonable time. The IACHR concluded that the State breached its duty to remove the obstacles created by the threats and harassment against various actors in the trial. Finally, the IACHR determined that the facts constitute an expression of racial discrimination against the Maya people during the armed conflict in Guatemala.

m. Linda Loaiza López Soto and family members v. Venezuela (submitted November 2, 2016)

81. The case has to do with the international responsibility of the State of Venezuela for the serious violations of the rights to humane treatment, personal liberty, private life, dignity and autonomy, and the right to live free from violence and discrimination, suffered by Linda Loaiza López Soto, 19 years old at the time, from March 27 to July 19, 2001. The IACHR determined that Linda Loaiza López Soto was deprived of liberty against her will and that she was the victim of acts of atrocious violence for almost four months, which included mutilations, severe physical injuries, and psychological affections committed with great cruelty, as well as repeated forms of violence and rape, all with a profound and irreversible impact on her life. The violence was motivated by and cast light on a brutal viciousness toward the victim as a woman; accordingly, it constitutes extremely intense gender violence.

82. The IACHR determined that the Venezuelan State had or should have had knowledge of the situation of real and imminent risk in which Linda Loaiza López Soto was found with the repeated efforts by her sister to lodge a complaint concerning her disappearance. From that knowledge and up to the moment of her rescue the State did not adopt any measure whatsoever to protect her from the risk in which she was in, and to prevent it from materializing. In addition, the IACHR established that the breach of the duty of prevention in the terms of the specific case stemmed a situation of acquiescence by the State and, therefore, the serious acts of physical, psychological, and sexual violence suffered by Linda Loaiza López Soto constitute a breach of state duties in the face of the absolute prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

83. The case is also related to the violations of the rights to judicial guarantees and judicial protection in the context of the respective investigation and criminal procedure. The IACHR determined that the Venezuelan State breached its obligation to investigate with due diligence due to: (i) The omissions in the initial identification and the collection of evidence taking into account that it was a case of violence against women, including sexual violence; (ii) the actions and omissions of the respective authorities throughout the investigation; and (iii) the failure to investigate the alleged irregularities throughout the investigation and criminal process, as well as the threats and harassment denounced by Linda Loaiza López Soto and her family. The IACHR also established that the Venezuelan State breached its duty to investigate within a reasonable time.

84. The IACHR concluded that the victims did not have access to justice in conditions of equality. To the contrary, Linda Loaiza López Soto did not receive adequate care or treatment as a victim of violence against women, including sexual violence and rape, from the moment of her rescue and the subsequent moments, in her situation as a victim. In addition, the serious acts of violence she suffered were investigated in a discriminatory normative context incompatible with the American Convention that allowed the debate to focus on speculation about the victim's life and not on clarifying what happened and determining the respective liabilities. The IACHR analyzed the almost total lack of credibility assigned to the testimony of Linda Loaiza López Soto, as well as the various indicia that bring to light a bias in the lines of investigation pursued and in the collection and weighing of the evidence. All these situations affected not only her right of access to justice, but also constituted forms of additional revictimization that negatively affected her private life and dignity as well as her psychological and moral integrity. Finally, the IACHR found that considering the

seriousness of the facts, together with the lack of a timely and adequate judicial response, the effects go beyond the direct victim and include her family members.

n. Nitza Paola Alvarado et al. v. Mexico (submitted November 9, 2016)

85. The case is related to the forced disappearance of Nitza Paola Alvarado Espinoza, José Ángel Alvarado Herrera, and Rocío Irene Alvarado Reyes, by state agents in the rural community Ejido Benito Juárez, state of Chihuahua, Mexico, as from December 29, 2009. To date the fate or whereabouts of the three disappeared victims has been unknown.

86. The IACHR determined that José Ángel Alvarado Herrera, Nitza Paola Alvarado Espinoza, and Rocío Irene Alvarado Reyes were deprived of liberty by a group of eight to ten persons who were carrying long arms and wearing uniforms that identified them as military personnel. As regards the direct participation of state agents, the IACHR takes into account: (i) the context, which included a large presence of members of the Army in the geographic zone in which the events occurred, as a result of the military operation Operativo Conjunto Chihuahua, in the context of which serious human rights violations have been alleged, including forced disappearances; (ii) the consistency of the accounts by the eyewitnesses to the detentions, who indicated that they were carried out by members of the Army; (iii) the statements of several family members, who indicated that at the moment they reported the incident and during the initial search efforts some state authorities indicated to them that their loved ones were at the 35th Infantry Battalion; (iv) the statements of several public officials who indicated they had knowledge or had received information indicating that the victims were under the custody of the state; and (v) the considerations of the Office of the Attorney General for the State of Chihuahua, the Federal Public Ministry, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes of Violence against Women and Human Trafficking (FEVIMTRA), the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), and the report by international experts, on the presence of sufficient indicia of the Army's participation. The IACHR also established that when the family members went to report what happened and to request information they were told by the authorities that they had no knowledge of their detention or whereabouts. In addition, it was determined that other mechanisms were activated to conceal what had happened. Based on the foregoing, the IACHR characterized the facts as a forced disappearance.

87. The case is also related to the situation of impunity affecting the three disappearances. The Commission determined that applying the military justice system to the specific case violated the right to have a competent, independent, and impartial authority for obtaining justice. The Commission also established that the State breached the duty to investigate with due diligence and in a reasonable time, both with respect to the search for the disappeared victims and with respect to the clarification of the facts and the individual identification and punishment of the persons responsible.

88. Finally, the Commission declared a series of related violations stemming from the threats and harassment the family groups have had to face, including the forced displacement of some of them.

o. Wilfredo Terrones Silva, Teresa Díaz Aparicio, Santiago Antezana Cueto, Néstor Rojas Medina, and Cory Clodolia Tenicela Tello v. Peru (submitted November 9, 2016)

89. The case refers to the forced disappearance of Wilfredo Terrones Silva (since August 26, 1992), Teresa Díaz Aparicio (since August 19, 1992), Santiago Antezana Cueto (since May 7, 1984), Néstor Rojas Medina (since January 26, 1991), and Cory Clodolia Tenicela Tello (since October 2, 1992). This happened in the context of the systematic and widespread practice of forced disappearance during the counter-terrorist struggle of the Peruvian State, with a special impact in those years. The State did not produce information on alternative hypotheses to the forced disappearance of persons, and most of the cases are in total impunity. To date no victim's fate or whereabouts is known, thus their forced disappearance continues.

p. Cuscul Piraval v. Guatemala (submitted December 2, 2016)

90. This case is related to the international responsibility of the State for violating various rights established in the American Convention to the detriment of 49 victims diagnosed with HIV/AIDS from 1992 to 2003. Specifically, the IACHR established that up until the years 2006 and 2007 there was a total lack of state medical care for the group of persons living with HIV/AIDS and affected by poverty. The IACHR determined that this omission had a serious impact on their health, life, and integrity. In addition, it established that the deaths of eight of the victims, Alberto Quiché Cuxeve, Reina López Mujica, Ismar Ramírez Chajón, Rita Bubón Orozco, Facundo Gómez Reyes, José Rubén Delgado, Luis Edwin Cruz Gramau, and María Vail, occurred as the result of opportunistic diseases; or occurred in a timeframe in which they did not receive the care they needed from the State, or after having received deficient care. Although the State began to implement some treatment for persons living with HIV/AIDS in the public sector after 2006 and 2007, the IACHR concluded that that care did not satisfy the minimum standards for being considered comprehensive and adequate and, therefore, these shortcomings continued violating the rights to health, life, and humane treatment to the detriment of the surviving victims.

91. The IACHR also established that the writ of *amparo* filed on July 26, 2002 with the Constitutional Court did not provide the victims with effective judicial protection. Finally, the IACHR determined that the next-of-kin and/or persons providing the closest support for the victims suffered violations of their psychological and moral integrity.

2. Appearances and participation in the public and private hearings, and on-site investigative procedures

92. From February 15 to March 2, 2016 the IACHR participated in the hearing held during the 113th regular period of sessions of the Inter-American Court in San José, Costa Rica. During that session five public hearings were held, in the following cases: Flor Freire (Ecuador); “Fazenda Brasil Verde” Workers (Brazil); Zegarra Marín (Peru); Tenorio Roca et al. (Peru); and Herrera Espinoza et al. (Ecuador). Commissioners Francisco Eguiguren and Enrique Gil Botero participated in this session.

93. From April 21 to May 4, 2016 the Inter-American Commission participated in the hearings held in the 114th regular period of sessions of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica. During that period of sessions public hearings were held in the cases Pollo Rivera et al. v. Peru, Members of the Village of Chichupac and Neighboring Communities of the Municipality of Rabinal (Guatemala), and I.V. (Bolivia). Commissioners James Cavallaro, Enrique Gil Botero, and Margarette May Macaulay participated during this period of sessions. The IACHR also participated in the private hearings to supervise compliance in the cases Massacres of El Mozote and nearby places with respect to El Salvador, the combined hearing for the cases of Fernández Ortega et al. and Rosendo Cantú et al. with respect to Mexico, and the combined hearing for the cases of Raxcacó Reyes and Fermín Ramírez with respect to Guatemala.

94. On June 6 and 7, 2016, the Inter-American Commission participated in the on-site investigative procedure by the Court in the context of the contentious case of the Fazenda Brasil Verde Workers v. Brazil.

95. On June 8, 2016, the Inter-American Commission participated in the on-site investigation by the Court at the Curado Prison Complex, in the city of Recife, state of Pernambuco, Brazil, in the context of monitoring the implementation of the provisional measures related to that prison.

96. From June 20 to 24, 2016 the Inter-American Commission participated in the hearings held in the 54th extraordinary period of sessions of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica. During that period of sessions two public hearings were held, in the cases of Village of La Esperanza (Colombia); and Andrade Salmón (Bolivia). Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez participated in this period of sessions. In addition, the Secretariat participated in the private hearings for supervision of compliance with judgment in the cases Serrano Cruz Sisters v. El Salvador and Contreras et al. v. El Salvador.

97. From August 22 to September 2, the IACHR participated in the hearings held in the 55th extraordinary period of sessions of the Court, held in Mexico. In that period of sessions three public hearings were held, in the following cases: Vásquez Durand (Ecuador); Valencia Hinojosa et al. (Ecuador); and Gutiérrez Hernández (Guatemala). Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez participated in this period of sessions. The Secretariat also participated in the public hearing on provisional measures in the Case of the Rochela Massacre (Colombia) and in two private hearings on supervision of compliance with the judgment in the cases of Radilla Pacheco v. Mexico and Cabrera García and Montiel Flores v. Mexico.

98. From October 10 to 14, 2016, the Inter-American Commission participated in the hearings held in the 56th extraordinary period of sessions of the Court, held in Ecuador. During that period of sessions, three public hearings were held, in the following cases: Acosta et al. (Nicaragua); Workers Dismissed from Petroperú et al. (Peru); and Cosme Genoveva et al. -- Favela Nova Brasília (Brazil). Commissioners José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez and Francisco Eguiguren Praeli participated in this period of sessions.

99. On December 2, 2016, the IACHR participated in the public hearing for supervision of compliance with the judgment in the case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v. Ecuador during the 116th period of sessions of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica.

3. Submission of written observations on the states' reports in cases under supervision of compliance with judgments

100. Pursuant to the mandate established in Article 57 of the American Convention, as well as the provision at Article 69 of the Court's Rules of Procedure, on its role defending the inter-American public order, in 2016 the IACHR continued to submit information and preparing briefs with observations on the states' reports on compliance. In the performance of this function the Inter-American Commission submitted 136 briefs with observations to the Inter-American Court.

4. Submission of written observations on the states' reports on the implementation of provisional measures

101. Pursuant to the mandate established at Article 63(2) of the American Convention, as well as the provision at Article 27(7) of the Court's Rules of Procedure, in carrying out its role in defense of inter-American public order, in 2016 the IACHR continued to submit information and write briefs of observations on the state reports on implementation of the provisional measures in force. The IACHR submitted 69 briefs of observations to the Inter-American Court in such matters.

E. Section of Friendly Settlements and Follow-up

102. In the context of the system of petitioners and individual cases the friendly settlement procedure of the IACHR is a mechanism used for the non-disputatious and consensus-based settlement of disputes. It is a process facilitated by the IACHR whose aim is for the state concerned and the alleged victims and/or petitioners to reach an agreement outside of the adversarial process that makes it possible to resolve the alleged violation of human rights. The friendly settlement procedure depends on the will of the parties, and therefore both parties must agree in order to begin and continue to pursue a settlement via this procedure. To that end the parties must state their interest and willingness to the IACHR.

103. This section of the annual report is divided into four parts. The first includes reports on the three working visits made this year to promote the use of the friendly settlement mechanism and to follow up on recommendations. The second part explains the seven friendly settlement agreements and the two agreements on implementation of recommendations made by the IACHR in reports on the merits. The third part explains the context of the 52 working meetings held by the friendly settlement and follow-up section. Finally, the fourth part refers to the reports approving the friendly settlement agreements reached in 2015.

i. Reports approving friendly settlement agreements

104. In 2016 the IACHR approved eight friendly settlement agreements signed by petitioners and the states of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Peru.

105. On April 14, 2016, the IACHR issued two reports in which it approved friendly settlement agreements on Mexico. The first, in petition P-1171-09, Ananías Laparra Martínez, is related to due process violations in the criminal justice context and conviction and sentencing of the victim to 28 years in prison based on a confession obtained under torture. The second friendly settlement agreement was approved in Case 12,847, Vicenta Sánchez Valdivieso, in which the petitioner alleged violations of due process in a civil matter due to the failure to enforce a court decision in a labor-related matter.

106. On October 7, 2016, the IACHR approved a friendly settlement agreement in Case 11,538, Herson Javier Caro, Colombia, a 15-year-old adolescent who was the victim of an extrajudicial execution by state agents.

107. On October 25, 2016, the Inter-American Commission approved a friendly settlement report in Case 12,848, Ms. N (Panama), in which the State compensated a victim of human rights violations with serious consequences for her health and quality of life, and provided her resources to be able to access adequate medical treatment and drugs.

108. On November 30, 2016, the IACHR approved two friendly settlement reports on matters from Colombia. The first, in Case 12,541, Omar Zúñiga Vásquez, referred to the torture, forced disappearance, and execution of Mr. Zúñiga Vásquez and the torture suffered by his mother, Amira Vásquez de Zúñiga, at the hands of state agents. The second report was Case 11,007 Trujillo Massacre, related to a series of violent events that occurred in the municipality of Trujillo, department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia, from 1988 to 1991, which include torture, executions, forced disappearances, and threats. In the friendly settlement agreement the State recognized its responsibility for the events, both in 1993 and in 2016, in relation to nine victims.

109. Finally, on November 30, 2016, the IACHR adopted two friendly settlement reports in relation to Peru, in petition P-288-08, Jesús Salvador Ferreyra González, and petition P-13339-07, Tito Guido Gallegos Gallegos, related to the violation of due process to the detriment of two judges who were subjected to arbitrary reviews, and who were not ratified in their respective positions.

ii. Friendly settlement agreements and compliance with recommendations

110. Friendly settlements seek to bring the parties together, to find common ground and reach an agreement by consensus that is satisfactory for each of them. In the period covered by this report, the IACHR has facilitated negotiations towards the signing of friendly settlement agreements and agreements on the implementation of recommendations. In effect, during 2016 nine friendly settlement agreements were signed in petitions and cases referring to four countries:

- **Mexico:** On January 28, 2016 the parties signed a friendly settlement agreement in Case 12,915 Ángel Díaz Cruz.
- **Colombia:** The parties signed a friendly settlement agreements on March 2, 2016 in Case 11,538, Herson Javier Caro; on April 6, 2016 in Case 11,007, Trujillo Massacre, and in Case 12,541, Omar Zúñiga Vásquez and Amira Isabel Zúñiga; and December 5, 2016, in Case 11,144, Gerson Jairzinho González.
- **Chile:** On June 11, 2016 the parties signed two friendly settlement agreements, in petition P-946-12 César Peralta Wetzel and in petition P-687-12 Gabriela Blas and C.B.B., respectively.

- **Peru:** The parties signed a friendly settlement agreement on October 27, 2016, in petition P-1339-07 Tito Guido Gallegos Gallegos (Peru); and on October 31, 2016, in petition P-288-08 Jesús Salvador Ferreyra González.

a. Working visits on friendly settlements

Visit to Chile

111. The IACHR made a working visit to Chile on June 11, 2016, with the objective of giving impetus to negotiations of friendly settlement agreements and compliance with recommendations made by the IACHR and precautionary measures. The delegation was led by Commissioner Enrique Gil Botero, as country rapporteur. On that day Commissioner Gil Botero chaired four working meetings to facilitate the pursuit of common ground by the parties to petitions and cases for opening up a space for dialogue with the Chilean State that would make it possible to advance in the search for points of consensus so as to then sign friendly settlement agreements and agreements on compliance with the decisions of the Inter-American Commission.

Visit to Paraguay

112. On August 17 and 18 the IACHR made a working visit to Paraguay for the purpose of giving impetus to the implementation of friendly settlement agreements signed by different petitioners and the State. The delegation was led by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, as country rapporteur. Commissioner Vannuchi held four working meetings to advance in efforts to pursue friendly settlement and to follow up on the implementation of friendly settlement agreements.

b. Working meetings on friendly settlements and follow-up

113. In 2016, 46 working meetings were held on matters in the phase of negotiation and supervision of implementation of agreements and recommendations, and a public hearing on follow-up of the implementation of recommendations made by the IACHR.

114. In the context of the 157th regular period of session meetings were held in 17 matters: Case 12,932, Agapito Perez Lucas et al., Guatemala; Case 12,094, Lhaka Honhat, Argentina; Case 12,191, Mamérita Mestanza and family members, Peru; Case 12,130, Miguel Orlando Muñoz Guzmán, Mexico; Case 11,545, Marta Saire, Honduras; Case 12,528, Raúl García Linera, Bolivia; Case 11,426, Marcela Alejandra Porco, Bolivia; Petition 1186/09, Adela Villamil Vda. de Flores Bedregal, Bolivia; Case 11,007, Trujillo Massacre, Colombia; Case 12,713, José Rusbel Lara, Colombia; Case 11,607, Víctor Hugo Maciel, Paraguay; Case 12,249, Jorge Odir Miranda Cortez, El Salvador; Case 10,488, Ignacio Ellacuría et al., El Salvador; Case 12,330, Marcelino Gómez Paredes, Paraguay; Case 12,541, Omar Zúñiga Vasquez and one other, Colombia; Case 10,455, Valentín Bastos Calderón, Colombia; and, Petitions 1159-08 A.N. and 1377-13 Aurora, Costa Rica.

115. In addition, in the context of the 158th regular period of sessions Chile, working meetings were held in four matters regarding Chile: Petition 946-12 César Antonio Peralta Wetzel; Case 12,904 Indigenous Community of Chusmiza Usmagama; Petition 687-11 Gabriela Blas and C.B.B.; and, Case 12,799 Miguel Ángel Millar.

116. In August 2016, in the context of the visit by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi to Paraguay working meetings were held in the following four matters: Case 12,358 Octavio Rubén Gonzalez Acosta; Case 12,374 Jorge Enrique Patiño Palacios; Case 12.359 Cristina Aguayo et al.; and Case 12,330 Marcelino Gomez Paredes.

117. During the 159th regular period of sessions in Panama, working meetings were held in 21 matters, and one public hearing for follow-up on recommendations. On December 2, 2016, the IACHR held eight working meetings in the following matters: P-850-15, Ayoreo People, Paraguay; Case 12,191, María Mamérita Mestanza Chávez, Peru; Case 12,905, Pablo Rafael Galván and one other, P-118-12 Isabel Guzmán,

and Case 13,011, Graciela Ramos Rocha, all from Argentina; P-1159-08 and P-1377-13 A.N. and Aurora and Case 12,942 Emilia Morales Campos, both matters from Costa Rica; and Case 12,789, Heriberto Chica and one other, from Honduras. In addition, on Monday, December 5,, the IACHR facilitated 11 working meetings in the following matters: Case 12,376, Alba Lucía Rodríguez, Case 10,916, James Zapata, Case 11,990, Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonnet, and Case 11,144, Gerson Jairzinho González Arroyo, all from Colombia; P946/12, César Antonio Peralta Wetzel et al., P687/12, G.B. and her daughter G.B.B., and Case 12,904, Aymara Community of Chusmiza Usmagama, all from Chile; P-735-07, Ismael Mondragón Molina, Mexico; P1224/07, David Rabinovich, Uruguay; and Case 12,487, Rafael Cuesta Caputi and Case 12,625, Marco Javier Zambrano and José Rada, both from Ecuador. On December 6, 2016, the IACHR held one public hearing for follow-up on the recommendations made by the IACHR in Case 11,291, Carandirú Massacre, from Brazil. Finally, on December 7 the IACHR facilitated two working meetings in the Case 12,934, Frank Guelfi, and Case 12,552, Rita Wald, both from Panama.

F. Activities of the IACHR in relation to the political organs of the OAS

118. One of the functions of the IACHR is to advise the states on human rights matters, as well as to promote public policies aimed at strengthening respect for human rights as a central element of the processes of strengthening national capacities for implementing human rights. To carry out this purpose the IACHR, with the assistance of the Section of Advisory Services for States (SAE) of the Executive Secretariat, maintains relations with the political organs of the OAS, in particular with the General Assembly (GA), the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP), and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP), and it follows the work of the political organs of the OAS to promote minimum human rights standards in resolution, declarations, treaties, conventions, and other inter-American instruments. It also maintains relations with other areas of the OAS.

119. In 2016 the SAE continuously accompanied the meetings of the Permanent Council, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs. The IACHR also answered the calls to submit information on the implementation of resolutions with the participation of Commissioners, the Executive Secretary, and professional staff of the Executive Secretariat.

120. On February 11 the Executive Secretariat made a presentation to the CAJP on the activities carried out by the IACHR in furtherance of the following eight resolutions adopted at the General Assembly: AG/RES. 2829 (XLIV-O/14), Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; AG/RES. 2845 (XLIV-O/14), Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty; AG/RES. 2850 (XLIV-O/14), Internally Displaced Persons; AG/RES 2851 (XLIV-O/14), Human Rights Defenders; AG/RES. 2863 (XLIV-O/14), Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity and Expression; AG/RES. 2790 (XLIII-O/13), The Human Rights of Migrants, including Migrant Workers and their Families; AG/RES. 2864 (XLIV-O/14), Persons Who Have Disappeared and Assistance to Members of their Families; and AG/RES. 2799 (XLIII-O/13), Protecting Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism.

121. In addition, in keeping with its function of strengthening the relations of the IACHR with the member and observer states of the OAS, from March 5 to 12 the SAE participated in a visit to Ireland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, during which information was exchanged on the human rights situation in the Americas. Both Ireland and the Netherlands made offers of voluntary contributions to support the work of the IACHR. Switzerland also expressed interest in providing financial support to the IACHR.

122. On March 17, 2016 President James Cavallaro presented the 2015 Annual Report of the IACHR to the CAJP. The meeting was attended by 23 delegates from member states and the President of the Inter-American Court, Judge Roberto F. Caldas; the Vice President of the Court, Judge Eduardo Ferrer MacGregor Poisot; and the Secretary of the Court, Pablo Saavedra. After the presentation of the Annual Report concluded, the following delegations made remarks: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

123. During the year meetings were held with the following permanent representatives to the OAS: the Ambassador of Canada, the Alternate Representative of Netherlands, the Alternate Representative of Ireland, and the Alternative Representative of Switzerland.

124. On March 31 and April 28, staff of the Executive Secretariat made presentations on the activities to implement General Assembly resolution AG/RES.2851 (XLIV-O/14), Human Rights Defenders: Support for the Individuals, Groups, and Organizations of Civil Society Working to Promote and Protect Human Rights in the Americas.

125. On April 5, 2016, in the context of its sessions, the IACHR made a joint presentation of the following four thematic reports: Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendent communities, and natural resources: Human rights protection in the context of extraction, exploitation, and development activities; Legal Standards: Gender Equality and Women's Rights; Violence, Children and Organized Crime; and Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons.

126. On April 12, 2016, the closing session of the 157th regular period of sessions of the IACHR was held, with the member states of the OAS in attendance.

127. On April 13, Commissioner Francisco Eguiguren, Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons, participated in the "Dialogue of the IACHR with the Member States of the OAS on Good Practices in respect of the Rights of LGBTI Persons in the Americas."

128. In addition, the Section of Promotion and Public Policy coordinated the organization of the 158th special period of sessions, which took place in Santiago, Chile, June 6 to 10, 2016. In particular, the opening session was coordinated with the Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, with the participation of President Michelle Bachelet, protocolary meetings with high-level officials, the requirements for the working sessions of the IACHR and public hearings; as well as the promotional seminar.

129. As for the preparatory work on the resolutions that were approved at the General Assembly in Santo Domingo, the IACHR, through the Section of Advisory Services for States, attended the meetings where they were negotiated in the CAJP and the Permanent Council, for the following resolutions related to human rights: AG/RES. 2883 (XLVI-O/16) Inter-American Program for the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants, including Migrant Workers and their Families; AG/RES. 2885 (XLVI-O/16) Inter-American Program on Access to Public Information; AG/RES. 2887 (XLVI-O/16) Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; AG/RES. 2888 (XLVI-O/16) American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and AG/RES. 2891 (XLVI-O/16) Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas (2016-2025).

130. The Commission also followed – in the CAJP, the Permanent Council, the CAAP, and the meetings on Strategic Vision and financial and budgetary issues,– the negotiation of the following resolutions: AG/RES. 2895 (XLVI-O/16) Financing of the 2017 Program-Budget of the Organization; AG/RES. 2890 (XLVI-O/16) Four-Year Strategic Plan of the Organization; and AG/RES. 2892 (XLVI-O/16) Management Modernization.

131. In addition, a delegation of the IACHR headed by its President James Cavallaro participated in the General Assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 13 to 15, 2017. President Cavallaro presented the 2015 Annual Report of the IACHR in the fourth plenary session of the General Assembly, with remarks by the following states: Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, the United States, Uruguay. It also held 17 bilateral meetings with delegations of member states (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States, and Uruguay) and observer states (Spain, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the European Union). The delegation also met with civil society organizations.

132. In the context of its 159th period of sessions, on July 27, 2016 the IACHR coordinated the meeting of the LGBTI Group of the OAS (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, México, the United States, and Uruguay) with Commissioner Francisco Eguiguren.

133. The Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão, held protocolary meetings with the ambassadors of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the United States, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Ecuador, Honduras, Dominican Republic, and Venezuela. He also met with representatives of the observers to the OAS from Spain, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the European Union.

134. On July 25 the Inter-American Commission met with the regional groups of OAS member states for a dialogue on the inter-American human rights system and, in particular, on the IACHR. On that occasion the conceptual note was presented on the Strategic Plan of the IACHR 2016-2020, which was adopted at the 158th period of sessions, to continue the process of consultations begun with the publication of a questionnaire on November 4, 2015. Following up on what was announced at the General Assembly, on this occasion an effort was made to expand the dialogue with the states regarding the bases of the new Strategic Plan of the IACHR.

135. The President of the IACHR travelled to Brussels on October 6 to meet with Roland Schaefer, Deputy Director of the Americas Division of the European Union (EU) and with other staff members of that organization. As a result of these meetings a commitment was established to finance a project on procedural backlog for three years starting in 2018, in the amount of approximately \$1,000,000 euros.

136. On October 19, 2016, the Permanent Council met to consider the financing of the IACHR and the Inter-American Court. The Section of Advisory Services to States coordinated President Cavallaro's presentation.

137. The IACHR followed the preparatory meetings of the OAS Special General Assembly on the budget of the OAS in the CAJP, the Working Group on Strategic Vision, and the Permanent Council.

138. The Special General Assembly on the Budget of the OAS was held October 31. The SAE of the IACHR monitored all the negotiations and prepared a report on the results.

139. On December 14 President Cavallaro sent a communication to the Permanent Council and the Secretary General in which he requested additional resources so as to have reinforcement for completing the Commission's activities in 2017. In response to this letter, in the session of the Permanent Council held December 15 the delegations of Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Uruguay signed a declaration in which they reiterated their intention to generate a broad and inclusive framework for consultations to attain solutions that ensure the full funding of the system so as to avoid any future crisis, which could endanger its ability to operate.

G. Activities of the IACHR with the regional and universal human rights organs

1. Inter-institutional relations

140. The Section on Inter-Institutional Relations of the IACHR was established for the purpose of coordinating and strengthening relations with other institutions, such as universal and regional intergovernmental organizations, with civil society organizations¹ and national human rights institutions. The second purpose is to coordinate the institutional cooperation agreements signed by the Inter-American Commission.

¹ Often the ties with civil society organizations have resulted from joint events and promotion activities that are reported in section H of this Chapter I.

141. This section describes the attainment of the objectives set out. The first part presents the ties with intergovernmental organizations, first with the United Nations, followed by an account of the relations with other international organizations, and finally is a description of the relationships with regional human rights organizations. The second part of the section includes a list of the cooperation agreements signed by the IACHR in the course of 2016.

1. Intergovernmental Organizations

a. United Nations

i) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

142. The cooperation between the IACHR and the various agencies of the United Nations includes close coordination to plan joint activities and for exchange of experiences and standards. In order to make the relationship between the two organizations more efficient they designated a focal point, which has helped make relations more efficient.

143. The Inter-American Commission has worked closely with various United Nations agencies, one expression of which was the signing of the Joint Declaration on Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on November 19, 2014. Pursuant to that declaration, both organs cooperated closely in 2016, based on joint lines of work for joint declarations and communiqués, periodic meetings, sharing of information, and cooperation in producing thematic reports.

144. The Executive Secretary travelled to Geneva on March 10 and 11, and met with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. At that meeting it was agreed to continue the lines of joint work, and that the High Commissioner would visit the IACHR soon. During the same trip the Secretary met with Karim Ghezraoui, Chief Officer for Special Procedures; Vladlen Stefanov, Chief of the National Institutions Section; and Gianni Magazzeni, Chief for Americas, Europe, and Central Asia.

145. On April 9 the IACHR, the Inter-American Court and the Office of the High Commissioner held a regional consultation in Washington, D.C., in the context of the 157th period of sessions to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the IACHR and Inter-American Court, with interactions between these organs and civil society and human rights defenders. Several rapporteurs, as well as members of the United Nations Working Groups and representatives of the IACHR and the Inter-American Court presented their work, exchanged experiences, good practices, and challenges, and explored new forms of cooperation. In the discussion input was also received from members of civil society and human rights defenders, which reflected the main challenges in the region, the context of the activities of human rights defenders, and their interaction with the regional human rights mechanisms and the United Nations. Finally, the consultation identified priority thematic areas to be included in the fourth world consultation on regional organs held in October 2016. As a result, a joint project was prepared for the purpose of creating a rapid response mechanism to respond to threats to human rights defenders; it was announced on December 13.

146. In the context of the serious financial crisis that the IACHR experienced in 2016, the public support of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was essential:

We are disturbed by the severe financial crisis that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is facing. Should the Commission not receive the necessary funds in the coming weeks, the capacity of the regional human rights system to respond to victims of rights violations across the Americas may be seriously diminished.

The pioneering work of the Inter-American Commission, as an agent of constitutional, legislative and policy reform, has had a strong impact on human rights in the region and beyond. It has provided a vital recourse for victims of human rights violations in the region and has played an important role in advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups. The

Commission is also a strategic partner for the UN Human Rights Offices in the region and a point of reference for the development of human rights standards worldwide. Unfortunately, in recent years, the Commission has faced undue pressure from a number of States.

We urge States to reaffirm their commitment to human rights by providing the Commission with the required resources to fulfill its crucial mandate and indeed to strengthen this key institution. The Commission's robust defense of human rights in the region should be encouraged – not punished.

147. During its special session in Chile the IACHR convened all the United Nations agencies to a working luncheon to share experiences and plan work together.

148. On October 4 and 5 the President of the IACHR and a professional staff member of the Executive Secretariat participated in the workshop of regional human rights mechanisms in Geneva, Switzerland. This workshop brought together all the regional human rights mechanisms, among them the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Court of Justice, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the United Nations Working Group on Human Rights and Business, and the Arab Commission for Human Rights.

149. During their stay in Geneva the President of the IACHR and the President of the Inter-American Court met with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with the President of the Human Rights Council.

150. On October 6 the annual meeting of focal points of regional human rights mechanisms was held; there was follow-up on the conclusions of the April 9 meeting. Among these, there was analysis of the creation of a joint mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders. On October 26 the Executive Secretary of the IACHR met with Mac Darrow, representative of the High Commissioner for financial matters, in Washington.

151. On October 31, Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, sent a letter of support for the IACHR in which she called on the states to support the budget increase for the IACHR.

152. During the 159th regular period of session in Panama, the Inter-American Commission carried out various joint activities with the Regional Office for Central America. On November 30 the IACHR had a working luncheon with several United Nations agencies, among them UNICEF, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). During that meeting the IACHR made a brief presentation on its process of preparing the Strategic Plan and requested the cooperation of the agencies in identifying priorities, as well as in its subsequent implementation. In addition, common lines of work were identified along with possibilities for strengthening cooperation.

153. On December 3 a working meeting was held between the IACHR and representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner. Representatives were present from the Americas Section in Geneva, the Regional Offices for Central America (in Panama) and South America (Chile), and the Offices in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Colombia (the latter participated by electronic means). This is the first time a meeting of this sort has taken place with most of the offices of the OHCHR in the region. During the meeting the IACHR described its process of developing the Strategic Plan and held a dialogue for coordination and cooperation between the regional and universal systems. Upon the conclusion of the period of sessions, the IACHR announced that the two organs would adopt a joint Work Plan, and on December 13 it was announced that the two institutions committed to developing a joint mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists that will be made public in the first months of 2017.

ii) Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council

154. The UN Human Rights Council is authorized to establish special procedures with the objective of advising it on various thematic areas. The special procedures depend on the work of independent experts on specific subjects or countries. The system of special procedures is a basic element of the human rights mechanism of the United Nations, for it encompasses civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. The secretariat of these procedures is within the organizational structure of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

155. The close collaboration of the IACHR with the United Nations special procedures has been strengthened thanks to the ongoing contact among the focal points. This has been reflected in joint visits, joint communiqués, the participation of United Nations rapporteurs in consultations of experts; the participation of the IACHR or the Executive Secretariat in the consultations; and meetings to plan the activities of different mandates.

156. During the 157th period of sessions of the IACHR it received several United Nations rapporteurs, who participated in the various activities that took place from April 2 to 15.

- Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances Baskut Tunkak visited the IACHR on April 4 to share experiences and explore possibilities of collaborating.
- Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment John Knox visited the IACHR on April 6 and met with Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco to discuss the issue of defenders of the environment in the region and the possibilities of collaboration between both mandates.
- Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences Dubravka Šimonović participated on April 7 as an expert in a hearing on indigenous women in Canada, following up on the IACHR's report on the topic. The next day she met with civil society representatives and with Commissioner Margaret Macaulay.
- The IACHR sponsored a seminar on "Fiscal Policy and Human Rights in Times of Economic Crisis," on April 11, attended by Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, former Rapporteur on the same topic Magdalena Sepúlveda, and Rodrigo Uprimny, member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations.

157. The IACHR was represented by staff of its Executive Secretariat at a seminar of experts on the right to life on May 11, 12 and 13 in Geneva, organized by Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions Christof Heyns. The consultation was conducted within the process of drafting General Comment number 3 of the African Commission.

158. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent visited the IACHR on June 6 to learn about the work of the Rapporteurship covering the same subject area, and to explore possible joint activities in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent.

159. The focal points of special procedures and the IACHR met in Geneva on October 6 in order to plan joint work.

160. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, visited IACHR headquarters on October 26 and met with the Executive Secretary and staff of the IACHR's Rapporteurship on human rights defenders.

161. On December 2, the Regional Office for Central America of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the IACHR organized a panel discussion on the situation of human rights defenders in the

region that included the participation of Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, and José de Jesús Orozco, Rapporteur of the IACHR on human rights defenders, in Panama City, in the context of the 159th period of sessions of the IACHR.

iii) Treaty Bodies

162. The United Nations includes nine bodies created pursuant to human rights treaties that supervise the application of these treaties. The IACHR has developed closer cooperation with those bodies through exchange of information on certain situations, calendars of activities, and the proposal to pursue joint activities and joint follow-up on resolutions.

163. On June 2, President James Cavallaro attended the annual meeting of Chairpersons of Human Rights Treaty Bodies in New York. During that meeting there was follow-up on the points of agreement from the previous year, particularly the possible holding of joint activities such as the participation of Committees in public hearings of the IACHR, issuing joint communiqués, holding possible joint visits, exchange of personnel, particularly in the petitions division, and mutual collaboration and exchange of standards in preparing reports or general comments.

164. At the outset of the meeting the chairpersons informed President Cavallaro that they had approved a press release in support of the IACHR.

165. On June 22 and 23 the Secretariat received the visit of María Clara Galvis, a member of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, to share experiences and plan possible joint activities.

iv) Press releases, letters, and joint declarations of the IACHR and United Nation Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups, and Independent Experts

166. On occasion the IACHR issues joint communications with the special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council. This year seven joint statements were issued, as follows.

167. On May 12, International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, the IACHR, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, a group of human rights experts from the United Nations, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe urged the governments to end the pathologization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans adults and children.

168. On June 24 the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, Edison Lanza, issued a joint communiqué warning of the interference of the Empresa Brasil de Comunicação (Brazil Communication Company) and the Office of the Comptroller General of Brazil.

169. On July 15 Juan Méndez, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture; Med Kaggwa, Special Rapporteur on Prisons, Conditions of Detention and Policing in Africa; James Cavallaro, President of the IACHR and Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty, and Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, saluted the approval of the Mandela Rules, a revised version of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted December 17, 2015.

170. On August 4 UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, and IACHR Special Rapporteur for the Freedom of Expression, Edison Lanza, issued an alert on the continuing deterioration of the freedom of press in Venezuela.

171. On August 10, International Day of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and the IACHR Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Francisco Eguiguren, urged the states of the Americas to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to significant and effective participation in decision-making processes related to

investment or development projects that may affect their rights and their cultural survival, and to reaffirm their right to development, which results from their self-determination.

172. On August 19, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Michel Forst and the IACHR Rapporteur on human rights defenders warned that Honduras has become one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders. In 2016 the IACHR received information on the assassination of at least eight human rights defenders in Honduras.

173. On October 24, anticipating Intersex Awareness Day, United Nations and regional experts on human rights, among them the IACHR, made an urgent appeal to put an end to the violations of human rights of intersex children and adults. They urged the governments to prohibit harmful medical practices on intersex children, including surgery and treatments that are unnecessary, without their informed consent, as well as sterilization.

174. On November 22, on occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the following made a joint appeal to step up efforts to prevent femicides and gender violence: the IACHR Rapporteur on women's rights; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa; the United Nations Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice; the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI); and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).

175. On December 2, Dubravka Šimonović, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, and Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur of the IACHR on women's rights, joined efforts to express their great alarm and concern with respect to continuing acts of extreme violence against women and girls in the Americas, and called for an increase in actions to end and prevent such violence.

176. On December 13, the IACHR and the Representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Central America, South America, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico announced the creation of a joint mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists.

v) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

177. On August 23 the Office of the UNHCR in Costa Rica organized a meeting of the IACHR and the United Nations agencies in the country with some diplomatic missions, to engage in a dialogue on the financial situation of the IACHR and the possibilities for supporting and financing its work.

vi) United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

178. On December 1, in the context of the 159th period of sessions in Panama, the IACHR met with the UNICEF Office of the Americas to exchange work plans and strengthen the mechanisms of cooperation between the two organizations.

1. Other agencies

i) International Committee of the Red Cross

179. On February 19 the Executive Secretary received Angela Gussing, Chief of Operations of the ICRC for the Americas, and François Stamm, Chief of the Regional Delegation of the ICRC in the United States.

180. On February 24 Mr. Christoph Harnisch, Chief of Delegation of the ICRC for Colombia, was received at the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR.

ii) World Bank

181. On February 24 the Executive Secretary participated in a meeting organized by the Nordic Trust Fund, created by the World Bank for the purpose of enlightening the various departments about human rights. During that meeting different approaches of programs and visions of the region were discussed along with other regional agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

182. During April and May, staff of the Executive Secretariat held several meetings with staff of the Nordic Trust Fund to collaborate in a process for incorporating human rights standards to the proceedings that affect the rights of indigenous peoples. A series of regional consultations will be held on the rights to health, education, rural development, social protection, environment, and basic infrastructure.

2. Regional human rights organs

i) African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

183. One important mandate of the Section of Inter-institutional Relations has been to strengthen ties with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other regional organs. Following up on a visit from the Secretariat of that Commission to the IACHR last year, in early 2016 a proposal for financing was presented for the purpose of cooperating with the African Commission in various areas. Among these, it was proposed to strengthen the search engine for cases and petitions of the IACHR and advise the African Commission on the use of technology and on press and communication.

ii) Arab Commission for Human Rights

184. The IACHR received an invitation to inaugurate the ninth session of the Arab Commission for Human Rights in Cairo, which was declined due to lack of funds. The relationship with that Commission is considered important, and it is expected that there will be participation in the near future.

3. Civil society

185. On January 30 and 31 President Cavallaro participated with indigenous leaders in a symposium at the University of Ottawa, Canada. The event had to do with disappearances and homicides of indigenous women and girls, and the possible framework and structure of the Commission of Inquiry announced by the Government of Canada.

186. On February 17 and 18 the IACHR participated in the Third International Meeting of the Euro-Latin American Network for the Prevention of Torture and Institutional Violence, in San José, Costa Rica.

187. On February 18 and 19 Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi and staff of the Executive Secretariat participated in a seminar on human rights and business in Panama City, at the initiative of the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation.

188. As part of its practice in the periods of sessions, the IACHR met on April 7 with civil society organizations that attended its 157th period of sessions in Washington, DC. During the meeting the President of the IACHR announced the measures adopted to address the procedural backlog, among them the creation of a Group of Analysis of Petitions, which in 2016 was to analyze all petitions pending review. He also referred to the decision of the IACHR to strengthen the precautionary measures mechanism. He also announced the beginning of the process of selecting a new person to head up the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission.

189. On June 6, in the context of the 158th period of sessions of the IACHR in Chile, the IACHR met with Chilean civil society organizations for the purpose of receiving information on human rights in the country.

190. From June 14 to 17 the Assistant Executive Secretary traveled to Brussels with support from OXFAM to meet with staff of the European Commission and legislators from the European Parliament, in the context of the serious financial crisis of the IACHR. During that visit the delegation of the IACHR met with the Copenhagen Initiative for Central American and Mexico (CIFCA), a coalition of 33 organizations, which includes FIAN and OXFAM, with the aim of discussing the situation of the IACHR and strengthening strategic partnerships.

191. On June 22, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights invited the IACHR to participate in the Forum on Fundamental Rights sponsored by the President of Austria, with the aim of engaging in dialogue on three fundamental topics: inclusion, protection for refugees, and the digital era. The President of the Inter-American Commission participated in this dialogue and met, among others, with Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the Agency for Fundamental Rights, with whom he discussed the possibility of a visit to the IACHR in March 2017, and Paul d'Auchamp, Deputy Regional Representative for Europe of the OHCHR.

192. On July 25, Open Society Justice Initiative, Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) organized a civil society dialogue with the finalists in the process of hiring the new Executive Secretary.

193. On September 27, the Executive Secretary held a conference with a coalition of human rights organizations from the hemisphere on regional issues and on the agenda of the IACHR, and announced the preparation of the Strategic Plan for 2017-2020.

194. On December 1, in the context of the 159th period of sessions in Panama, the IACHR held a meeting with Panamanian organizations for the purpose of receiving information on the situation of human rights in the country. It also met with civil society organizations from the entire region with the objective of sharing information about its plans to draw up its Strategic Plan. On December 4, the IACHR met with organizations of the coalition of human rights organizations, with the same objective of sharing the plan for producing the Strategic Plan and beginning the respective consultations.

4. Agreements and memoranda of understanding signed during the year

195. During 2016 the following agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed:

Institution	Date	General objective
Pan Amazon Ecclesial Network	August	Institutional cooperation
Universidad Federal do Pará	August	Institutional cooperation
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)	December	Addendum to General cooperation agreement establishing the participation of a fellow at the IACHR
Observatory of the Right to Food in Latin America and the Caribbean	December	Institutional cooperation, exchange of information on food and promotion activities
Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson of the Republic of Panama	December	Institutional cooperation and participation of one person as "associate staff" at the IACHR
The provincial Public Defense Service of the Province of Santa Fé	December	Institutional cooperation and participation of one person as "associate staff" at the IACHR

H. Human Rights Promotion Activities

1. Activities of the Office of the Executive Secretary

196. On January 27 the Executive Secretary participated as a speaker in the opening and closing sessions of the “Sixth consultation on the situation of economic, social and cultural rights in the United States and Canada,” which took place at the headquarters of the IACHR.

197. On February 3 and 4 in Antigua, Guatemala, the Executive Secretary participated as a speaker at a closed high-level workshop organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala, in conjunction with the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), and with the financial support of Germany, called “Where are we headed? New perspectives on cooperation between the international community and the states for implementing human rights and combating impunity.” He was also a speaker at a public colloquium entitled “The experience of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Mexico and the experience of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia.”

198. The Executive Secretary participated in the Regional Consultation on Human Rights and Business, which took place March 2 and 3, 2016 in Santiago, Chile, organized by the United Nations Working Group on the topic. The purpose of the consultation was to debate and take stock of the progress in the Americas in terms of implementing the Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business. Representatives of states, civil society, and regional agencies were in attendance.

199. The Executive Secretary opened the consultation held in the context of the “Meeting of experts on national mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders and judicial officers,” held April 1 at IACHR headquarters. In addition, on April 5 he moderated a joint presentation of the thematic reports of the Commission on extractive industries; legal standards and women’s rights; violence, children, and organized crime; and violence against LGBTI persons in the Americas.

200. On April 7 the Executive Secretary moderated the meeting held at the IACHR with members of civil society as well as the events “Seminar on fiscal policy and human rights in times of austerity,” organized by CESR, ACIJ, Dejusticia, CELS, Fundar, IBP, INEXC, Latinidad, Oxfam, and the Network for Fiscal Justice in Latin America and the Caribbean; and “Dialogue with Member States of the OAS on Good Practices in respect of the Rights of LGBTI Persons in the Americas,” held April 11 and 13, respectively.

201. On April 25 the Executive Secretary moderated the event called “Panel Discussion on Monitoring, Reporting, and Fact-finding,” co-organized by the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, DC, the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR), and the IACHR.

202. On April 28 the event “International civil society week 2016” was held in Bogotá, Colombia, convened by the organization CIVICUS. The Executive Secretary participated as a speaker in a panel discussion entitled “What is needed to create inclusive societies and organizations?”

203. The Executive Secretary traveled to Venezuela to participate on May 4 and 5 as a speaker in the forum “Human rights in the contemporary world: An inter-American perspective,” organized by the School of Law of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello. He also participated in the first annual university meeting on human rights entitled “Days of reflection on human rights in Latin America: Evolution and prospects of constitutional guarantees in the region,” organized by the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

204. On May 11 the Executive Secretary was guest speaker at the event “A Transnational Vision Rooted in Community” in Washington, DC, convened by Alianza Américas, a network of organizations, where he spoke of the future of democracy in the region.

205. On May 14 and 15 the Executive Secretary was a speaker on a panel entitled “United Nations and intergovernmental actions applicable to conflicts that affect indigenous peoples and their resolution:

Challenges and opportunities,” in the context of the international seminar on “Rights of indigenous peoples and undocumented struggles: Conflict and Peace.” The event was held at Columbia University in New York, organized by that university’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

206. On May 16 the Executive Secretary gave the keynote address “The situation of human rights in Mexico and the response of organized society” at an event at the Center for Inter-Disciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities (CEIICH: Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

207. In the context of the Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the Academy of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of American University’s Washington College of Law, on June 2 the Executive Secretary gave the lecture “The current practice of the supervision by the IACHR in general annual reports on countries and situation of human rights in the hemisphere, as well as the special country and thematic reports, on-site visits, and the rapporteurships.”

208. On June 6, during the special period of sessions of the IACHR in Chile, the Executive Secretary was a discussant in the seminar “Business and Human Rights: Inter-American standards and conclusions of the baseline study for Chile,” organized by the Human Rights Center at the Universidad Diego Portales, with the sponsorship of the Inter-American Commission.

209. On August the Executive Secretary participated as a speaker at the International Human Rights Symposium, addressing the topic “The state of danger of human rights in the Americas: The need to strengthen the regional system for the protection of human rights.” The seminar was held in Curitiba, Brazil, organized by the National Justice Council of Brazil.

210. During the visit of the IACHR to Mexico from August 28 to 31, under the leadership of President James Cavallaro, Executive Secretary Paulo Abrão participated in a working meeting with the Secretary General of the OAS and members of the Inter-American Court. That meeting included discussion of issues of mutual interest, such as the financial crisis of the inter-American human rights system and its consequences; and some joint strategies were delineated to address the situation.

211. At the invitation of the Government of Colombia, the Executive Secretary travelled to the city of Cartagena, Colombia, to participate in the ceremony of the signing of the Final Peace Agreement, held September 26.

212. The Executive Secretary provided technical support to President Cavallaro during the regular session of the Permanent Council of the OAS held October 19. In that session, along with the President of the Inter-American Court, Judge Roberto Caldas, the proposal was presented for strengthening the inter-American human rights system, which both organs forwarded to the Secretary General of the OAS on September 30, 2016.

213. On November 10, 2016, in Mexico City, the Executive Secretary participated in the presentation of the Work Plan of the Mechanism for Follow-up of the precautionary measure granted on behalf of the students from the “Raúl Isidro Burgos” rural school of Ayotzinapa and the recommendations of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI).

214. On December 15 a day of work and training on Public Policy with a Human Rights Approach was held in Washington, DC, sponsored by the Inter-American Social Responsibility and Human Rights Institute (IIRSODH).

215. On December 22 the Executive Secretary participated in the presentation of the preliminary report of the IACHR on “Poverty, Extreme Poverty and Human Rights in the Americas.” The presentation was made at the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights of Mercosur in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where it was announced that a period was beginning for taking in comments and additional information.

2. Activities of the Office of the Assistant Executive Secretary

a. Activities of the Court Group and the Merits Group

216. On September 1, 2016, staff from the Secretariat attended the "Sergio García Ramírez" University Competition at the School of Law of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where the Assistant Executive Secretary participated as a judge in the simulation of a proceeding before the IACHR and the Inter-American Court (semifinal round).

217. On December 1, 2016, staff of the Executive Secretariat attended a seminar on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala and the Presidential Commission Coordinating Executive-branch Policy on Human Rights. A presentation was given on standards on the protection of human rights defenders as per the judgment in the case Human Rights Defender v. Guatemala of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. More than 180 human rights defenders from different regions of the country participated, along with authorities of the State.

218. From December 5 to 9, staff of the Executive Secretariat participated in the Course and International Competition on Human Rights in Bogotá, Colombia, organized by the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos. The staff of the Secretariat made a presentation on the issue of enforcement of treaty obligations by domestic judges ("control of conventionality"), particularly from the perspective of the standards of the IACHR, and participated as judge in the semi-final and final rounds.

b. Activities of the Section of Friendly Settlements and Follow-up

219. On August 17, 2016, the Section of Friendly Settlements and Follow-up held a training workshop in Asunción, Paraguay, for public servants on the practical procedural aspects of using the friendly settlements mechanism for the various institutions in charge of negotiating and carrying out friendly settlement agreements. Among the officials attending the event were staff of the Vice Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Peoples, the Public Ministry, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Supreme Court of Justice. The workshop incorporated theoretical and practical procedural aspects of the friendly settlement mechanism in light of the normative framework that regulates it, including technical tools for negotiation and practical application of the information provided, and a practical exercise of the activities that one must carry out to reach a friendly settlement.

220. On August 26, 2016 a class was given on the friendly settlement mechanism at the "Héctor Fix Zamudio" Diplomat program on the Inter-American Human Rights System, organized by the Legal Research Institute of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. In addition, a class was given on that mechanism in the Course on the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights for state agents, which took place July 18 to 22, 2016.

221. On December 1, 2016, a training workshop was held in Panama City for public servants on the practical and procedural aspects for using the friendly settlement mechanism; the various institutions in charge of the negotiation and implementation friendly settlement agreements in Panama were convened to participate in the workshop. Among the Panamanian institutions participating where the Office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Health, the National Land Management Authority, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Police, and the Office of the Attorney General for the Administration (Procuraduría General de la Administración). This workshop, organized with the support of the Panamanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, included theoretical and practical elements of the friendly settlement mechanism in light of the normative framework that regulates it, including technical tools for integrative negotiation that should be used to reach a friendly settlement.

222. On December 6, 2016, a class was given on the friendly settlement mechanism in the "Fourth International Specialized Course on Human Rights and Access to the International Systems of Protection," organized in Bogotá by the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos.

3. Other promotion activities of the Executive Secretariat

223. On January 27, the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Trans Persons (REDLACTRANS), with the support of the IACHR and several civil society organizations, launched a new report on violations of the human rights of trans women in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. The event took place at the headquarters of the IACHR with more than 100 representatives of civil society in attendance, in particular from various LGBTI communities. The speakers at the event included Commissioner James Cavallaro; the Executive Secretary; Marcela Romero, Director of REDLACTRANS; and Ideli Salvatti, Secretary for Access to Rights and Equity of the OAS.

224. On February 8, 2016, Secretariat staff attended a videoconference organized by Handicap International to present a new report with the title “Making it Work Initiative on Gender and Disability Inclusion: Advancing equity for women and girls with disabilities.” The report identifies and describes 11 good practices in 10 countries, developed by women to eliminate violence against women and girls with disabilities.

225. From February 9 to 18, Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez and staff from the Executive Secretariat participated in the Fourth Course for Specialization on the Inter-American Human Rights System in Lima, Peru, organized by the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. This course was focused on the theory, practice, and standards of the inter-American human rights system.

226. From February to April 2016, the Executive Secretariat organized a training and orientation program for the 32 interns for the winter and spring seasons. This program took the form of interactive presentations by several departments, sections, and groups of the IACHR Secretariat, including a roundtable discussion with the Executive Secretary.

227. On February 25 and 26, 2016, Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez attended the Sixth Strategic Meeting of Protection Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders at the Palais de L'Europe in Strasbourg, France. The meeting was organized by the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and included representatives of various international human rights institutions related to human rights defenders, among them United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on human rights defenders, staff of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the Secretary General of the World Organization Against Torture.

228. On March 10, 2016, Colonel Julio Gordon of the Carabineros de Chile and the American Police Community (Ameripol) gave a talk on community policing and drug trafficking to staff of the Executive Secretariat at the headquarters of the IACHR.

229. On April 12, 2016, in the context of the 157th period of sessions, the IACHR received the visit of a group of judges from the Judicial Council (Consejo de la Magistratura) of the city of Buenos Aires. During the visit a brief seminar was held on the inter-American human rights system geared to the visiting judges in which issues were addressed such as the system of petitions and cases, the mechanisms for protection and oversight, and the promotion of human rights, among others.

230. In collaboration with the Faculty of Law of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the European Union, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR organized a seminar for ombudspersons of the CARICOM region, with the participation of President James Cavallaro and Commissioner Margarette May Macaulay. The seminar was held May 19 and 20 at the Faculty of Law of UWI-MONA in Kingston, Jamaica. The title of the seminar was Ombudspersons of CARICOM, Citizen Security, and the Inter-American Human Rights System. The seminar included the presence of officials from five CARICOM states, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Also in attendance with officials from Costa Rica and Puerto Rico. During the seminar several panel discussions were held that gave a general overview of the inter-American human

rights system and its role in promoting the protection of citizen security from a human rights perspective; CARICOM's experience in terms of institutional challenges and existing national and international mechanisms for addressing these challenges; the experience of Latin America in terms of challenges and best practices in the use of international human rights mechanisms to improve citizen security. As a result of the seminar, supported by staff of the Executive Secretariat, a brochure of good practices is being prepared that is expected to be published and distributed by the UWI in 2017.

231. In the week of June 6 to 10, 2016, in the context of the 158th special period of sessions held in Chile, the IACHR held an academic seminar at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights with three panels on progress and challenges of the IACHR, the right to truth, justice, and reparation, and inter-American standards on equity and non-discrimination. The IACHR also sponsored a colloquium on the issue of States, Businesses and Human Rights, organized by the Human Rights Center of the Universidad Diego Portales and held at the National Human Rights Institute. A colloquium was also held with the members of the Human Rights Committee of the Judicial Branch on the question of issue of enforcement of treaty obligations by domestic judges ("control of conventionality") at the headquarters of the Judicial Studies Institute.

232. On June 14, staff of the Executive Secretariat made a presentation at Washington College of Law, American University, in the context of a diplomate course on the Inter-American Human Rights System. The course included the participation of students from several countries of the Americas, including Argentina, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Peru. The next day, the students visited the headquarters of the IACHR.

233. On June 15, a brief seminar was held at the headquarters of the IACHR for students from the National Defense University (United States). Staff from the Executive Secretariat made presentations to the students on various aspects of the IACHR, including its structure and functions, as well as the mechanisms of observation and protection.

234. From July 18 to 22, 2016, the IACHR, together with the Washington College of Law, American University, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, organized a training course on the American Convention and the system for the protection of human rights, for state agents from the Americas.

235. On July 27 the Secretariat organized a presentation by Zakiya Carr-Johnson for the members of the IACHR on cultural diversity and social inclusion in the workplace. Ms. Carr-Johnson is the Director of the Race, Ethnicity and Social Inclusion Unit in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department of State of the United States. The presentation to the commissioners followed up on an earlier presentation for the staff of the IACHR in September 2015.

236. In the months of July and August the traditional training and orientation program for summer interns continued. These events mainly took the form of interactive presentations by various departments, sections, and groups of the Executive Secretariat, and included a roundtable with the Executive Secretary on August 11.

237. On August 18, 2016, staff of the Executive Secretariat attended the First International Meeting of Specialists and Networks of the Inter-American Human Rights System in Mexico City. The event was organized by the Legal Research Institute of the UNAM to discuss the lag in the system of petitions and cases, and to promote the dialogue on mechanisms and measures for resolving that problem.

238. From August 22 to September 2, the "Héctor Fix-Zamudio" Diplomate program in the Inter-American Human Rights System, 2016 edition, was held in Mexico City, organized by the Legal Research Institute of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, with the collaboration of the IACHR and the Inter-American Court. The annual Diplomate program, geared to students, academics, members of civil society organizations, and public officials, is aimed at offering the students specialized high-level academic training in the inter-American human rights system through classes and lectures by the most outstanding experts in the

hemisphere. Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez served as academic coordinator of the program, in which the instructors included members of the IACHR and staff of its Executive Secretariat.

239. From October 3 to 7, 2016, staff of the Executive Secretariat attended the Fourth Training Program on Human Rights Protection Mechanisms in Florence, Italy, organized by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights.

240. From October 10 to 15, 2015, staff of the Executive Secretariat attended the 8th edition of the “Specialized Course on the Inter-American System for State Officials” to make a presentation on the topic Organs of Protection of the Inter-American Human Rights System: the IACHR. This course was organized by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, and was held at its headquarters in San José, Costa Rica.

241. In a collaborative effort with the George Washington University Law School (GWULS), the IACHR held the Fifth Annual Course on Human Rights for state agents of the CARICOM states, on October 11 and 12, 2016. The participating states were Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The agenda included specific areas such as the petition system, precautionary measures, country monitoring, rapporteurships, and activity before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The program also included a working luncheon to facilitate an open dialogue on matters of mutual interest.

242. From December 5 to 9, 2016, the third edition of the International Human Rights Competition was held in Bogotá, Colombia, organized by the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos (ICDH), with the support of the IACHR. The competition was organized for the purpose of fostering study, dissemination, promotion, and training in the field of human rights, with special emphasis on the procedure before the organs of the inter-American human rights system, and included the participation of more than 40 universities from the region. In addition, in that same framework, from November 28 to December 5 the Fourth Specialized International Course on Human Rights: “Access to the international systems of protection,” was held, geared to community human rights activists from the city of Bogotá; members of the Executive Secretariat participated making presentations.

243. With the support of the Permanent Observer Mission of France, the IACHR organized an event to commemorate International Human Rights Day 2016, which was held December 9, 2016 at the Main Building of the OAS. The main theme of the event was the launch of the IACHR’s report Human rights of migrants, refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking and internally displaced persons: Norms and standards of the inter-American human rights system. The speakers at the event included the Secretary General of the OAS, the President of the IACHR, Commissioner Enrique Gil Botero and the Permanent Observer of France.

244. For the second consecutive year, the IACHR cooperated with the Inter-American Social Responsibility and Human Rights Institute (IIRESODH) to organize a clinic on strategic international litigation and evidence and oral procedure in the inter-American human rights system. This clinic was held December 12 to 16, 2016, and included presentations by staff of the Executive Secretariat. The event was attended by some 25 actors from civil society in the Americas.

245. Finally, on December 16, 2016, the IIRESODH gave a special seminar for the staff of the IACHR on the issue of public policy with a human rights approach.