



# Semi-annual Report on Implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021

January–June 2019

January 2019



The Executive Secretariat presents the following report on the results achieved for the period January to June 2019 in the implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021 adopted by the IACHR on March 20, 2017 (OEA/Ser.L/V/II.161.Doc. 27/17) as its main institutional management instrument.

The report begins with a summary of the main results achieved in the period that it covers. That is followed by six chapters, five of which refer each of the strategic objectives contained in the Plan, with the sixth covering the Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations (Program 21). The final part of the report sets out a number of conclusions on the Plan's execution.

We would like to thank the member states, observers, and donor countries whose voluntary contributions were crucial for achieving the results described in this report: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru and United States; the European Commission, Spain, the Netherlands, the Balearic Islands, and Switzerland; ARCUS Foundation, Google, Freedom House, the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the Ford Foundation, OXFAM, and the UNHCR.

## Main Achievements

- Strengthening of the individual petitions and cases system by keeping on the 21 professionals added last year, registering a staff increase of 75% since 2016.
- Streamlining case system management and decision-making processes, increasing the number of petitions and cases examined in comparison to recent years. Examination of 3,550 petitions at the initial review stage, while completing 67 reports on admissibility and 35 reports on the merits.
- Strengthening of the precautionary measures mechanism by ensuring its efficiency and timely response while expediting its decision making.
- Strengthening of the friendly settlement mechanism, through which seven agreements were signed.
- Expanding the public presence of the IACHR in the region by holding two sessions away from headquarters (Bolivia and Jamaica) and conducting eight working visits to eight different countries.
- Increasing the impact of monitoring and the production and enriching standards through the preparation and adoption of two thematic reports.
- Monitoring of freedom of expression and ESCER, including development of standards on new topics.
- Capacity building for 5,695 civil society representatives and public officials on inter-American human rights system (IAHRS) mechanisms and standards through workshops and promotional activities in 26 countries.
- Reinforced advisory services and technical cooperation to Central America for strengthening institutions and public policies with a human rights perspective
- Expanding the IACHR's presence before the OAS political bodies, giving 17 presentations over the course of the semester.



- Expanding the social participation of civil society organizations in IACHR activities and processes.
- Implementation with the OHCHR of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.
- Doubling of the Regular Fund for the second third is being executed in 2019 and General Assembly approval of an increase in the last third for the 2020 budget.
- Maintaining the representation of different nationalities on the Executive Secretariat staff, especially of persons from the countries of the Caribbean.
- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) in operation and findings presented.
- Progress with the prototype of the IACHR Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE) and rounds of dialogue held with national monitoring systems.



# SO1

**To contribute to the development of more effective and accessible inter-American justice in order to overcome practices of impunity in the region and achieve comprehensive reparation for victims through decisive measures for the strengthening of the petition and case system, friendly settlements and precautionary measures.**

## Results Achieved:

- The number of decisions adopted to open cases under initial examination for processing increased 138 percent compared with the amount for the whole of 2018.
- The management and adoption of decisions on admissibility and merits rose 24 percent compared with the first half of 2018, for a total of 102 reports issued.
- The friendly settlement mechanism was strengthened through the signing of seven new friendly settlement agreements.
- The precautionary measures mechanism was strengthened through the legal evaluation of all 610 requests received in the semester, during which 35 precautionary measures were granted, 29 percent of those within a month of their request and 63 percent within 90 days. Two working visits (to Costa Rica and Argentina) to verify firsthand the implementation of precautionary measures granted.
- Access to information and transparency was boosted with the publication of the IACHR Annual Report and four balance and accountability reports.

Strengthening of the individual petitions and cases system was maintained in the first half of 2019 by retaining the 21 new professionals incorporated the previous year, ensuring the continuity of—and even improvements in—the results achieved in terms of reducing the procedural backlog. Positive results were also seen in the area of friendly settlements in terms of the continuity of efforts to move forward cases in which a friendly settlement procedure has been instituted.

In the area of precautionary measures, the IACHR has managed to keep up to date in terms of its review of cases, ensuring an efficient and timely response of the precautionary measures mechanism by expediting its



decision making and centering efforts and available resources on reviewing the cases of individuals who are at risk and in need of precautionary measures to safeguard their rights.

Based on the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that highly satisfactory outcomes have been achieved under Strategic Objective 1 for the first half of 2019.

## **P1: Special Procedural Delay Reduction Program**

In the first half of 2019 the IACHR received a total of 1,641 petitions, marking an increase of 10.9 percent compared with the number received the year before and a continuation of the upward trend of previous years.

### **> Initial review**

A total of 3,798 petitions were evaluated between January and June this year, the highest number of petitions ever evaluated by the IACHR in its history. Additional information was requested from the petitioners in 92 of those petitions, while a decision was made as to whether or not to start processing in 3,550 petitions: It was decided to initiate processing 414 petitions and not to process 3,136. That number of decisions on whether or not to open cases for processing represented a 38 percent rise compared with that for the whole of 2018.

The table below provides statistics on reviews conducted by year of receipt of the petition.

	Start processing	No processing	Request additional information	Conduct further review
Pre-2016 petitions	163	542	0	0
2016 petitions	26	109	5	0
2017 petitions	199	456	0	0
2018 petitions	26	589	87	0
Petitions rejected on which additional information was received	0	1440	0	156
	<b>414</b>	<b>3136</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>156</b>

### **> Admissibility, merits, and Court stages**

In the first half of the year, States were notified of the acceptance of 309 new petitions to the admissibility stage, a figure that contrasts with the 261 such notifications recorded for 2018 as a whole.



Between January 1 and June 30, 2019, the IACHR adopted 67 reports on admissibility (56 cases were declared admissible, and 11 inadmissible). In qualitative terms, in the reports on admissibility that it adopted during the first half of 2019, the IACHR advanced and consolidated its decisions on a variety of issues, including forced disappearance and torture; duty to protect the right to life; criminal due process; violence against women and girls; punitive administrative due process; extrajudicial executions; noncompliance with judicial decisions; and the right to equality in the framework of reparations in transitional contexts.

The IACHR also adopted 25 reports on merits and is in the process of adopting a further 10 reports that have already been drafted. Annualized, this figure represents a 63 percent increase in relation to the 43 reports produced in 2018, and a 100 percent rise compared to the 35 reports turned out in 2017. The Commission has made significant progress in drafting a report on merits that joins several cases concerning similar subject matter. When possible, the joinder of cases in a single report on merits facilitates the uniform and efficient processing of a portfolio of cases at the merits stage. In addition during the period covered by this report the Commission adopted eight final reports on merits and publications

Through these cases, the IACHR continues to develop standards in relation to criminal punishment and due process, freedom of expression, violence against women and impunity, rights of migrants, human rights defenders, the death penalty, indigenous peoples, forced disappearance, and remembrance, truth and justice, among other issues. These achievements have been possible thanks to the standardization of review procedures and methodologies, simplification of IACHR decisions, and thematic specialization thanks to portfolio-based case organization and planning.

Also in the first half of 2019, the Commission prepared a total of 66 memoranda for consultation on cases at a transitional stage.

### ➤ Activity of the IACHR before the Inter-American Court

During the period covered by this report the IACHR submitted 11 cases to the Inter-American Court. Those cases had to do with a range of issues, including freedom of expression, persons deprived of liberty, rights of migrants, right to health, business and human rights, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearance, right to fair and equitable working conditions and duties of oversight and supervision, and criminal due process, among others. For the first time, the IACHR referred to the Court a case involving violence against girls in schools and on violence motivated by prejudice against trans individuals.

The IACHR also continued to act in written proceedings in contentious cases, submitting approximately 24 briefs on active cases. The Commission fulfilled its mandate under the Convention to appear at all hearings before the Court, both on contentious matters and on judgment supervision and provisional measures. In all, IACHR representatives appeared at 22 such hearings in the first half of 2019. In addition, the IACHR submitted more than 80 briefs to the Inter-American Court on the subject of judgment compliance.

### ➤ Measures to reduce procedural delay

In the first half of 2019 the IACHR continued to implement its pilot plan for serial decision making on cases at the admissibility stage that deal with the same subject matter. In that context, reports were drafted on petitions alleging violations of the rights to life and humane treatment in armed conflicts; lack of reparation for



victims of dictatorial regimes and judicial independence; and job stability and guarantees against arbitrary dismissal of judicial or prosecutorial officials. In addition, reports were prepared with model paragraphs and the same review criteria were adopted for similar situations in order to address the procedural backlog more diligently and promptly.

The IACHR decided to adopt a short colorability analysis format using a paragraph that summarizes the most relevant information. Thus, the analytical focus of reports has been brought to bear on exhaustion of domestic remedies, while the review of colorability is limited to a reference to the provisions that would be examined in the merits stage. This short colorability format expedites the preparation, review, translation, discussion, and adoption of reports.

The following common measures were applied to the admissibility and merits stages:

- The number of requests for observations at the admissibility stage was reduced, where the necessary flexibility in each petition allows.
- The inactivity threshold for sending archive notices to parties was lowered from four to three years, regardless of whether or not there might be proceedings ongoing in the case. The object is to center efforts on matters in which the activity of the petitioner remains constant.

## **P2: Program to Expand the Use of Friendly Settlements**

During the first half of 2019 the IACHR took various steps to advance the negotiation and implementation of friendly settlement agreements, as well as undertaking activities to promote the friendly settlement mechanism as an alternative to contentious proceedings for the resolution of petitions and cases lodged with the Commission to obtain comprehensive reparations for victims of human rights violations.

### **➤ Results achieved and progress with new friendly settlement follow-up methodologies**

In the first six months of 2019, the Commission facilitated 39 working meetings (both on-site and virtual) for the negotiation and follow-up of friendly settlement agreements following the adoption of new methodologies to advance the signing and fulfillment of such agreements. Likewise, 50 bilateral and tripartite videoconferences were held, attended by petitioners, States, members of the Commission, and facilitators from the Friendly Settlement Section, using alternative dispute settlement methods in friendly settlement procedures, a major step towards the opening of permanent, fluid channels of dialogue for managing cases under the friendly settlement mechanism.

The Section also held six assessment meetings with representatives from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay to follow up on roadmaps jointly developed by the parties in their negotiations, as well as to identify opportunities for progress in the friendly settlement processes at their various stages.

Also part of the new methodologies adopted are the activities to publicize the signing and fulfillment of friendly settlement agreements, to which end the IACHR issued 17 press releases in the first half of 2019. Work to systematize information on fully implemented friendly settlement agreements that are no longer being monitored has also been completed, the aim being to demonstrate the historical impact of friendly settlement



agreements at the individual and structural level. That information will soon be made publicly available on the IACHR web page.

As a result of the Commission's facilitation and the will of States and petitioners to pursue non-contentious procedures, seven friendly settlement agreements were signed in the period covered by this report. Thus, on January 21, April 3, and June 12 and 18, 2019, friendly settlement agreements were signed in Cases 12.961 A, Bolívar Salgado Welban et al.; 12.961 C, Marcial Coello Medina et al.; and 12.961 D, Jorge Enrique Valladares Argueñal et al., all regarding Honduras; those matters concerned the arbitrary dismissal of more than 350 police officers in that country. Similarly, on May 23 and June 21, 2019, friendly settlement agreements were signed in Cases 13.017 A and C, Families of Victims of the Military Dictatorship, which concerned gross human rights violations that occurred in Panama between October 1968 and December 1989. The IACHR regards those eight friendly settlement agreements as emblematic in view of their nature, the type of violations for which reparation was sort, and the number of beneficiaries they covered.

In the year to date, the friendly settlement section has concluded 33 cases under the friendly settlement mechanism by approving 6 agreements, closing 14 negotiations at the request of the parties, and archiving 13 either because of inactivity of the petitioners, or at their request. As regards friendly settlement agreements adopted and published in the year to date, the Commission decided to approve the following cases: 11.990 A, Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonnet et al., Colombia; 12.190, José Luis Tapia et al., Chile; 12.942, Emilia Morales Campos, Costa Rica; 13.408, Alberto Patishtán Gámez and P-1014-06, Antonio Jacinto López; and 13.017 C Families of Victims of the Military Dictatorship in Panama. It is worth noting that of the six of approved agreements, three concerning Chile and one involving Costa Rica and Mexico, respectively, had been implemented in full at the time of their publication. The above is an important indication of the will of the States concerned to implement the measures contained in the friendly settlement agreements and build confidence by meeting their undertakings. It is also worth mentioning that two friendly settlement agreements were adopted in the same period in 2018, and it is estimated that by the end of July 2019 the number of approved and published agreements would reach a historical high not seen since 2001.

The Commission has also participated in the implementation of friendly settlement agreement in 2019. In that connection, it should be highlighted that Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva made two working visit to Argentina in the first half of 2019. In the first visit, from April 3 to 8, Commissioner Vargas Silva presided at a plaque unveiling ceremony that was part of the implementation of the friendly settlement agreement in Case 12.854 (Report No. 36/17, Ricardo Javier Kaplun). The ceremony was held at Police Precinct 14B in Buenos Aires and attended by senior state officials and relatives of the victim. Following the ceremony, in keeping with clause 13 of the agreement relating to measures to avoid repetition, the parties, accompanied by Commissioner Vargas Silva, toured a number of jail facilities to verify that detention environments were compatible with human rights standards and that security cameras had been properly installed, as stipulated in the friendly settlement agreement.

On his second working visit, from June 3 to 5, 2019, Commissioner Vargas Silva met with provincial officials in Mendoza as well as with relatives of persons deprived of liberty to gather information about their situation. Commissioner Vargas visited Almafuerde and San Felipe Prison Complexes in the context of PM-35-14 and Case 12.532 (Mendoza Prisons) to verify the implementation of the decisions of the Commission in relation to that friendly settlement process and the precautionary measure. It also held working meetings on those matters with the petitioners' representatives and the state authorities involved in their implementation.

On May 27, 2019, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, in her capacity as President of the IACHR, and Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, as IACHR Rapporteur for Uruguay, attended the Seminar on the Impact of



the IACHR Friendly Settlement Procedure in the Development of Uruguay's Domestic Law, held in Montevideo. That event was organized pursuant to the friendly settlement agreement signed in relation to Petition 1224-07, David Rabinovich, regarding Uruguay.

Likewise, in its 2018 Annual Report the Commission noted that progress was made in the implementation of 106 measures: 69 measures of reparation attained total compliance; 20 measures, substantial partial compliance; and 17 measures, partial compliance. The IACHR recorded a considerable increase in terms of total compliance with reparation measures, compared with the 16 clauses declared complied with in full in 2017. The Commission also assessed six approved the friendly settlement agreements in the following cases, declaring them in total compliance: Case 12.710, Report No. 102/14, Marcos Gilberto Chaves and Sandra Chaves, Argentina; Case 12.745, Report No. 97/05, Alfredo Díaz Bustos, Bolivia; Case 12.769, Report No. 65/14, Irineo Martínez Torres and Candelario, Mexico; Petition 288-08, Report No. 69/16, Jesús Salvador Ferreyra González, Peru; Petition 1339-07, Report No. 70/16, Tito Guido Gallegos Gallegos, Peru; and Case 12.383, Report No. 137/17, Néstor Alejandro Albornoz Eyzaguirre, Peru.

In the second half of 2019, the Commission will continue to facilitate negotiations in 102 cases in which a friendly settlement procedure is ongoing, 35 of which are at the admissibility stage, and 67, at the merits stage. To that end, it performed a detailed review of the negotiation processes and developed strategies for moving them forward. Friendly settlement agreements have been signed in 43 of those processes. Accordingly, the Friendly Settlement Section will continue helping to advance those processes toward their approval and total compliance or, failing that, the closure of those processes in which there is no will on the part of the parties to continue their implementation. It will also continue to create spaces for dialogue for signing new friendly settlement agreements in the other 59 cases. The Commission is also advancing the process of periodic follow-up on 73 agreements that have already been published, whose implementation is being supervised through its Annual Report. The Commission has already started the process of gathering relevant information to that end.

The Commission will also continue adopting new methodologies to expedite negotiation processes and increase levels of compliance in friendly settlement agreements, without overlooking the new cases received for the friendly settlement procedure through a pilot project.

### **P3: Program to Strengthen Precautionary Measures**

In 2019, through its precautionary measure mechanism, the IACHR continued to protect the rights of individuals throughout the Hemisphere that face a situation of grave and urgent risk of irreparable harm.

#### **➤ Results Achieved**

As of June 30, 2019, the Commission had received a total of 610 requests for precautionary measures, a proportionally larger number than the amount received in 2017 when a total of 1,037 requests were submitted for the year as a whole. All the requests received to date have been analyzed and classified in order of their apparent seriousness and urgency, in accordance with the requirements established in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure. The greatest number of requests consent Colombia (138), Mexico (90) and Brazil (51).

In the first half of the year, the Commission granted 35 precautionary measures, taking the total number of precautionary measures in force to 560. The beneficiaries of precautionary measures include human rights defenders, minors, survivors of acts of violence, indigenous peoples, and individuals who have been detained or



whose whereabouts are unknown, among other persons or groups in situations of great vulnerability. In 63 percent of cases, measures were granted within less than three months of their request, with 29 percent granted within a month. A large majority (43 percent) of the latter correspond to the State of Venezuela. This level of swiftness of response marks a significant improvement over the response times seen in 2017, when 44 percent of precautionary measures were granted within three months of their request.

The Commission deliberated on a total of 830 matters during the first half of the year. That number is twice the amount of deliberations during the same period in 2018. In spite of the fact that 2018 was a record year in terms of numbers of requests for precautionary measures received by the Commission (1,618), the overall size of the portfolio of requests pending a final decision has not only been maintained, but actually shrunk by 60 percent in comparison to the total number of requests that made up the portfolio in the first half of 2018. In accordance with the parameters established in [Resolution 3/2018](#), adopted on May 10, 2018, more than 2,000 requests were deactivated for lack of up-to-date information or a response from applicants to requests made by the Commission. Should additional information be submitted in relation to those matters, the Commission will review the situation in the light of Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure, as indicated in the above resolution.

With the foregoing, the Commission has managed to ensure an efficient and timely response from the precautionary measures mechanism by expediting its decision making and centering efforts and available resources on reviewing the cases of individuals who are at risk and in need of precautionary measures to safeguard their rights.

#### ➤ **Enhanced visibility and follow-up of precautionary measures**

For the purposes of greater disclosure of the universe of measures in effect, the Commission published an [interactive map of precautionary measures granted since 2013](#). In the first six months of the year, 500 follow-up letters were sent to States and representatives, requesting specific information for the purposes of supervising implementation of those measures. In addition, 22 working meetings were held to gather information from the parties on progress and challenges in implementing the measures. Public hearings have been promoted as a way of encouraging more-effective implementation. Two public hearings were held: one was an ex officio meeting on Venezuela to supervise a total of nine measures in effect; the other, a thematic meeting to collect information about the implementation of the differentiating ethnic approach for indigenous peoples.

The Commission also conducted a [working visit to Costa Rica](#) to verify firsthand the implementation of a precautionary measure granted to the Bibri and Teribe indigenous people. Likewise, it made a [working visit to Argentina](#), where it held meetings on the implementation of precautionary measures granted in connection with the Almafuerite and San Felipe Prison Complexes, both of which it visited. The Commission once again thanks both States for consenting to the visits and for the accommodations and arrangements made to enable broad participation on the part of the authorities.

#### ➤ **Request for Provisional Measures presented to the Inter-American Court**

Faced with a lack of information demonstrating the implementation of precautionary measures, as well as an increase in the situation of risk, in the first half of 2019, the Commission [invoked the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court](#) so that it might order provisional measures and protect the rights of 17 individuals who have been deprived of their liberty and are at extreme risk of suffering irreparable harm in Nicaragua as a result of acts of violence and precarious prison conditions. The President of the Court adopted a [resolution on May 21, 2019](#), ordering those provisional measures. The Commission also presented the Inter-American Court with a [request for provisional measures](#) to protect the rights of the members of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH), owing to the situation of extreme risk



that they face in Nicaragua. The President of the Court ordered urgent measures to be adopted in a [resolution dated July 12, 2019](#). In addition, the Commission filed a total of 22 legal briefs in connection with the supervision of ongoing provisional measures ordered by the Inter-American Court.

In order to continue promoting the visibility and knowledge of the precautionary measures mechanism and to advance the activities set forth in the [Strategic Plan](#), in the first half of 2019 the Commission moved forward with the preparatory work and first draft of a basic handbook on the use of the precautionary measures mechanism for first-time users; it will continue that work in the latter half of the year.

## P4: Program for Transparency and Access to Information

In the first half of 2019 the IACHR continued to increase its efforts in the area of transparency, accountability, and access to information, as the following section shows.

### ➤ Annual Report published

The Annual Report is the main instrument of IACHR accountability to the member states, civil society, users of the inter-American human rights system, and all the actors that participate in and cooperate with the work of the Commission. The Annual Report for 2018 was presented to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS on March 21, 2019, and to the OAS General Assembly on June 27, 2019. It is worth noting that the report was drafted according to a new design that aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of human rights in the region, while offering a description of the Commission's activities and accomplishments in correlation to the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. ([Press Release](#) – [Remarks of the President to the CAJP](#) – [2018 Annual Report](#))

### ➤ Four additional overview and accountability reports published

In the first half of 2019, the IACHR issued a number of overview and accountability reports to ensure transparency in the activities of the IACHR in its various areas of work.

- On February 27, 2019, the IACHR presented an overview of results of its precautionary measures mechanism, which offers facts and figures about the work of the IACHR in relation to that mechanism. ([Press Release](#))
- On February 8, 2019, the IACHR presented an overview of results achieved by its special recommendations monitoring mechanisms. The report contained information about the work of the IACHR in connection with its various special monitoring mechanisms: Special Follow-up Mechanism on the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA), working groups on the Dominican Republic, Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), and the Special Monitoring Team (ESE) ([Press Release](#))
- On March 13, 2019, the IACHR presented to the OAS Permanent Council the progress report on the second year of implementation of the Strategic Plan and its 2018 financial report on the execution of funds received. ([Presentation to the PC](#) - [Press Release on SP Report](#) – [SP Report](#) - [Press Release on Financial Report](#))



- On June 25, 2019, the IACHR submitted an overview of the results achieved by the Special Follow-up Mechanism on the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA). ([Press Release](#))
- **Both Special Rapporteurships (SRFE and SRESCER) presented annual reports on results**
- On February 27, 2019, the IACHR presented the report on the results of the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights which contains information on the work of the Special Rapporteurship in 2018. ([Press Release](#))
- The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression presented its 2018 Annual Report to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS on March 21, 2019, and to the OAS General Assembly on June 27, 2019. ([Press Release](#) – [Report](#))
- **Increased access to information through agreements**
- Under an agreement between the IACHR and the **Commission for Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition of Colombia** access was provided to the historical archives of Colombia at the IACHR.
- As part of an agreement concluded with the **Secretariat for Human Rights of the Province of Buenos Aires**, access was provided to the files and historical documentation concerning the visit that the IACHR made to Argentina in 1979. The agreement was apropos of the fortieth anniversary of that visit.
- The IACHR responded to specific requests made by States and family members for access to petition and case files contained in the Commission’s historical archive.
- **Policy on Transparency and Access to Information advanced**

The Executive Secretariat of the IACHR is working on a draft Policy on Transparency and Access to Information, which it is hoped will be presented to the IACHR in the course of the second half of the year.



# SO2

**To have an impact on prevention measures and the factors that lead to human rights violations through the coordinated use of IACHR mechanisms and functions to achieve improved capacity for monitoring and coordinating relevant, timely and appropriate responses**

## Results Achieved

- Public presence of the IACHR expanded in the region to 10 countries by holding two sessions away from headquarters and conducting working visits to three countries and promotional visits to five countries.
- Structured and coordinated response to critical human rights situations through the SACROI by maintaining the working groups set up in previous years on Brazil, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and installing a new working group to follow up on the situation of human rights in Haiti.
- Consultation initiated on the situation of human rights of rights defenders and community leaders in Colombia.
- Request for an advisory opinion presented to the Inter-American Court on differentiated approaches in relation to deprivation of liberty.
- Consultation carried out on the subject of memory, truth, justice, and guarantees of non-repetition in the Americas.



- Consultation process on inter-American principles on migration concluded
- Output and enrichment of inter-American human rights standards increased.
- Monitoring of freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, along with the development of innovative standards on new issues.

## P5: Program to Improve the Scope and Impact of the Monitoring of Human Rights Situations by Theme and Country

The institutional changes promoted in the last two years in the area of monitoring continued to yield significant results in 2019, as the following shows:

### ➤ Progress in monitoring priority issues

In the first half of 2019, the following progress was made with in broadening the scope of protection for individuals in the Americas, which, in turn, contribute to advances in the interpretation of human rights recognized in inter-American instruments. The priority issues on which the IACHR developed standards included the following:

- **Rights of human rights defenders and judicial independence:** Since February 2019, the mandate of the Office of the Rapporteur also includes the issue of judicial independence and judicial operators.

During the period covered by this report, the IACHR put out a press release and a questionnaire inviting civil society and other interested actors to send information about the situation of human rights of rights defenders and community leaders in Colombia. The Commission is using the information it received to prepare a thematic report analyzing the situation of this group in the wake of the signing of the Peace Accords, the situation of rights defenders and community leaders at greatest risk, and the obstacles they face in carrying out their work.

- **Rights of persons deprived of liberty:** Since February 2019, the mandate of the Office of the Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty also includes preventing and combating torture.

In addition to its continual monitoring of these issues, in the first half of the year, the Commission began work on a report entitled “Women Deprived of Liberty in the Americas. Emphasis: Drug-related offenses.” A public questionnaire is being prepared to that end. In this framework, there has been significant rapprochement with leading organizations in this field. In order to draw attention to the issue, the Office of the Rapporteur has participated in events to do with women, drugs, and incarceration.

The Commission is also leading a request for an advisory opinion to the Inter-American Court on differentiated approaches in relation to deprivation of liberty. The Office of the Rapporteur has devoted particular attention to monitoring the situation of persons deprived of liberty in Brazil and Honduras as part of the follow-up to recent on-site visits.

The standards developed in the first half of the year concern the following topics: (a) greater protections in the context of transfers to maximum-security prisons; (b) consequences of military training for prison management and guards; and (c) deplorable prison conditions as obstacles to social reintegration.



- **Memory, Truth and Justice:** The Unit on Memory, Truth, and Justice became a rapporteurship in February 2019. The Commission has begun to build regular channels of dialogue with civil society organizations and academic institutions to identify priority topics in connection with its monitoring work and to divulge information about the mechanisms through which the Commission acts. So far it has contacted 21 organizations and institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Uruguay.

The IACHR organized a public consultation in Bolivia in which 30 people took part, at least 20 of whom were from the Andean region. The activity was carried out in coordination with the Latin American Transitional Justice Network (RLAJT) and the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Sites of Memory (RESLAC). Its objectives were twofold: to update the diagnostic review of current trends and challenges in relation to memory, truth, justice, and guarantees of non-repetition in the Americas; to receive comments, corrections, critiques, and input for the working document produced by the Office of the Rapporteur on Principles on Memory Policy in the Americas. A virtual consultation was also held on the second topic in which participation was widened to include other actors in the construction of a future normative framework on memory policy.

- **Rights of People of African Descent and Racial Discrimination:** On March 20, 2019, the Commission released the report [African Americans, Police Use of Force, and Human Rights in the United States](#) \_ at Howard University in Washington, D.C. The event was attended by scholars representing the State and civil society organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Black Lives Matter, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and Race and Equality. In the report, the IACHR finds that discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system cannot be separated from racism, social stigmatization, and hate speech. The Commission underscores that racial profiling practices may constitute inhuman and degrading treatment under international law. The Commission also notes that the increasing militarization of security forces through the use of military-grade equipment and tactics increases the risk of excessive use of force and undermines respect for human rights, with a particular impact on the rights of people of African descent.

In May the Commission took part in an expert consultation on reparations convened by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. On that occasion, scholars came together with representatives of civil society organizations and international agencies to discuss recent progress in international understanding about policies on reparation, particularly that of a financial nature.

- **Rights of LGBTI Persons:** In 2019, the IACHR released its report [Advances and Challenges towards the Recognition of the Rights of LGBTI Persons in the Americas](#), in which it develops issues relating to the responsibility of private business in building a culture of respect for LGBTI rights. In the report the Commission affirms that control over property rights ensures the possibility for LGBTI persons to fulfill their life plans and develop their personalities in accordance with their interests, desires, and convictions on an equal footing with all others.

In addition, at a meeting of the United Nations LGBTI Core Group, the Commission gave a presentation on progress and challenges in relation to the rights of LGBTI persons in the Americas. The IACHR also attended an audience granted by the Vatican on the impact of laws that criminalize same-sex relations and violence against LGBTI persons. Finally, in the context of its working visit to Uruguay, the Commission announced its concern over the approval of a possible referendum that could limit the rights of trans persons.



- **Rights of Indigenous Peoples:** In March 2019, the IACHR partnered with the office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) to organize the international seminar “Indigenous Peoples’ Rights to Autonomy and Self-Government As a Manifestation of the Right to Self-Determination.” The purpose of the event, held in Mexico, was to analyze experiences of indigenous peoples and regions with the recognition and exercise of autonomy and self-government as a manifestation of the right to free self-determination. Likewise, in June the Commission teamed up with the IWGIA and the Indigenous Organization of Antioquia to organize the seminar and workshop “The Inter-American System and Indigenous Women’s Rights in the Americas.” The event was held in Colombia and its aim was to present the principal standards developed by the inter-American human rights system on indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on the rights of indigenous women in the Hemisphere. Among other important rights promotion events, the Office of the Rapporteur attended an academic gathering in Trinidad and Tobago, in February, concerned with indigenous intellectual property rights, as well as a seminar in Mexico, in April, on the right to free, prior, and informed consultation and consent.
- **The rights of women:** The IACHR made a working visit encompassing several Caribbean countries to promote the Commission’s mandates, reinforce knowledge of the human rights protection and promotion mechanisms of the inter-American system, and strengthen dialogue with key actors working in the area of human rights in those countries. In that context, the IACHR visited Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and The Bahamas, where it held meetings with various state institutions, experts, and representatives of civil society to promote inter-American standards and the recommendations of the IACHR on eradicating violence and discrimination against women, girls and adolescents.

The IACHR also continued to consolidate its relations and joint work with other international and regional mechanisms for the protection and advancement of women’s rights, including the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, USA; a joint meeting of women’s rights mechanisms at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, at the invitation of the United Nations special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the thirty-eighth meeting of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and several meetings with the Inter-American Task Force for Women’s Empowerment and Leadership. At those high-level gatherings, the IACHR took part in technical meetings and promotional events as well as publishing joint pronouncements with those mechanisms.

- **Rights of migrants:** The Commission developed new standards on human mobility with its report on Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, which is in the process of adoption.

The IACHR also closed the consultation process for the Inter-American Principles on Migration, which elicited more than 50 contributions from States, scholars, independent experts, and civil society organizations.

- **Children and adolescents:** During the first half of the year, the Commission published its report on merits in Case 12.678 (Paola del Rosario Albarracín and family regarding Ecuador), in which it further develops its case law on the right to education free from violence, especially sexual violence. In that report, the Commission sets out measures that States should take to prevent sexual violence in schools.

➤ **Preparation and adoption of two thematic reports**

During the first half of 2019 the Commission approved the following two thematic reports:



**Table of thematic and country reports:**

Rapporteurship	Report Title
Technical Cooperation and Public Policies	Compendium of Inter-American Standards on Equality and Discrimination
Office of the Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child/ Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression	Children, Freedom of Expression, and the Media in the Americas

➤ **Three working visits and five promotional visits to eight countries in the region:**

**Table of working visits:**

State	Dates / Places	Topic(s) / rapporteurships
Uruguay	May 27 to 29	The situation of human rights in the country, particularly in relation to the issues of memory, truth, and justice; persons deprived of liberty; children and adolescents; women's rights; and LGBTI rights
Honduras	May 22 to 24	Implementation of the recommendations put forward by the IACHR in its preliminary observations on the visit made in 2018 The situation of Nicaraguans forced to flee Nicaragua
Costa Rica	May 19 to 21	The situation of Nicaraguans forced to flee Nicaragua

**Table of promotional visits:**

State	Dates / Places	Topic(s) / rapporteurships
Barbados	February 20 to 27	Women, children, and adolescents
The Bahamas	February 20 to 27	Women, children, and adolescents
Trinidad and Tobago	February 20 to 27	Women, children, and adolescents
Jamaica	February 20 to 27	Women, children, and adolescents
Haiti	June 3 and 4	Situation of human rights

➤ **48 hearings on monitoring and new human rights situations or to follow up on IACHR recommendations**



In the first half of the year, the Commission organized 48 public hearings in the course of its 171st and 172nd regular sessions, held in Bolivia and Jamaica, respectively. At those sessions the IACHR decided to expand and enhance the institutional framework in place for monitoring certain matters. Specifically, the IACHR decided to convert the Units on Memory, Truth, and Justice; on the Rights of Older Persons; and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into rapporteurships. In addition, the Office of the Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty will now have a mandate on preventing and combating torture, while the Office of the Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders will have a mandate on the situation of judicial operators.

It is worth mentioning that the 172nd regular session, held in Jamaica, was historic for being the first to be held in a CARICOM country in the Commission's 60-year history. In that framework, 27 public hearings were held both on regional issues and on the situation of human rights in 13 countries: Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Venezuela. The IACHR organized a promotional event on "The Inter-American Human Rights System and Access to Justice" at the University of the West Indies. A large number of people attended, including officials, scholars, civil society representatives, and members of the public.

➤ **Impacts on preventive measures and factors that lead to human rights violations with the issuance of 35 requests for information to 15 member states**

In the period covered by this report, the IACHR sent 35 letters requesting information from States in the region: Eight of the letters were dispatched under Article 18 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and 27, pursuant to Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights. The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression drafted five of the letters, largely concerning investigations into murders, abductions, and arrests of journalists, legislative processes concerning freedom of association, and freedom of information. Five of the letters were prepared by the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights. Through this mechanism, the IACHR addressed the situations of human rights in 15 of the region's countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and United States.

Of the letters sent whose response deadline expired, 21 were answered and 13 went unanswered, which represents a 61.8% response rate by States. In the period covered by this report, the IACHR took up the following issues: forced eviction of indigenous peoples, legislative processing of proposed laws on protection of life and the family, a national reconciliation law, forced sterilization, human rights of human rights defenders, reports of sexual abuse of detained migrant children, and situation of persons deprived of liberty.

➤ **106 press releases issued by the IACHR relating to monitoring of human rights in the region, individual countries, and priority issues for the IACHR**

The IACHR has expanded its ability to protect and promote human rights in the region, through this mechanism. In the first half of 2019, of the 163 press releases issued by the IACHR, 97 concerned its monitoring of the human rights situation in the region, individual countries, and priority issues for the IACHR, while 9 had to do with technical cooperation, promotion, and training activities. Through this mechanism, the Commission addressed the human rights situation in 17 countries of the region, either as a general situation, or with regard to particular issues and specific population groups in the country. It also dealt with issues such as forced eviction and internal displacement, migration policies that lead to the separation of children from their families, military involvement in citizen security and public order, sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls, the rights of LGBTI persons and of older adults, racial discrimination, the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, the right to freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, among others.



## **P6: Special Rapporteurships Program**

### **Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.**

#### **➤ Plan of action designed**

In carrying out its Plan of Action 2018-2021, the Office of the Special Rapporteur continued to implement projects concerning democratic governance, defense of the civic space, and challenges to freedom of expression online. Through the mechanisms of the IAHRs, the Office hopes to continue the progress made with the system of individual cases and petitions; to develop standards in the area of freedom of expression, their promotion, and dissemination to different actors; and to engage in continuous technical cooperation with OAS member states.

#### **➤ Inter-American standards disseminated and promoted**

The Office of the Special Rapporteur organized and participated in more than 15 events to disseminate inter-American standards on freedom of expression, as well as taking part in regional and international forums such as RightsCon in Tunisia, the OAS General Assembly, sessions of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the OAS Electoral Observation Mission to monitor the presidential elections in Panama, during which it advised the observation team, sessions of the Constitutional Court of Colombia, and other forums convened by digital platforms. The issues addressed included the Internet and freedom of expression with an emphasis on the phenomenon of disinformation in electoral contexts, censorship, and harassment of journalists, the use of criminal law, and challenges to freedom of expression from a regional perspective and, in particular, in Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

#### **➤ Effective monitoring of freedom of expression**

The Office of the Special Rapporteur also met important objectives in terms of monitoring the most serious situations in the Hemisphere. The Office of the Special Rapporteur published its report on the situation of freedom of expression in Cuba, the first special report of the IACHR on that country since 1983. It did so publicly in important settings: in Mexico City, accompanied by Cuban journalists and activists; and in Geneva, in the context of the forty-first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, alongside the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye. Similarly noteworthy was the publication of the report on the official mission of the Special Rapporteur to Ecuador, undertaken in conjunction with the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye. The report included a series of recommendations concerning legal and institutional reforms needed to strengthen freedom of expression and press independence in the country, which had been left in a weakened state following a period of harassment and attacks by the State. Finally, the Office of the Special Rapporteur accompanied other representatives and experts at the fortieth session of the UN Human Rights Council, where it addressed the issue of freedom of expression in Venezuela.

In May this year, the Special Rapporteur made an academic visit to Guatemala weeks before the presidential elections in June 2019, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) During the visit the Special Rapporteur met journalists, rights defenders, representatives of



community radio stations, and civil society organizations, among other actors. He also attended an open event on bots, netcenters and online harassment with representatives of CICIG, as well as meeting the President of the Electoral Tribunal and the Human Rights Ombudsman. At the end of the visit, the Office of the Special Rapporteur and the OHCHR issued a joint press release that mentioned the profound political polarization in the country and the risks posed to freedom of expression and democracy by the continual disparaging comments made about the press by presidential candidates.

### ➤ Thematic reports

As for the production of expert insight, the IACHR published the report *Women Journalists: Discrimination and Gender-based Violence against Women Journalists for Practicing their Profession*. The presentation of the report was attended by representatives of civil society organizations, journalist protection mechanisms in the region, and diplomatic missions to the OAS. The report, which has been presented to a number of legislative bodies in the region, was developed in coordination with the Office of the Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the IACHR and represents a milestone in terms of protection standards with a gender perspective.

The Office is also leading the process of developing a “Recommendations guide to guarantee freedom of expression and access to information from a variety of Internet sources during electoral processes without improper interference” in coordination with the OAS Department of Electoral Cooperation (DECO), in response to the mandate from the General Assembly contained in resolution AG/RES. 2928-XLVIII-O/18. The process, which began in 2018 with an open consultation to receive input, continued this year with the meeting of a panel of experts on disinformation in electoral contexts in Mexico City and an open event in the framework of the forty-eighth regular session of the OAS General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia. The process and the various forums have succeeded in striking a balance in terms of topics, geographical representation, and sectors concerned. Participants in the process include multilateral agencies, such as UNESCO, as well as civil society organizations, regional electoral authorities, private-sector representatives, and scholars. The Guide will be presented to the OAS Permanent Council in the second half of 2019 and will complement the efforts of this office to tackle this issue that began with the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and "Fake News," Disinformation and Propaganda issued with other rapporteurs in 2017. Other actions taken under this initiative include advisory services provided by the SRFOE to the OAS electoral observation mission during the presidential elections in Brazil and Panama.

Finally, the Office made progress with the drafts of four thematic reports. Three of them—*Children, Freedom of Expression and the Media* (adopted in February 2015); *Protest and Human Rights*; and *Access to Public Information and National Security*—will be presented to the IACHR in the second half of 2019;

The fourth report, *Corruption and Human Rights*, is being developed by the IACHR. The Office of the Special Rapporteur is advancing the draft chapters on corruption and freedom of expression, investigative journalism, access to information and transparency, and whistleblower protection. The report is framed by the Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAS member states at the Eighth Summit of the Americas held in Lima, Peru, in April 2018.

### ➤ Press Releases

The 16 press releases published so far in 2019 have been reposted by different media outlets around the world. Of those, five concerned murders of journalists in Mexico, Haiti, and Honduras. Five others had to do with attacks, threats, and intimidation against journalists and media outlets, including issues concerning restrictive



environments and censorship in Venezuela, Guatemala, and Brazil. The reports published, including the Country Report on Cuba, the 2019 Annual Report, and the Report on the Situation of Women Journalists in the region were also disseminated in this way. Announcements were also made about activities of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and the 2019 Joint Declaration.

In 2019, the Office of the Special Rapporteur made particular use of social media to disseminate press releases, information about promotion and training events, and standards developed, among other materials and instruments. The Office of the Special Rapporteur reaches 13,000 users on Facebook and Twitter. One challenge for this year has been to increase the level of engagement with audiences in order to have more influence on users interested in the exercise of freedom of expression and access to public information in the region. The posts with the greatest reach were those connected with the London 2019 Joint Declaration on freedom of expression, the call for applications for the Orlando Sierra Fellowship offered by the Rapporteurship, and announcements regarding activities such as the debate on crimes against honor in Peru, disinformation in electoral contexts in Colombia, and the presentation of the Cuba country report in Geneva, Switzerland.

In addition, the Office of the Special Rapporteur sent out 4 letters to States under Articles 18 and 41, requesting information on situations that could amount to violations of freedom of expression. Two of them were sent jointly with the United Nations Special Procedures system, in particular the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye; the Special Rapporteur on Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Clément Nyaletsossi; and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. The communications addressed structural situations surrounding violations of freedom of expression, such as impunity in cases of violence against journalists, restrictions on the right to freedom of peaceful association, and use of criminal law and pretrial detention against the activist Ola Bini; as well as new challenges, such as the use of surveillance systems by the State.

### ➤ Expert advisory services

In March, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression presented to the States and victims' relatives the Final Report of the Special Follow-Up Team (ESE, for the Spanish) established by the IACHR for the case of Javier Ortega Reyes, Paúl Rivas Bravo, and Efraín Segarra—two reporters and a media worker, respectively—who worked for the Quito-based *El Comercio* newspaper and were murdered on the Ecuador-Colombia border in April 2018. The Office of the Rapporteur is currently making arrangements for the public release of the report, scheduled for September 2019 and analyzing possible avenues of cooperation to follow up on the investigation. In addition to the visits made to Ecuador and Colombia and the hearings and working meetings held in 2018, in March this year a photographic exhibit of the work of Paul Rivas was organized at the offices of the IACHR. The exhibit served as a backdrop for discussions on conditions for investigative journalism in Ecuador and the day-to-day existence of people living on the Colombia-Ecuador border.

### ➤ Promoting strategic petitions and cases

The case of *Tulio Alvarez v. Venezuela*, which was referred to the Inter-American Court in January 2019, will provide an opportunity for the Court to advance inter-American standards on the use of criminal law to suppress freedom of expression and critical opinion, as well as on the criminalization of journalists and independent media. In relation to the system of petitions, the Office of the Special Rapporteur presented a report on admissibility (P-403-08, *Juan Carlos Tafur Rivera [Peru]*) that was adopted by the IACHR. The Office of the Special Rapporteur also submitted reports on merits in the cases of *Emilio Palacio Urrutia v. Ecuador* and *Carlos Baraona v. Chile*.



As regards the precautionary measures mechanism, in the period from January 1 to June 30, 2019, the Office of the Special Rapporteur collaborated in the examination of nine requests for precautionary measures, four of which were granted: **MC 75-19** (Honduras) José David Ellner Romero on March 21; **MC 250-19** (Venezuela) Luis Carlos Díaz and his family on March 29; **MC 1025-18** (Cuba) Manuel Alejandro León Velázquez et al. (Journalists of “Diario de Cuba”) on April 4; and **MC 399-19** (Nicaragua) Sergio Warren León Corea and family (Director General of “La Costenisima” in the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region) on June 15. Likewise, in May the IACHR presented a request for provisional measures to the Inter-American Court, seeking protection for 17 individuals deprived of their liberty in circumstances of extreme risk in Nicaragua. The beneficiaries included the Director and Press Chief of Canal 100%, Miguel Mora and Lucia Pineda, respectively. The Inter-American Court granted the request on May 21, 2019. The Office also took part in a working meeting on PM-75-19 (José David Ellner Romero regarding Honduras) at the IACHR session held in Jamaica.

### ➤ **Judicial operators trained in inter-American standards on freedom of expression**

In compliance with its projects for training judicial operators in inter-American freedom of expression standards, in 2019, the Special Rapporteurship, in partnership with UNESCO, provided training to 2,146 of the region’s judges in enforcing inter-American standards on freedom of expression through an online course based at the University of Texas (Austin), which benefits from the participation of current and former rapporteurs for freedom of expression and tutorials by a team of experts. This course was able to reach 9,000 judges of the Americas during the current mandate. With the exception of Cuba, all Ibero-American countries have participated in at least one edition of the course offered so far. This year marked the first time that someone from Portugal took part. Mexico and Peru continued to be the countries with the highest number of participants, followed this year by Ecuador. The content of the course was revised prior to the start of the current edition so that materials might reflect the latest decisions of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on freedom of expression, reports of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, domestic decisions considered by instructors as examples of good practice in the region, and UNESCO reports on the right to freedom of expression.

## **Office of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights**

### ➤ **Progress in the installation, positioning, and sustainability of the Office of the Special Rapporteur**

One of the main challenges facing the Office of the Special Rapporteur is to secure funding and its sustainability, since it is not allocated resources from the Regular Fund of the OAS to ensure its basic operational structure. Accordingly, the SRESCER has given attention to advancing the development and approval of funding proposals that it has promoted at numerous forums and meetings with prospective donors, allowing the Office of the Special Rapporteur to continue its work.

In the period covered by this report, it completed the implementation of a project to monitor the situation of social rights in Nicaragua in the context of the crisis brought about by the repression in the wake of the protests that began in April 2018. That project was sponsored by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. Near the end of April, implementation began of phase II of a project financed by the Spanish Fund



for the OAS, which decided to grant fresh funding to SRESCER after its positive appraisal of its performance during phase I.

In December 2018, the Office of the Special Rapporteur submitted a four-year funding proposal to the Norwegian cooperation agency for ESCER in Central America and Mexico. The donor approved the proposal and the arrangements for signing the relevant agreement are at an advanced stage. Considering the recent creation of the Office, the context of scarce resources, and the stiff competition for those resources, the fund-raising efforts of the Special Rapporteur have been a notable achievement. It is important to take into account that while the project constitutes a great contribution to the sustainability of the Office over a significant period of time, it is still insufficient to cover all its financial and operational needs. Accordingly, the Office of the Rapporteur continues to look for sources of funding and relies on the support of the Executive Secretariat and the IACHR itself, especially its leadership, in those efforts.

At the same time, the SRESCER continues publicly to promote its mandate and activities through regular and social media, including its own Twitter account and that of the IACHR. It also continues to pursue a fruitful agenda of contact meetings with States, public and private institutions, universities, rights holders, civil society, other OAS bodies, intergovernmental bodies, and donors.

➤ **ESCER promoted and mandate disseminated**

In the first half of 2019, the Office of the Rapporteur undertook a large number of promotional and academic activities in several countries in the region, focusing on various issues connected with its mandate. Notable were the following: Brown Bag Lunch organized at headquarters on Access to medicines and the right to health: the experience of community pharmacies in Chile (February 26); Organization of the meeting and presentation on progress on the Report on Human Rights and Business, prepared by the SRESCER, to the CAJP (March 7); participation in the meeting of the OAS Permanent Council for World Water Day (March 19); the Special Rapporteur participated and gave a presentation as a panelist at LATINOSAN, the region's premier water and sanitation forum, at the invitation of CAF (San José, Costa Rica, March 21 to April 7); training and promotional activities with representatives of civil society from Nicaragua and Costa Rica in relation to the situation of ESCER in Nicaragua and of asylum-seekers and people on the move at a meeting with a representative of the United Nations and the Foreign Ministry (San José, Costa Rica, March 21 to April 7); promotional visit to Honduras to hold meetings with asylum-seekers from Nicaragua and training activities with members of Honduran civil society (Tegucigalpa and Choluteca, Honduras, April 8 to 12); inaugural conference on current prospects in relation to economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights in the inter-American system (Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 30); a delegation negotiated and signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Office of the Ombudsperson [*Ministerio Público de la Defensa*] to form a strategic partnership on ESCER (Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 30); at the invitation of the Secretariat for Human Rights of Argentina, the SRESCER took part in the Regional Forum on National Plans of Action and Public Policies on Business and Human Rights, giving a presentation on the topic in the inter-American human rights system (Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 3 and 4); the SRESCER organized during the forty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly the open dialogue with states and civil society to discuss progress and challenges in the implementation of the Report on Poverty and Human Rights, which was attended by the President of the IACHR and held with the support of the Heinrich Boll Foundation, Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos, and Universidad Latinoamericana; the Office of the Special Rapporteur also participated in the event Human Rights and Business: Challenges in the Inter-American Context (Medellín, Colombia, June 26 and 27); recently, the Special Rapporteur undertook a fruitful mission to Geneva where she was invited to be a panelist at the side event "Keys to Understanding the Venezuelan situation: Analysis with a Human Rights Perspective on the Most Pressing Crisis in Latin America," organized by Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists (Geneva, Switzerland, July 8). In



the course of that visit, she held meetings with various heads of related bodies of the Human Rights Council, civil society, and officials from the UNHCHR, ILO, and DCAF, among other agencies.

During the period covered by this report, the Office of the Rapporteur has held meetings with various member states and observer missions to the OAS and with members of civil society organizations that work on issues connected with its mandate.

### ➤ **Monitoring the situation of ESCER in the region**

Since the start of its mandate, the SRESCER has been carrying out monitoring activities in close coordination with the teams of the IACHR Executive Secretariat, receiving and seeking information on the situation of ESCER in the region.

Worth noting in relation to those efforts are the following: (i) preparation/participation in seven press releases; (ii) dispatch of four letters under Article 41 and one letter under Article 18; (iii) technical support, generation of input, and participation in seven public hearings on ESCER at the IACHR sessions held in Bolivia and Jamaica during the period covered by this report; (iv) participation in the visit to Honduras led by Commissioner Joel Hernandez from May 22 to 24; (v) participation in the work and session of the Working Group on the Protocol of San Salvador from April 22 to 24.

### ➤ **Specialized contributions and opinions in the processing of petitions and cases**

The Rapporteurship also provided specialized assistance in the system of individual petitions and cases at all stages of proceedings before the IACHR. In addition, during the first half of 2019, the SRESCER provided specific assessments of ESCER topics in 18 reports on admissibility, 2 reports on merits, and 12 requests for precautionary measures; in relation to PM-1548/18 regarding Uruguay, it issued two technical opinions for direct evaluation by the IACHR.

The SRESCER also completed the request for an advisory opinion to the Inter-American Court on the subject of trade union freedom with a gender perspective, which was to be referred to the Court after the General Assembly. It is worth noting that at the 171st regular session of the IACHR, held in Sucre, Bolivia in February 2019, the SRESCER presented the request of the IACHR for an advisory opinion to the Inter-American Court, which provisionally approved it. After the SRESCER subsequently included the comments of the Commission, the final version of the request was approved in late April 2019 and it is currently awaiting referral to the Court.

### ➤ **Thematic and country reports**

#### **- Report on Business and Human Rights Inter-American Standards**

At the 172nd regular session of the IACHR held in Kingston, Jamaica in May 2019, the SRESCER presented the report *Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards* to the IACHR, which provisionally adopted it. Subsequently, the SRESCER included comments made by the Commission, made final consultations with the monitoring teams and the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and concluded the drafting of the report for approval and translation. Work on the design of the report's cover began in June. The report has been finalized and will soon be submitted to the IACHR for adoption.

#### **- Compendium of labor rights**



In June 2019, the SRESCER finished the first draft of the report compiling standards on labor rights. The draft is currently under internal review with the public policy and technical cooperation section of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR.

**- Joint reports with other rapporteurships**

The SRESCER partnered with the rapporteurships for persons of African descent and indigenous peoples on the preparation of questionnaires and indicators for two reports concerning protection of the ESCER of those vulnerable populations. It also took part in the process of hiring the consultant to draft the general report on ESCER and people of African descent; provided input for the participation of the delegation from the Executive Secretariat at the meeting with Swiss cooperation official in Costa Rica; and participated in the preparatory work for the report on ESCER and indigenous peoples in the Northern Triangle.

**- Sections on ESCER for the country reports on Honduras and Brazil**

In the period covered by this report, the SRESCER completed the drafts for the sections pertaining to its mandate to be included in the reports on the on-site visits made to Honduras and Brazil in 2018. It also drafted a memorandum on Brazil in connection with the main government reforms and causes for concern with respect to ESCR for inclusion in the report of the IACHR to the Secretary General.

## **P7: Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI)**

In order to have a more effective impact on critical situations and expand its protection measures, the IACHR strengthened its internal rapid and integrated response mechanisms designed to avert possible rights violations and protect those potentially at risk by creating and monitoring rapid and integrated response coordination units for Brazil and Honduras, which were visited in 2018; and for Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

The IACHR also activated a SACROI to attend to the situation in Haiti and, as part of the steps that it took, visited that country on June 3 and 4, 2019, to foster dialogue between government authorities and civil society on the situation of human rights in the country and to identify opportunities for collaboration with the IACHR. It also reactivated the Unit for Guatemala in order to allow close monitoring and a timely response to the requests for precautionary measures presented and the situation of human rights in the country.

Following the visits in 2018, the Unit has continually monitored Honduras and Brazil in order to keep across the requests for precautionary measures received, complete the country reports, and identify petitions received and cases being processed in relation to the main issues addressed in the preliminary observations from the visits.

With respect to Venezuela, the IACHR strengthened the unit set up in 2017 to monitor human rights in the country. Additionally, the SACROI met to identify petitions at the admissibility stage and cases at the merits stage, which were procedurally ready for respective report preparation and, as a priority, to carry out the initial processing of petitions received.

Is important to note the challenge posed by the serious human rights crisis that has unfolded in Nicaragua in relation to the violence that began on April 18, 2018. In that connection, the IACHR installed a SACROI to devote particular attention to the human rights situation in the country. Steps taken by the Commission include a working visit from May 17 to 21, 2018, in order to make an on-site observation of the situation of human rights in the country, document the facts, and offer initial recommendations in its Preliminary Observations. The IACHR



also published the report *Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua*. The IACHR has installed two special investigation and monitoring mechanisms: the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), whose results are described below in this report.

The results seen in the first half of the year confirm the importance of this tool. The IACHR has succeeded in bringing its influence to bear in a timely and effective way on one of the most serious human rights crises in the region, coordinated the efforts of its various offices, and prepared its visits with a broad scope and consistent with the needs of each country.

## **P8: Integrated Information Analysis and Management Platform (IIAMP)**

The purpose of this platform is to consolidate a unified approach by the IACHR to gathering, recording, analyzing, managing, and producing information. In order to better carry out its work in a context of limited resources, the Commission plans to build strategic alliances with observatories and other key actors.

The IACHR continues to work to raise funds for the implementation with the Technology Unit of the various management and computer systems components of the IIAMP.



# SO3

**To promote democracy, human dignity, equality, justice, and fundamental freedoms based on an active contribution to the strengthening of State institutions and public policies with a human rights approach in accordance with inter-American norms and standards and to the development of the capacities of social and academic organizations and networks to act in defense of human rights.**

## Results Achieved

- Providing advisory services and technical cooperation to States in order to strengthen State institutions and public policies with an enhanced human rights-based approach, increasing the number of presentations before the OAS political bodies to 17 for the first semester.
- Strengthening of promotional and training activities in relation to the IAHRs, with 720 people trained on 25 courses and workshops in 9 different countries and participating in 66 promotional events in 15 countries.
- Reinforced advisory services and technical cooperation to Central America for strengthening institutions and public policies with a human rights perspective
- Successful holding of a Roundtable on Transitional Justice with the Justice Sector in El Salvador.
- Advisory services in relation to human rights to member states through 17 presentations to OAS political organs.
- Mechanisms for collaboration and social participation with academia and civil society implemented and expanded. Receipt of 60 applications in response to the invitation to establish an academic network specializing in the inter-American system.
- Technical cooperation relations strengthened with the signing of seven agreements with different institutions.

The IACHR has managed to consolidate its activities in training, promotion, and campaigns to promote human rights thinking and culture in the region, fostering greater understanding about the IACHR's mandate and inter-American human rights standards among persons using the inter-American human rights system (IAHRs). The IACHR received more than 7,000 applications to attend courses on public policies on human rights and on the strategic use of the IAHRs.



In the first half of 2019, the Commission continued strengthening its collaboration with Central American countries through the Project on Democracy and Human Rights in the Northern Triangle, in particular with respect to standards on forced displacement and on the right to work. Progress was made on the implementation of the Special Plan for Collaboration with the Caribbean. It also strengthened its collaboration with academia and civil society.

In that respect, all programs made progress, and this makes it possible to state that implementation of this strategic objective has been satisfactory.

## P9: Expanded Program for Training and Promotion of Thought and Culture on Human Rights

### ► Promotion and training on the IAHRs

The IACHR has geared promotional and training activities toward inter-American human rights standards, which have been created through the system's doctrine and jurisprudence. The purpose of this is to provide deeper insight and promote greater understanding among members of civil society, networks of social actors and the Member States about the scope thereof, and to the extent that it is pertinent, about application and incorporation thereof into decisions, legal frameworks and public policies with a human rights-based approach.

In the first half of 2019 IAHRs promotion and training activities in the Hemisphere were strengthened. During that period the IACHR organized 25 training courses in 9 countries in the region. The training covered approximately 720 people and addressed such topics as the inter-American system and its human rights promotion and protection mechanisms; public policies with a human rights approach; inter-American standards on rights defenders, indigenous peoples, migrants, children, women, LGBTI persons, ESCR, and transitional justice among other issues.

The countries reached were Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States.

In the context of the same program, the IACHR took part in 66 promotional events in 15 countries in the region.

In the context of training activities as a whole, in 2019, the following professional development activities should be highlighted:

**§ IACHR/IPPDH International Course on Public Human Rights Policies:** The aim of the International Course on Public Human Rights Policies, which was jointly organized by the IACHR and the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH), is to train and build up the capacities of relevant actors in the Americas in relation to a rights-based approach in public policy. The course, which was taught by both IPPDH and IACHR instructors, drew 109 participants from 22 countries. The working subjects were democracy, development and human rights, public policies with a human rights-based focus, regional systems and the Inter-American protection system, equality and non-discrimination and information production.

The first joint addition of the course concluded on February 15; 72 percent of participants passed, took part in the on-site week, and obtained their diploma.



A new edition of the course, announced in May and scheduled to begin in the last week of July, attracted a total of 4,021 applications. The 100 participants for the new edition of the course were selected at the end of June. As with the previous year, this year's course will include an optional on-site week in Washington, D.C. in September. The course is intended for government officials responsible for public policy design, direction, implementation, and evaluation; members of civil society organizations and movements, academics, and the general public.

### **§ Training Course for Human Rights Defenders on the Strategic Use of the IAHR**

The IACHR organized the first edition of the Training Course for Human Rights Defenders on the Strategic Use of the Inter-American Human Rights System in collaboration with the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. 60 human rights defenders from 22 countries in the region were selected from the 2,953 applications received. The course, which is scheduled to start early in the second half of the year, will cover the situation of rights defenders in the Americas, the petitions and cases system, the precautionary measures protection mechanism, the friendly settlement process, the monitoring role of the IACHR, and follow up on its recommendations.

The second stage of the course will consist of course participants replicating what they covered in the first stage with their communities and organizations, thereby building up the capacities of at least another 600 human rights defenders in the Americas by reinforcing their knowledge of the inter-American human rights system and inter-American standards.

### **§ Virtual and on-site training on the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua**

In the first half of 2018, seven virtual training workshops on the mechanisms of the IACHR and standards of the inter-American human rights system in relation to transitional justice were held for three organizations from Nicaragua, covering 60 participants overall.

In addition, on-site training courses on the working mechanisms of the IACHR and international standards on migration and asylum were held for civil society organizations from Nicaragua in Costa Rica, in Miami, and at the headquarters of the IACHR, reaching 72 participants.

The on-site training events were as follows:

- Training workshop on international standards on migration and asylum at the headquarters of the IACHR on February 25.
- On-site training on transitional justice and precautionary measures in San Jose, Costa Rica on May 20 and 21
- On-site training: Introduction to the inter-American human rights system
- and its protection tools in Miami, USA on June 18

### **§ Training workshop on inter-American standards on migration and labor rights**

Three training workshops were held as part of the “Regional Human Rights and Democracy Project,” which is being jointly implemented with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and receives funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Two workshops were held in Honduras on April 10 and 11: one for 30 members of the technical team from the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH); the other for 30 judiciary officials.



Another workshop was held in Guatemala on April 24 and 25 for 30 members of the technical team from the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson.

The topics addressed at all the workshops were inter-American standards on migration and internal displacement and inter-American standards on economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, with an emphasis on labor rights.

According to the evaluation surveys on the three workshops, an average of 98 percent of participants said that their knowledge of the subject matter addressed had increased.

It is also important to mention the following training courses held for representatives of civil society organizations:

- Seminar on the Inter-American system and Indigenous Women's Rights in the Americas, held in Colombia
- Webinar on Women in War: Stopping Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Workshop-seminar on strategies against discrimination with a focus on prevention of large-scale atrocities: LGBTI persons, held in Costa Rica
- Training course on the IAHRs for Cuban activists, held in Trinidad and Tobago
- Training course on Rights of Migrants, held in Mexico
- Training workshop: Introduction to the Inter-American System and Its Protection Instruments, held in Chile

### ► **Promotional activities of the rapporteurships**

In the first half of 2019, the IACHR held or was invited to participate in a large number of promotional activities and events. Overall, the IACHR organized or participated in a total of 66 promotional activities in order to disseminate the standards of the inter-American human rights system (IAHRS) and build up the capacities of public officials, organizations and networks of social actors and scholars to protect the human rights, in at least 15 countries in the region. Many of these activities were undertaken with other stakeholders, consolidating the collaboration with civil society organizations, regional and international institutions, and states. The activities took place in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Germany.

## **P10: Program for Attention and Collaboration with Central America and the Caribbean**

The IACHR has been implementing an impact strategy pursuant to its mandates to move forward in providing technical cooperation in the area of development and human rights with the States of the Caribbean and Central America, as well as to carry out special projects with emphasis on the crosscutting pillars of the Strategic Plan. In this context, the following detailed information is provided:

### ► **Project on Democracy and Human Rights in the Northern Triangle**

The IACHR has been implementing the Regional Project on Democracy and Human Rights since 2016 jointly with the PADF. It has developed a plan of promotion activities based on three pillars: (i) Training for ombudspersons



and public officials; (ii) Training for civil society organizations that engage in litigation activities; (iii) Promotion of inter-American standards on human mobility.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the public institutional framework with a human rights approach in the countries of the Northern Triangle: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In that connection, during the first half of the year, three two-day training workshops on internal displacement and labor rights were held in Honduras and Guatemala, attended by approximately 90 officials from the countries' national human rights institutions and the judiciary of Honduras. The purpose of the training was to help strengthen knowledge of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights with an emphasis on labor law. The training also covered norms and standards on migration and internal displacement in the inter-American human rights system for key local actors responsible for protection of human rights in the countries of the Central American Northern Triangle. As part of the project the IACHR is also implementing a technical cooperation program on transitional justice in El Salvador.

### ➤ Technical support to El Salvador in transitional justice processes

In the context of the abovementioned project of Democracy and Human Rights, the State of El Salvador, through the Technical Executive Unit of the Justice Sector, requested technical support from the IACHR to promote capacity-building of the Justice Sector in El Salvador, in carrying out processes of transitional justice in that country.

It should be mentioned that said request was made in the context of a ruling by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court finding the Amnesty Law unconstitutional in 2016. Thus, in collaboration with the PADF, the IACHR has worked to add an annual component on transitional justice to the original Project of Democracy and Human Rights. In that connection, on April 24, the Commission successfully held a Roundtable on Transitional Justice with the Justice Sector of El Salvador. The Roundtable was attended by the Coordinating Commission for the Justice Sector and approximately 70 judicial officials. The purpose of the event was to exchange views and reflect on progress and challenges in the implementation of inter-American human rights standards on transitional justice in El Salvador.

### ➤ Advisory Service for Caribbean Affairs

In this section, it is important to note that there has been significant progress in the implementation of the Collaboration Plan with the Caribbean. Contact was established with various institutions in the Caribbean in the first half of the year. They include the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) of Jamaica; the Jamaica Constabulary Force at the level of the Office of the Commissioner of Police of Jamaica; CARICOM headquarters; the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados; and the University of Technology of Jamaica, with a view to reaching cooperation agreements, among other objectives.

The Commission also worked to identify and build up contacts at universities and schools in Haiti, with the aim of initiating negotiations on cooperation agreements. The IACHR has also received information on quasi-state institutions in St. Lucia, to which it has sent correspondence.

In response to a request from a member of Caribbean civil society, the Secretariat is currently in the process of planning an online seminar on the subject of hearings.

In addition, as part of the preparations for its 172nd regular session in Jamaica, the IACHR organized a meeting with a group of CARICOM ambassadors and permanent representatives to the OAS. The Commission also held a



videoconference with members of the Caribbean media community just before the 172nd regular session. The purpose of the videoconference was to involve Caribbean news media in the work of the IACHR and encourage their coverage of the 172nd regular session in Jamaica.

## **P11: Technical Cooperation Program on Institutions and Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach**

Through this program, activities were carried out in 2019 to expand and strengthen relations with OAS member states, facilitate technical assistance and cooperation on human rights for any State entities that so requested and for the OAS political organs. Concretely, progress was made in establishing diplomatic-institutional dialogue groups, in cooperating in order to strengthen State institutions on human rights and national human rights plans, in coordinating with national justice systems, Public Prosecutor's Offices and Ombudsman's offices and in creating closer ties to national and autonomous human rights institutions.

### **➤ Technical and Public Policy Cooperation with States**

The IACHR marked its sixtieth anniversary with a solemn event in Medellín, Colombia on June 25, 2019 in the framework of the forty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly. The act of commemoration was attended by delegations from at least 19 OAS member states, permanent observers, more than 30 organizations and social movements, activists, scholars, international experts, victims of human rights violations, and members of the public. In that context, a panel discussion was held to reflect and discuss the new horizons for international human rights law based on an analytical examination of the subject in the universal and regional systems. Events commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the IACHR will continue in the second half of 2019. Events planned include a solemn act of commemoration in September in Chile, the country that in 1959 hosted the Fifth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which ordered the creation of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Celebratory events will also be held in Argentina as well as in the context of the third meeting of the Forum of the Inter-American Human Rights System, which is to be held in Ecuador in November. In addition, in commemoration of this important anniversary, the IACHR launched Canal CIDH, a website with up-to-date, accessible multimedia productions about the Commission's activities.

The program on public policies with a human rights approach saw progress in terms, not only of production of inputs targeting public policy shapers, but also of the consolidation of links for provision of technical assistance, support for the institutional strengthening strategies of states, and cooperation activities with other institutions. The Report on Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach is also close to publication. The report offers general guidelines on public policy formulation from a human rights perspective and aims to serve as a working and reference tool for officials in the region's countries in charge of public administration and institutional frameworks.

Likewise progress was made with the design of technical cooperation working proposals with different government institutions in Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Haiti. The aim of the technical cooperation mechanism, consolidated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021, is to support national efforts for the advancement of human rights and the design of public policies from a human rights perspective. Of particular notes during the first half of 2019 was the technical support provided in relation to LGBTI rights, protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, support for the implementation of national human rights



plans and social participation mechanisms, and access to rights for vulnerable and historically discriminated-against groups.

➤ **Advisory services in human rights to member states**

One of the functions of the IACHR is to provide advisory services in human rights to states; these services are offered, among others, through IACHR interaction with the political bodies of the OAS: the General Assembly and the Permanent Council and its committees, particularly the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). In that connection, the IACHR gave presentations to the Permanent Council on the implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the execution of the Regular Fund budget, as well as on its work in relation to Nicaragua and Venezuela. The IACHR also presented its 2018 Annual Report to the OAS General Assembly and organized 17 bilateral meetings during the forty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia, in addition to meetings to review portfolios of cases and petitions with States that have so requested and meetings with representatives of member states and permanent observers.

In that regard, it is important to note the importance of the participation of the IACHR in the meetings of the Permanent Council concerning Nicaragua, as well as on developments in the humanitarian situation in Venezuela. Just as it did in 2018, the IACHR continued to play a central role by providing the political bodies of the OAS with technical input on the decisions of member states. As a result of those efforts, it is worth mentioning the resolutions adopted by the Permanent Council and the General Assembly of the OAS which insist on the need for the Government of Nicaragua to permit the IACHR and its mechanisms to visit the country. There was a significant increase in presentations made by the IACHR to the political bodies. In the first half of 2019, the IACHR gave 17 presentations to the OAS political bodies, compared with 23 presentations in the whole of 2018.

In addition, States have shown a continuing interest in holding meetings to review their respective portfolios of petitions, cases, precautionary measures, friendly settlements and recommendation follow-up. In the first half of 2019, four meetings were held with the following states: Uruguay (April 1), Canada (April 17), Ecuador (May 16 and 17), and Colombia (June 4 and 5).

## **P12: Program on Social Participation and Contribution to Capacity Building for Actions by Social and Academic Organizations and Networks in Defense of Human Rights**

➤ **Periodic channels of dialogue with civil society and the academic sector**

In the first half of 2019, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expanded and deepened civil society participation in all its activities, including public hearings, consultations, training workshops, and bilateral and multilateral meetings, among others.

At its 171st and 172nd sessions, held in Bolivia and Jamaica, respectively, the Commission met with inter-American civil society organizations to gather information on the human rights situation in the region and to hear their concerns. Holding sessions away from headquarters has increased access to the IACHR for civil society organizations from different parts of the region, expanding the role of actors involved in the inter-American human rights system.



In that connection, dozens of civil society organizations from Bolivia and other countries in the region took part in 24 public hearings held during the 171st session. The hearings concerned the situation of human rights in 12 countries: Chile, Haiti, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela. In addition, a general meeting with civil society was held that drew 478 participants from almost 100 civil society organizations from Bolivia and other countries in the region, including important representations of peasant farmers, indigenous communities, students, members of the LGBTI community, women, children and adolescents.

At the 172nd session the IACHR welcomed members of civil society at 27 public hearings and more than 20 working meetings. The session also featured a general meeting with civil society that drew a large turnout, democratizing access to the IACHR.

Even so, new spaces were created in order to increase that participation. For example, a promotional event on “The Inter-American Human Rights System and Access to Justice” was organized at the University of the West Indies and attended by officials, scholars, and civil society.

Multiple meetings were also organized with civil society in the course of the working visits. During its visits to Barbados, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Costa Rica the IACHR not only met representatives of the State and international organizations, but also members of civil society and community leaders. The meetings served to establish a dialogue and identify future lines of work around topics of major concern in each country. In addition, during the working visits to Uruguay, Costa Rica, Honduras, Argentina, and Haiti the Commission met representatives of civil society, victims' relatives, and scholars, providing it with in-depth information about the situation of human rights in the various countries.

As for thematic reports, as pledged the IACHR has given high priority to holding public consultations in order to gather input and comments from all relevant actors and the general public. Two consultation processes were held for purposes of preparing thematic reports. One of the consultations was for the report on corruption and human rights; the other, to provide input for the joint report with the OHCHR on the situation of human rights defenders in the region, in the framework of the two institutions' Joint Action Mechanism.

For its part, the Office of the Rapporteur on Memory, Truth, and Justice invited civil society organizations, States, and other users of the inter-American human rights system to participate in its second public consultation held in Bolivia in the context of the 171st session. Apart from receiving input for identifying priorities in the area of memory, truth, and justice, the aim of the consultation was to receive contributions for a preliminary working document prepared by the Office of the Rapporteur on principles and best practices in memory policies in the Americas, developed on the basis of proposals put forward by civil society during the first consultation.

The IACHR also held meetings with civil society organizations in Latin America in Geneva, Switzerland, in the framework of the fortieth and forty-first sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council. At those meetings, which were attended by more than 30 organizations, the IACHR was represented by Commissioner Joel Hernández and Special Rapporteurs Edison Lanza and Soledad García Muñoz.

- **Specialized academic network in the inter-American System, agreements with academic research centers on the IAHRs**



To continue implementing its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, in the context of its sixtieth anniversary the IACHR decided to deepen its links and cooperation partnerships with academic bodies throughout the region. Accordingly, in the first half of the year the Commission convened a Specialized Academic Network for Technical Cooperation to provide technical support for its work, particularly through its rapporteurships. As a result of the invitation, the IACHR received more than 60 proposals to support the work of its 13 rapporteurships and recommendations follow-up section.

➤ **Technical cooperation relations strengthened**

With regard to strengthening technical cooperation relations, in the first half of 2019 the IACHR signed seven cooperation agreements. Three of those agreements were with universities in the region: Buenos Aires University Law School, Andean Region University Foundation in Colombia, and University of Monterrey, Mexico. It is also worth noting that it signed a technical cooperation agreement with Oxfam to promote the use of the inter-American human rights system and its standards and to strengthen its institutional capacities. Likewise, the Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Judiciary of Honduras to carry out joint activities and projects for promoting national frameworks and policies on prevention of forced displacement and on protection of persons displaced by violence, refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons. The IACHR also signed a Framework Cooperation Agreement with the Secretariat for Human Rights of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to enable technical cooperation and professional exchanges by which officials from the Human Rights Secretariat would provide support services to the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. Also worth highlighting in this connection was the signing of a special cooperation agreement with Argentina for the joint implementation of triangular cooperation programs with other OAS member states in the framework of the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender expression and promotion and protection of LGBTI rights.



# SO4

**To promote the universalization of the Inter-American Human Rights System through coordinated initiatives with the Inter-American Court, and to cooperate with other international, regional, and sub-regional human rights agencies and mechanisms.**

## Results Achieved

- Collaboration with the United Nations bodies expanded through information sharing and participation by their members.
- Collaboration expanded with the Mercosur Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH)
- Implementation with the OHCHR of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas broadened.
- Institutional cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights strengthened.

During the first half of 2019, the IACHR continued to make progress with structuring collaboration programs with the United Nations, in addition to launching or advancing initiatives with regional and subregional agencies. Likewise, the Commission strengthened its institutional cooperation with the Inter-American Court, with which work began on the organization of the third meeting of the Forum of the Inter-American Human Rights System.

Although challenges remain where universalization of the system is concerned, given the significance of the progress made, it is fair to say that implementation of this objective has been highly satisfactory.

## **P13: Cooperation and Coordination Program with the Universal Human Rights System and other international agencies**

### ➤ **Collaboration with the United Nations expanded and strengthened**

In 2019, the IACHR has deepened its collaboration with the United Nations human rights system on a number of fronts. It continued to move forward with a number of different practices: it submitted input for the Universal Periodic Reviews of Bolivia and El Salvador; it hosted representatives of the OHCHR and UN special rapporteurs and other officials, who participated in 11 hearings at its 171st and 172nd sessions; and it held coordination meetings with UN agencies.

During the same period, 10 press releases were published jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights or special mechanisms of the UN system. Among other things, the press releases demanded justice for the murder of a female human rights defender in Brazil, welcomed the judgment



granting protection for internally displaced persons in Mexico, and regretted violent incidents in the context of recent demonstrations in Honduras over the adoption by the country's National Congress of the Law on Restructuring and Transformation of the Health and Education Systems. The press releases also expressed concern about the disappearance of Venezuela migrants, the continuity of acts of violence and intimidation against human rights defenders in the Americas, and the adoption of the Comprehensive Victim Assistance Law in Nicaragua.

In addition, on International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia (IDAHOTB), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and two human rights experts from the United Nations urged States and civil society actors to take the necessary steps to prevent and counter all forms of promotion that amount to incitement of violence, hostility, and discrimination toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex persons and to ensure their right to a life free from all forms of violence.

On May 3, UNESCO, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights organized a celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Latin America. The celebration included a series of panel discussions open to the public at the seat of the Inter-American Court, in which renowned journalists, jurists, and international activists discussed, primarily, how the Internet functions and its impact on the right to seek, receive, and share information.

### ➤ **Advocacy at the United Nations Human Rights Council expanded and strengthened**

In the period covered by this report, the IACHR engaged in a number of advocacy efforts with the United Nations human rights system. Specifically, at the fortieth session of the UN Human Rights Council it participated in discussions and side events focusing on the serious human rights situations in Nicaragua and Venezuela.

For the first time, the IACHR took part in the high-level segment of the session, on February 27, where Commissioner Joel Hernandez delivered a presentation that focused largely on the situation in Nicaragua. The IACHR also participated in the interactive debate of the Human Rights Council on March 7 with comments about the situation in Nicaragua. Furthermore, on March 19, the IACHR held a side event on the situation in Nicaragua and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), in which 18 delegations from the Americas, Asia, and Europe took part.

Commissioner Hernandez also participated as a speaker at two other side events, both on Nicaragua. One of those events, titled "The human rights crisis in Nicaragua: an analysis based on the findings of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE)" took place on March 5. It was organized by Amnesty International and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). The other event, organized by Human Rights Watch, was held on March 7. Its title was "The role of the Human Rights Council in ending the human rights crisis in Nicaragua."

On March 21, 2019, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 40/2, "Promotion and protection of human rights in Nicaragua," in which it expressed grave concern at the serious human rights violations and abuses since April 2018; called on the Government of Nicaragua to release all those arbitrarily or illegally detained; regretted the decision by the Government of Nicaragua to suspend the mission of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI); and called upon the Government to resume its cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner, the Organization of American States, and the IACHR.

In the period encompassed by this report the technical areas responsible for follow-up on the recommendations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR opened a dialogue with a view to sharing information, methodologies, and good practices. The



Commission also sent input for the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs) of El Salvador and Bolivia. Discussions were held with the Americas Department of the OHCHR on the review of the UPR of Nicaragua (which begins in May), in order to finalize joint advocacy strategies, so that the recommendations of States may take into account the monitoring work and recommendations of the IACHR in the context of its two mechanisms: GIEI and MESENI.

At the forty-first session of the Human Rights Council, the IACHR was represented by the Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression and on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights, Edison Lanza and Soledad García Muñoz, respectively.

## **P14: Program of Coordination and Complementarity with Regional Systems and Sub-Regional Mechanisms in the Area of Human Rights**

### **➤ Collaboration continued with the Mercosur Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH)**

The IACHR continued its collaboration with the IPPDH, with which it jointly completed the **International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights**. The last stage of the International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights was held in Buenos Aires from February 11 to 15, 2019. The course has space for 100 participants and targets state officials responsible for public policy design, direction, implementation, and evaluation; members of civil society organizations and movements, academics, and society at large. In May, the Commission announced an invitation for applications for a second edition of the course, which will be held during 2019 and for which there are 100 places.

The course is an initiative of the International School of the IPPDH and IACHR. Its principal objective is to train strategic actors from the public sector and civil society organizations with the aim of helping to strengthen public policies on human rights in the Hemisphere.

## **P15: Mechanism of Protection for Human Rights Defenders in the Americas (with the OHCHR)**

### **➤ Progress with the Mechanism's implementation**

During the first half of 2019 the IACHR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued their combined efforts under the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas. In the framework of the Mechanism, in March training was provided to human rights defenders in the city of Chihuahua, Mexico.



Several joint press releases have been issued under the Mechanism. In those press releases the IACHR and the OHCHR have expressed concern about violence against human rights defenders during the first four months of the year in a number of the region's countries. They also spoke out about violent incidents that occurred in Honduras in the context of recent protests in the health and education sectors. A press release was also put out regarding possible abridgments contained in the new criminal code adopted in May of year, including restrictions that would violate international and Inter-American human rights standards.

During the visit to Honduras in June this year, the OHCHR joined the IACHR at various meetings with members of civil society organizations and indigenous leaders to address the situation currently faced by human rights defenders in the country.

## **P16: Program for the Universalization and Coordination of the IAHRs with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights**

### **➤ Institutional Cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights**

On June 27, 2019, the officers of the IACHR and the President of the Inter-American Court met in the framework of the forty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia. At the meeting they continued their dialogue on cooperation between the two bodies and held preparatory talks for the third meeting of the Forum of the Inter-American Human Rights System, which will be held in Quito, Ecuador on November 6 and 7.



# SO5:

**To guarantee the human resources, infrastructure, technology, and budget necessary for full implementation of the mandate and functions of the IACHR by means of results-based institutional management for efficient, effective, and measurable institutional development.**

## Results Achieved

- Collectively drafted work environment improvement plan under implementation
- Communications capacity strengthened with the launch of Canal CIDH.
- Increased geographic representation of the staff of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR maintained
- Financial sustainability plan under way
- Public presence of the IACHR expanded in the region's countries
- Regular Fund budget and specific funds increased
- Communicational capacity of the IACHR strengthened
- Technological innovation in progress

The IACHR has successfully maintained the performance that it achieved in the area of institutional management in 2017 and 2018, as well as making progress with regard to institutional communications and strengthening. With respect to technology and systems, although it has made incremental progress, additional resources need to be mobilized if it is to meet the Program 18 objectives.

The IACHR has received the second third of its doubled Regular Fund budget, and the General Assembly has approved the 2020 budget, finalizing that doubling.

## P17: Institutional Management and Development Program

### ➤ Strengthening the organizational structure

During the period covered by this report, the competition processes were completed for filling 8 of the 11 new positions approved in the IACHR budget for 2018. The process of obtaining final approval for the appointment of the 3 other positions is ongoing. In addition, the competition was announced for filling six new positions approved in the 2019 budget at P-2 level. The appointments for those positions are in the process of approval. Furthermore, through two internship sessions coordinated with the Department of Human Resources of the OAS General Secretariat, a total of 54 interns were incorporated in the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. In March the 2019 announcement was published for 5 fellowships to be awarded to young professionals from OAS member states in order to learn about and apply the protection mechanisms of the Inter-American human rights system. So far, the Fellowship on LGBTI Rights has been awarded, and in July two fellows will be selected for the

Fellowship on Human Rights Defenders. Thanks to support from the University of Monterrey, Mexico, the SRESCER received a fellow who will join the team for the remainder of the year.

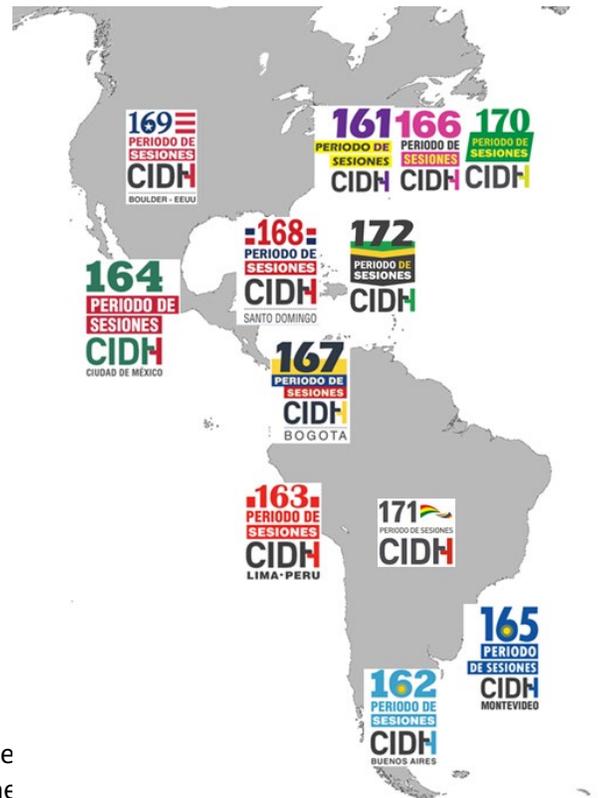
➤ **Implementation of the collectively drafted work environment improvement plan in progress**

During the first half of the year the Work Environment Committee, a group comprising staff and consultants of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, continued the activities envisaged in its work plan. The Work Environment Committee took on new members to work on new initiatives in 2019. An Open Door Policy was implemented, whereby personnel have the opportunity to meet with the Executive Secretary to raise topics of interest to them. A suggestions box was installed and meetings were held with the Ombudsperson to work jointly with her on ways to improve the working environment in the Executive Secretariat.

➤ **Expanding the IACHR’s public presence in the region through roaming sessions**

In the first half of 2019 the IACHR has held two sessions at different locations in the region, thus facilitating engagement with civil society and States. The sessions held in 2019 are outlined in the table below:

Session	Location	Date	Number of public hearings	Working meetings
171st	Sucre, Bolivia	February 7 to 16, 2019	24	30
172nd	Kingston, Jamaica	May 3 to 10, 2019	27	23



Two years after the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan began to be implemented, public presence throughout the region, having held sessions in nine

➤ **Accountability to donors**

Preparation and delivery of 17 midterm or final narrative reports on 12 projects financed by the following 9 donors: UNHCR, Germany, ARCUS, Canada, United States (3), Spanish Fund (4), SRESCER- Nicaragua, Afro-



descendants, MESENI, GIEI), Netherlands, PADF (2 quarterlies), Switzerland 3 (visit to Honduras, GIEI, Regional Program in Central America).

### ➤ Communicational capacity of the IACHR strengthened

The IACHR continued to strengthen its communicational capacity by means of a multiplatform strategy. On one hand, the IACHR kept its [website](#) permanently updated and upgrades to it were encouraged. A new section for [Follow-up of Recommendations](#) made by the IACHR to OAS member states was created in order to encourage observance of human rights. This reporting period saw the design and launch of an interactive multimedia [micro site](#) on Recognition of the Rights of LGBTI People in the Americas along with a [graphic campaign](#) that was publicized on Twitter and Facebook. The Commission also unveiled a [micro site](#) on the **Situation of Human Rights in Venezuela**, which was supported by a publicity campaign on social media platforms and launched in [Spanish](#), [English](#), and [Portuguese](#). Just as it did in 2018, the IACHR website continued to attract a high number of visits, reaching 1.7 million in the first half of 2019. 21 percent of users connected from Mexico, 12 percent from Colombia, 8 percent from the United States, 8 percent from Argentina, 8 percent from Guatemala, 7 percent from Brazil, 5 percent from Peru, 4 percent from Ecuador, 3 percent from Chile, and 2 percent from Venezuela, as well as lower visit percentages from other countries. The most-visited sections of the webpage were the [multimedia site](#) on the country reports in Guatemala in 2016, with 50,000 visits; and the petitions and cases portal, with 32,000, confirming the usefulness of the content provided for system users.

With its 163 press releases the IACHR reported on its main activities and observations regarding protection and promotion of human rights in the Americas. The most viewed press release (7,200 visits) was [No. 17/19](#) put out on January 25, 2019, concerning the granting of precautionary measures to Juan Guaidó in Venezuela. The second most-visited press release (6,000 visits) was [No. 113/19](#), issued on May 13, 2019, announcing the call for applications for the International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights.

The IACHR continues to use social media to disseminate information on its work and raise awareness about inter-American standards. On Twitter the IACHR added more than 63,800 new followers in the period from January 1 to June 30, 2019, closing it with a total of 502,305 followers on its @cidh account. As for Facebook, the number of followers rose from 525,606 to 535,951 in the period under review.

In the first half of 2019, the IACHR's Twitter reach produced 35.6 million impressions. The most viewed tweet was *CIDH reúne Sala de Situación y da seguimiento a los acontecimientos que se están registrando hoy en #Venezuela. Ante presencia de colectivos armados en las calles, hace un llamado a la protección prioritaria a la vida, a libre manifestación y condena todas las formas de violencia* (April 30, 358,792 impressions). The second most viewed was *La #CIDH condena la represión de la Policía Nacional en #Managua y en otros puntos de #Nicaragua. El Estado debe cesar ataque a periodistas y manifestantes que se expresaban hoy pacíficamente por la liberación de presos políticos, y debe dar información sobre detenidos y heridos*, (March 16, 305,674 impressions). The most successful Facebook [post](#) concerned the campaign for the report "Recognition of the Rights of LGBTI Persons," which was seen by 175,000 people and elicited 20,000 interactions and more than 2,300 comments on the original post and its shares.

During the first half of 2019 the IACHR took the opportunity presented by holding its session in Jamaica to reach out to Caribbean media outlets about its work. To that end, the IACHR organized a videoconference with members of the Caribbean media community just prior to its 172nd session. The purpose of the videoconference was to encourage local media to cover the 172nd session in Jamaica.



In the context of the celebrations to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Commission's new multimedia team launched [Canal CIDH](#) in May. *Canal CIDH* (or IACHR Channel) is a multimedia platform for showing information videos produced to a high aesthetic standard about the activities of the Commission around the Americas.

The Canal CIDH site is organized into sections and the Commission's main areas of work. The video series [Tenemos Derechos](#) (We Have Rights) tells the stories of victims of human rights violations in different parts of the region. In the section [Entrevistas y Reportajes](#) (Interviews and Reports) the site periodically publishes articles about inspirational figures and events in the region, such as, for example, an [interview with the President](#) of the IACHR, Esmeralda Arosemena, and an [article about the Bolivian girls](#) who organized against sexual exploitation in that country and conquered the hearts of everyone at the 171st session held in Sucre, Bolivia in February this year. The site contains informational videos on all the [Sessions of the IACHR](#) held since the 169th session in Boulder, Colorado, up to the last session held in Jamaica, in May this year.

Another important contribution that Canal CIDH makes in terms of disseminating information about the IACHR is the [Interactive Map on Precautionary Measures](#), where site visitors can consult the measures in force since 2013 along with a geographical reference for each one. The Precautionary Measures and Canal CIDH teams are currently working on making available previously granted precautionary measures as well as updating the map to include those awarded more recently.

This month will also see the release of a series of videos dealing with follow-up on the precautionary measures granted by the Commission. The IACHR was in Costa Rica to supervise the implementation of the precautionary measures granted to the Bribri and Terraba people, and the channel released a [video on its activities](#). The Canal CIDH team was also in La Guajira, Colombia, shooting a video on the implementation of the precautionary measure granted to the Wayuu indigenous people. The new video is currently under production and scheduled for release in the coming weeks.

The site also has pages devoted to the [special follow-up mechanisms](#): MESA (Ayotzinapa) and MESENI (Nicaragua). The pages contain videos on the mechanisms' activities as well as reports and other relevant documents.

## P18: Program of Technological Innovation Applied to Human Rights

### ➤ Systems requirements defined

In a bid to better harness information and communication technology solutions to increase productivity, reduce manual working costs and personnel hours on manual tasks, and encourage sustainability and support for the Commission's core business, the Technology and Systems Section is working on a technical needs analysis and providing technological advisory services to study ways to enable swift implementation of a Recommendations Monitoring System (SIMORE) in the Organization. The aim is to integrate working processes at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels in order to enable anyone who approaches IACHR to use this tool which will bring enormous advantages for follow-up on recommendations of the IAHRs.



In follow-up to the work on the design of an electronic voting system to facilitate discussion and decision-making for the Commission and Executive Secretariat, we have developed a system blueprint. This management information system blueprint will enable us to identify the advantages, scope, functionalities, and operability of the system once it is finished. Having been reviewed by the Commission, approval was given for the blueprint to proceed to the development phase with support from DOITS.

Automated information gathering systems were also rolled out, enabling receipt of hearing requests for three sessions; submission of applications for five fellowships; participation in the public consultation on corruption and human rights for the preparation of a thematic report; and receipt of applications for the training course for human rights defenders on strategic use of the inter-American system.

➤ **Technological innovation implemented**

Over the last six-month period an additional multimedia room with videoconference capability was set up at the headquarters of the IACHR. The room is equipped with various leading-edge technologies, including facilities for projecting presentations, audio conferences, smart boards, and collaboration tools. This will enable virtual proximity to the Commission's members as well as users of the inter-American human rights system.

➤ **Updates and upgrades of existing tools**

Heeding the feedback offered by users of the individual petitions portal, member states, and civil society, we have introduced functionalities to enable them to see the procedural status and processing of cases in chronological order. In addition, the most recent procedure will be automatically displayed upon entering the portal, and the letters associated with the procedure and annexes will be displayed only for the most recent procedure. The letter's addressee, whether the petitioner or the state, will be displayed alongside each letter. Finally, users will be able to access a help message describing the changes and providing them with guidance about the new functionalities mentioned.

We are working to implement a new module specific to precautionary measures within the individual petitions portal. Thus, upon lodging a petition the beneficiary should complete the form with specific data for a precautionary measure and the system will automatically update our central systems with the information. We are currently working on the final trial phase of this new module for the portal. The precautionary measures request form is being created in the four official languages of the Organization. We are conducting tests, troubleshooting problems, revising texts, and monitoring the module's interaction with the other IACHR systems already in place and the corresponding equipment in the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. Finally, after presenting this new tool internally we will roll it out for users of the individual petitions portal.

## **P19: Financial Sustainability Plan**

➤ **Increase in Regular Fund budget approved**

The second third of the increase in the Regular Fund budget approved for the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, totaling US\$9,367,400, was disbursed in 2019. The 2018 and 2019 increases have enabled the IACHR to continue consolidating its administrative structure and expanding its capacities.



In the first half of 2019, the Executive Secretariat worked with member states and the OAS General Secretariat on the presentation of the proposed program-budget for 2020. The budget approved for the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR for 2020, which includes the last phase of the doubled budget, was US\$10,627,900. The program-budget of the Organization for 2020 was approved at the forty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly held in Medellín, Colombia, from June 26 to 28, 2019.

➤ **Fundraising Committee set up**

Although the Committee did not meet during the period covered by this report, in keeping with the methodological recommendation it made at its last meeting, on June 20, 2019 an accountability roundtable was held with the donors that financed MESENI, in which the officers of the IACHR and its Executive Secretary took part. The meeting was attended by 13 representatives of the various donors, including the European Commission, Spain (2), United States (4), Switzerland, Luxembourg (2), the Netherlands, and Freedom House (2). The attendees expressed thanks for the information, noted the progress, reaffirmed their support and, in some cases, expressed interest for the planned next steps for the MESENI.

➤ **Financial Sustainability Plan with prospects for the diversification of sources**

The Executive Secretariat of the IACHR continued the process of implementing the different components of the financial sustainability plan, particularly with respect to the communication strategy (see communication program) and enhancing donor accountability processes, as mentioned.

The Executive Secretariat also continued fundraising efforts as part of the funding diversification strategy to be implemented in 2019 and 2020. To that end, in the first half of 2019, the Executive Secretariat drafted six concept papers (two concerning rights of indigenous peoples, Switzerland-Central America, United Kingdom, Defenders, two for the Spanish Fund 2019-2020) and seven funding proposals for presentation to donors (Belgium-MESENI, Spanish Fund-Defenders, Spanish Fund ESCER-II, ARCUS, Balearic Islands, PADF-Nicaragua, Freedom House-Venezuela). The proposals presented to the Spanish Fund and for ARCUS were approved and their execution has started. The project proposal submitted to the Balearic Islands has been approved. We are currently developing the detailed project document for Switzerland.

## **P20: User Assistance Center**

In the first half of 2019, the User Assistance Center (AUC) continued consolidating the efforts made towards the end of 2018, the year it was established. In the first half of 2019, the AUC reported the following progress.

➤ **Mapping and standardization of flows, procedures, and processes**

The user assistance mapping and diagnostic assessment began with telephone assistance. The result was the identification of users' most frequently asked questions, the stages/areas that concentrated the greatest demand for information, and the response capacity of the IACHR. Armed with that information, a proposal was presented for strengthening telephone assistance to users.



Simultaneously, the internal flows and procedures for receipt, classification, entry, or distribution of information received by the IACHR were redesigned. Implementation also continued of various forms and fact sheets referenced in the previous report.

To date, the AUC has drafted a "Document Digitization Guide" which complements the "IACHR Content Digitization Protocol." In addition, the "Petitions and Precautionary Measures Registration Manual" is also being revised and updated. The "User Assistance Manual" is currently being reviewed and edited and is expected to be implemented in the second half of 2019. The Manual contains basic user assistance guidelines in different modalities (in person, by telephone, and in writing).

In the first half of the year, around 15,544 communications received via the official CIDH Denuncias account were reviewed and classified. 3,955 documents presented in hardcopy have been digitized and entered into the Document Management System (DMS), as have 18,346 documents submitted digitally. Furthermore, more than 17,000 additional information files were entered automatically via the Portal. In all, the AUC has entered more than 39,300 files in the DMS.

#### ➤ User assistance and response increased

During the period covered by this report, 465 users were attended to via email. Appointment scheduling has been implemented for users who wish to come to our offices. This has had a significant impact on the quality of information and assistance provided, as it allows advance notice of the topics that the user wishes to address, enabling us to gather the necessary information to attend to the request and set aside an appropriate place for the meeting. 371 users have been attended to in person.

Through the increased contact with users, significant efforts have been made to divulge and promote the Individual Petitions System Portal. This has brought an increase in the number of subscribers to the Portal, in which more than 700 new users have registered.

The AUC handled the logistics coordination for two sessions of the IACHR: the 171st held in Bolivia and the 172nd held in Jamaica, at which it coordinated user assistance and receipt of documents.

In addition, the maximum wait time for the registration of petitions and precautionary measures has been maintained at four and two days, respectively. During the first half of the year 1,802 petitions and 666 requests for precautionary measures were registered. Implementation continues of an alert system to warn other sections of the Secretariat about matters whose nature warrants their attention as soon as possible.

#### ➤ Training for AUC personnel carried out

So far, 10 training sessions have been held for AUC personnel. The training has covered the use of the Individual Petitions System Portal, use of IACHR operating systems (Document Management System and Petition and Case Management System), and procedures at the Initial Review, Admissibility, and Merits stages.



# P21

## Special Program to Follow-up on IACHR Recommendations

### Results Achieved

- General Guidelines for Follow-Up on Recommendations and Decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights presented to the IACHR
- Proactive follow-up strategy for published cases implemented, results overview published, and increase in response levels by parties and in implementation of recommendations
- In 2019, 7 working meetings, 5 portfolio meetings with States, and 12 meetings with petitioners on cases with reports on merits published were held
- Recommendations Follow-up page set up on the IACHR website
- Follow-up methodologies established or refined in 2019
- 2018 results overview for the special recommendations follow-up mechanisms published
- Technical Support Group (GAT) for the Ayotzinapa Case installed in Mexico City in the new stage of the Follow-up Mechanism (MESA)
- Report of the Working Groups for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic included in the 2018 Annual Report of the IACHR, with a follow-up strategy for the activities of the working group at the national level defined
- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) in operation at headquarters and results overview presented
- Dialogue with the State of Honduras for establishment of a Special Technical Advisory Group for implementation of the human rights recommendations of the IACHR
- OAS General Assembly resolution on promotion and protection of human rights recognized the efforts of the IACHR to put into operation the Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE) as part of its Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
- Progress with the blueprint for the IACHR Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE) and rounds of dialogue held with national monitoring systems.
- Progress with the follow-up report on compliance with recommendations set forth in published merits reports on discrimination and violence against women and children
- 21 press releases concerning follow-up published
- 4 official follow-up visits made in 2018
- 13 promotional activities and 10 trainings carried out, covering a total of 115 people

In 2019, the IACHR has made important strides with the development and refinement of methodologies for follow-up on its recommendations as well as for verifying the level of compliance and ownership of commitments given by States in relation to human rights. In that connection, the 2018 Annual Report was



reformulated to include several methodological innovations, including new classification criteria on level of compliance for individual recommendations; the chapter on follow-up on recommendations in individual cases in the Annual Report was reformulated, highlighting progress and challenges during the year, with separate follow-up fact sheets prepared for each case; a new analysis methodology was developed for levels of compliance with recommendations contained in country reports in the framework of the Annual Report (Chapter V), with set, transparent analysis criteria; there was an increase in the number of recommendations follow-up actions with a view to developing consensualized road maps for implementing recommendations; progress was registered in levels of compliance by States with recommendations in published cases at the follow-up stage. In addition, the IACHR advanced its draft General Guidelines for Follow-Up on Recommendations and Decisions in order to ensure access and transparency in relation to mandates, methodologies, criteria, and procedures used in the follow-up on the recommendations issued by its various mechanisms. Furthermore, to coordinate actions and share good practices, the IACHR strengthened its linkage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as with academic networks and civil society. To that end, 13 promotional activities were carried out, as were 10 trainings for community leaders, representatives of civil society, and students in the region.

The IACHR is also committed to the consolidation and creation of special recommendations follow-up mechanisms and the [dissemination of their results](#), as evinced by the creation of the Technical Support Group (GAT) for the Ayotzinapa Case installed in Mexico City as part of the new stage of the Follow-Up Mechanism (MESA); the new national stage of the Working Group to Monitor the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic; the new phase of the [Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua \(MESENI\)](#); and dialogues for the establishment of new roundtables and cooperation mechanisms with States to follow up on implementation of IACHR recommendations, such as with Honduras and Haiti, for example. Through its Special Follow-Up Mechanisms the IACHR offers an innovative and appropriate way to help countries in the region to meet their international obligations and implement its recommendations under inter-American norms and standards on human rights. The IACHR is also developing the Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE), which will have access to an information database containing all the recommendations issued by the IACHR through its various mechanisms. The importance of that system was acknowledged by the Organization of American States in the framework of its General Assembly in 2019.

### ➤ **Developments in the follow-up on IACHR recommendations**

Since January 2019, the Recommendations Monitoring Section of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR has been developing new technologies and products for recommendations follow-up. By way of example, we can mention:

#### ➤ **Memorandums and thematic studies** on the preparation:

- Concept paper for the report on the *Impact of the Recommendations Formulated in Reports on Merits of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on Protection of Women, Female Adolescents and Girls from Violence and Discrimination* adopted by the IACHR. Report under preparation.
- Memorandums compiling recommendations on El Salvador, United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and Uruguay prepared for visits to those countries.
- Memorandum prepared for a study on the implementation of recommendations contained in published reports on merits in relation to 2018.



- Study on Domestic Systems for Implementation of IACHR Decisions: A Best Practices Guide, under preparation.
- Project proposal for the IACHR Impact Observatory under preparation.
- 2019 plan for Program 21 approved and under implementation.
- **Recommendations Follow-up page** published on the IACHR website:  
<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/activities/follow-up/default.asp>
- **General Guidelines for Follow-Up on Recommendations and Decisions** of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights developed for approval by the IACHR
- Work is underway on the internal protocol for follow-up on recommendations for analyzing individual cases of the IACHR in accordance with Article 48 of the Rules of Procedure.
- In the context of its work in **partnership with universities**, the Commission has also been collaborating with a project to prepare **IACHR case law fact sheets** in relation to reports on merits and friendly settlements, in which it is working with the **Democracy and Human Rights Institute of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (IDEHPUCP)**. In addition, as part of its cooperation with the **Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law**, based in Heidelberg, Germany, the Commission is pursuing two research studies on the impact of the inter-American human rights system. The IACHR has also reached out to the Academic Network to collaborate in the **IACHR Impact Observatory project**.
- In addition, the IACHR has been strengthening its coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the National Institutions Network for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the American Continent on this subject matter in order to coordinate actions and exchange best practices on recommendation monitoring.
- **Promotional and training activities in the area of recommendations monitoring**

In 2019, the Commission organized or took part in 13 promotional activities and training events for State officials, ombudspersons, community leaders, civil society, and academic networks in the region.

- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández during the high-level segment in the framework of the forty-first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on February 27, 2019.
- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández at the side event *“The human rights crisis in Nicaragua: an analysis from the findings of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts”*, organized by CEJIL and Amnesty International in Geneva on March 5.
- Remarks by Commissioner Joel Hernández at the Interactive Dialogue following the address by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the context of the fortieth session of the Human Rights Council.
- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández at the side event *“Human Rights Crisis in Nicaragua: The Suppression of the Rule of Law”* organized by the International Network of Human Rights in Geneva on March 13, 2019.
- Panel discussion on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua organized at the headquarters of the IACHR in Washington, D.C., on March 22, 2019. Participation by Commissioner Antonia Urrejola; the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrao; the Assistant Executive Secretary, María Claudia Pulido; and the Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Edison Lanza.



- Participation by the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrao in the side event “*Rights, Retaliation, and Repression in Nicaragua – Political prisoners, human rights abuses and accountability*” regarding the situation of human rights violations in the context of the crisis, in Geneva on April 4, 2019.
  - Presentation on the ad hoc and follow-up mechanisms of the IACHR (IGIEs and Special Mechanisms) at the workshop “International Mechanisms in Support of Domestic Law Enforcement and Justice Institutions: Against the Criminality of Power in Latin America” held on May 5 and 6, 2019, at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law, in Freiburg, Germany.
  - Presentation on the actions of the IACHR in relation to “Corruption and Human Rights” at the 190th Ibero-American Colloquium: Impact of Corruption on Human Rights, held at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, Germany.
  - Panel discussion on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua organized in Miami, Florida, on June 17, 2019. Participation by the President of the IACHR, Esmeralda Arosemena; Commissioner Antonia Urrejola; and the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrao.
  - Donors’ conference to present an overview of the activities and results of MESENI, organized in Washington, D.C., on June 20. Participation by the President of the IACHR, Esmeralda Arosemena; Commissioner Antonia Urrejola; Commissioner Joel Hernández, and the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrao.
  - Presentation on the work of the IACHR to follow up on recommendations, given on June 20, 2019 at the annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.
  - Presentation of the documentary film “Home Truth” about the story of Jessica Lenahan and her struggle for justice that gave rise to the landmark case of domestic violence at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on June 25, 2019, in Washington, D.C.
  - Participation by Commissioner Antonia Urrejola in the side event *¿Hacia dónde va Nicaragua? Retos y desafíos ante la grave crisis de derechos humanos*, organized by CEJIL in Medellín, Colombia on June 26, 2019.
- **Follow-up on cases with reports on merits published (Article 51)**

During the period covered by this report, the Recommendations Follow-Up Section analyzed information resented by parties regarding the implementation of recommendations made in cases with published reports on merits (Article 51), pertaining to the 104 cases at the recommendations monitoring stage. **Chapter II.G.4. “Status of compliance with Recommendations Issued in Mertis Reports,”** was prepared as part of the 2018 Annual Report, including individual follow-up fact sheets for each case, in which the IACHR, for the first time, classified the level of compliance recommendation by recommendation and identified the individual and structural results reported by the parties. In relation to the [2018 Annual Report, the following results are worth highlighting](#):

- Five cases progressed from pending compliance to partial compliance.
- The implementation advanced of 24 recommendations and 14 clauses of compliance agreements signed by the parties, with the following results:
  - A. Total compliance with 11 reparation measures;
  - B. Substantial partial compliance with 10 reparation measures;
  - C. Partial compliance with 17 reparation measures.



- There was a more than 200-percent increase in response levels, leaping from an average of 20 responses in 2017 to more than 60 in 2018, on the part of both States and petitioners, particularly in cases involving the region's Anglophone countries.
- The Commission notes in particular the financial reparation and satisfaction measures implemented by the State in the case of Valentín Basto Calderón, a peasant farmer leader who was a victim of extrajudicial execution (Case 10.455, Report No. 45/17, Colombia); the payment to the victim's mother of a sum of money to purchase a home in the case of Paloma Angélica Escobar Ledezma, regarding the disappearance and subsequent murder of a 16-year-old girl (Case 12.551, Report No. 51/13, Mexico); the expunging of the criminal record of the victim in the case of Dayra María Levoyer Jiménez, who was deprived of liberty for more than five years without a court order (Case 11.992, Report No. 66/01, Ecuador); and the order to conduct further DNA tests on four evidence exhibits in the context of the clemency request for the victim in the case of Kevin Cooper, who has been on death row in the State of California since 1985 (Case 12.831, Report No. 78/15, (United States)).

**In 2019, the IACHR has undertaken the following activities:**

- **7 working meetings** to follow up on reports on merits published (Art. 51) during the 171st and 172nd sessions of the IACHR (three of them ex officio).
- **5 portfolio meetings** with the States of Belize, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay at which 15 published reports on merits (Art. 51) were reviewed.
- **Bilateral meetings with 12 petitioners** (on-site and by videoconference) at which 14 published reports on merits (Art. 51) were reviewed.
- Sent **206 letters containing requests for information** to the parties to prepare the 2019 Annual Report, as well as devising a methodology for parties to submit information.
- **2 follow up press releases.**
- **8 memorandums** analyzing follow-up on cases submitted to the IACHR.
- Preparation of **indicators on cases.**

**Some significant statistics and indicators**

- **103 cases under follow-up** (of a total of 113 published)
- **22 countries** with reports on merits under follow-up
- **12.5 years** is the average length of the follow-up stage

**Level of compliance of published reports on merits – 2018 Annual Report**

Category	Number of Cases	Level of compliance
Total compliance	9	8.26%
Partial compliance	82	75.23%
Pending compliance	18	16.51%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Levels of compliance of recommendations in published reports on merits – 2018 Annual Report**

Category	Number of recommendations	Level of compliance
Total compliance	84	19.5%
Substantial partial compliance	19	4.4%
Partial compliance	104	24.1%
Pending compliance	212	49.3%



Non-compliance	12	2.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ➤ Inter-American SIMORE

The Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE) is based on a tool developed by Paraguay for systematizing international recommendations on human rights made to the country and allows public access to information on measures taken by the State to comply with and implement recommendations. The system features a civil society participation tool. In 2019, the IACHR has been working on the system's blueprint and methodological documents.

It is worth noting that at its regular session **in 2019, the OAS General Assembly adopted a resolution on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights** recognizing the efforts of the IACHR to put into operation the Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System (Inter-American SIMORE) as part of its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (AG/CG/doc.2/19 rev. 1/2019). The resolution also urged member states to strengthen their institutional capacity to follow up on and implement the decisions and recommendations of the inter-American human rights system and to consider the use and development of monitoring systems, such as SIMORE, among other mechanisms to which member states are party, while promoting the exchange of experience and best practices.

Additionally, the IACHR engaged in dialogue and meetings to learn about the **national recommendation systems of other States** in order to identify best practices in the region, exchange experience with respect to recommendation systems and explore the possibility that the IACHR recommendations be incorporated into these systems, as in the case of **Guatemala's SIMORE and Honduras' SIMOREH**.

### ➤ IACHR recommendations database

Additionally, as part of the System's development stage under the Plan of Action of the Strategic Plan, the IACHR systematized the recommendations database by defining common categories, the information gathering and classification method based on **search criteria and a recommendations classification system**. Recommendations issued in the different IACHR mechanisms and instruments were gathered, and were broken down as follows:

- **4,758 recommendations compiled:**
  - 448 recommendations from reports on merits published since 2001
  - 2,158 recommendations from thematic reports published since 1998
  - 1,469 recommendations from country reports published since 1998
  - 683 recommendations from reports published in Chapter IV.B of the Annual Reports since 1998

The Recommendations Monitoring Section also updated the portfolio of cases with reports on merits under Article 51 of the American Convention published since 2001 in order to include the four reports published in 2018. The Section also performed a mapping of the cases with reports on merits published prior to 2001 on information had been received from the parties in the last 10 years, which amounted to 110 cases concerning 15 countries.



➤ **Special Follow-up Mechanisms**

➤ **Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA), Mexico**

In the first half of the year, the Special Follow-Up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA) initiated its activities under the 2019 Work Plan, the purpose of which is the continued implementation of the Mechanism and strengthening of cooperation and technical assistance. The Plan was adopted following an agreement reached with the representatives and the new Mexican administration. One of the Plan's innovations is the creation of a **Technical Support Group (GAT, for the Spanish)**, formed by the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR and with a permanent presence in Mexico.

Since its creation, GAT has attended six meetings of the Presidential Commission for Truth and Access to Justice in the Ayotzinapa Case. The Group has also held meetings with that Commission's technical team and presented the recommendations included in the Final Report of MESA published in November 2018. The Group also met with representatives of beneficiaries, relatives of the missing students, civil society organizations, and officials involved in implementing the recommendations put forward by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and MESA.

The permanent presence in Mexico of the GAT allowed a closer dialogue with the parents of the missing students and more frequent interlocution with officials, representatives, and civil society organizations involved with the precautionary measure, in order to follow up in closer detail on the recommendations regarding the search, investigation, assistance to victims, structural measures, and measures to prevent repetition.

The mechanism was also present at the relaunch of the National Missing Persons System (*Sistema Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas*). MESA also took part in working groups at the invitation of the National Search Commission. The Mechanism also continues to examine the criminal investigation file in order to follow up on compliance with the recommendations in that regard.

**Some results**

**Search**

- GAT followed up on the search activities and plans reported by the Presidential Commission, as well as on the use of Lidar technology for those purposes.
- GAT participated in the reporting on the activities of the National Search Commission in this specific case.

**Investigation**

- GAT read the criminal investigation volumes provided by the State up to volume 667, which contains procedures relating to statements from various officials allegedly involved and requests for information to federal and state authorities on C4 and telephone records, as well as procedures regarding the Strategic Operations Center (COE) and the Urban Joint Operations Bases (BOMUS).
- The group was present at the procedures advanced by the Presidential Commission.
- The Mechanism sent a letter to the State regarding the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Ayotzinapa.

**Assistance to Victims**



- The GAT was at meetings with the Executive Commission for Services to Victims (CEAV) and the organizations involved in the victim assistance plan in order to learn about the plan's implementation roadmap.
- MESA followed up on the plans for implementing the Assistance Protocol for the nine urgent cases sets out at the meetings of the Presidential Commission, in coordination with the representatives and health officials.
- The Mechanism also traveled to Ayutla de los Libres to visit Aldo Gutiérrez and verify his health care conditions.
- The Mechanism held meetings with the CEAV on progress made with the care provided to Aldo Gutiérrez and Andrés Vargas, both students wounded on the night of September 26-27.

#### Structural measures

- GAT took part in the working groups convened by the National Search Commission to Develop a Standard Search Protocol.
- The Group participated in meetings on the Special Forensic Identification Mechanism with OHCHR and FUNDAR personnel.
- On April 8, 2019, GAT was present at the public ceremony at which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights signed an agreement with the Mexican State for the provision of technical assistance in the Ayotzinapa case.

#### Press Releases

- The IACHR issued a [press release](#) on the official visit and presentation of the 2018 Final Report and the 2019 Work Plan.

#### Official Visits

- On March 11, 2019, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño made an official visit on the part of the Mechanism to present the 2018 Final Report and the 2019 Work Plan.

#### Visits by other commissioners

- On January 15, 2019, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño and Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva attended the launch of the Truth Commission for the Ayotzinapa Case.
- On March 24, 2019, Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva attended the relaunch of the National Missing Persons System.

#### ➤ Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic established

In 2018 the IACHR installed the Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic, which held two meetings with the State and civil society to follow up on recommendations and commitments made in relation to the acquisition of nationality, migration, policies to combat all forms of discrimination, and policies on women's rights and gender equality. The Working Group is a



complementary tool to the process of follow-up on the recommendations about the situation of human rights in the Dominican Republic.

In 2019 the IACHR presented a follow-up report on the issues addressed by the Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic ([Chapter V of the 2018 Annual Report of the IACHR](#)) and on the recommendations set out in its country reports regarding acquisition of nationality and migration, policies to combat all forms of discrimination, and women's rights. The progress and pending challenges of the working group were analyzed in that report, which appreciated that over 2018 the Dominican State had carried out several actions aimed at engaging in talks with the IACHR to find solutions to the critical situations raised in chapter. Among those actions, the IACHR particularly underscored the installation of the Working Group on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic. However, the IACHR also found that a number of tasks and challenges had yet to be tackled in order to fully implement the measures it has recommended.

On January 25, 2019, the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the Organization of American States sent the IACHR a note containing the commitments adopted by the Dominican State as a result of the Working Group, including activities for 2019: 1. A meeting with civil society in April 2019. 2. To respond halfway through the year to a human rights questionnaire from the IACHR. 3. A training on human rights for public officials imparted by the IACHR. 4. The presentation of a year-end report in Washington to explain the country's progress in terms of human rights. In follow-up to those commitments, the State provided information to the IACHR about a meeting held with civil society on May 23, 2019, as well as progress made in conjunction with the IACHR on the preparation of training courses scheduled for August 2019. The IACHR sent the questionnaire to the Dominican Republic in July.

### ➤ **Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI)**

The IACHR installed MESENI on June 24, 2018 in order to follow up on the recommendations based on the IACHR's visit to Nicaragua, including the Commission's [Preliminary Observations](#) and its [report](#) "Serious human rights violations in the context of social protests in Nicaragua." Among other things, MESENI is monitoring compliance with precautionary measures granted in this context, in favor of people whose life or physical integrity is in serious danger, and will continue monitoring the human rights situation in Nicaragua in keeping with the IACHR's mandate.

In spite of the fact that on December 19, 2018, the State of Nicaragua announced its decision to suspend permission for MESENI to be in the country and for the visits of the IACHR, the Special Mechanism continues to monitor the situation of human rights in Nicaragua from the headquarters of the Commission in Washington, D.C., as well as through working visits to other countries in the region to which Nicaraguans are fleeing to escape repression and seek international protection.

Since its installation, MESENI has been technically rigorous in its task of monitoring and consolidating information recorded, analyzed, and published by the IACHR on Nicaragua. To that end, the IACHR considers and compares different sources of information, particularly the figures and reports gathered by civil society organizations whose mission is to defend human rights, information reported by the media, and that documented by the State, as and when this is made available.

On June 24, 2019, after MESENI had been in operation for one year, the Inter-American Commission presented a [Performance Report](#) on its results and impact. In that report, the IACHR valued the outcomes of the steps taken to protect the rights of Nicaraguans, preserve the historical memory of what happened in Nicaragua, and support the efforts of the victims and their relatives to obtain the truth, justice, and reparation.



Some results of the semester

➤ **Monitoring of the Human Rights Situation**

Through MESENI, the IACHR is articulating a strategy to provide a sustained, timely response to the current human rights in the country. During this period, the IACHR has sent the state of Nicaragua **four requests for information** on the specific situation of victims of state repression and **one Article 41 letter** relating to the situation of people who are being deprived of their freedom. Likewise, in the first half of 2019, the IACHR also held **three hearings (two public and one private)** to gather specific information on human rights violations in the country.

In the first half of 2019, as part of MESENI’s work, the IACHR made **three working visits** to monitor the situation of Nicaraguans who have been forced to flee their country. Commissioner Joel Hernández visited Costa Rica and Honduras from May 19 to 24, 2019. Subsequently, on June 17 and 18, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, President of the IACHR, and Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, rapporteur for an irregular, made a visit to Miami, in the United States.

As a result of the visits and its work at headquarters, MESENI has gathered a total of **132 testimonials** so far in 2019. In turn, those testimonials have been essential for preparing reports and reporting on the grave situation the country is experiencing. In this regard, the IACHR has issued **18 press releases** on the unfolding of the current human rights crisis in Nicaragua to alert the international community to what is going on there.

➤ **Collaboration and training**

In the first half of 2019, MESENI continued its work to strengthen the capacities of Nicaraguan civil society with regard to international human rights standards. In that connection, the IACHR carries out a program of in-person and online training sessions on the mechanisms and standards of the IAHRs. It also provides training in matters relating to truth, justice, and reparation with organizations such as Asociación de las Madres de Abril. Against the backdrop of the adoption of the amnesty law in Nicaragua, the training sessions have contributed to the work of these organizations based on ownership of international standards on the subject and the recommendations of the Commission.

In the course of 2019, MESENI has held a total of **10 training sessions** covering a total of **115 beneficiaries**, including students, human rights defenders, journalists, and people exiled as a result of the crisis in Nicaragua.

➤ **Training provided by MESENI – 2018**

Name of the activity	Subject	Place and date	Persons trained	Groups trained
Training course on transitional justice (MESENI)	Transitional justice	Managua, Nicaragua, July 13, 2018	25	Civil society
Training workshop on IACHR mechanisms: MESENI and IGIE (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Managua, Nicaragua, July 14, 2018	30	Next of kin of victims of human rights violations
Training workshop on inter-American human rights standards (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Managua, Nicaragua, June 29, 2018	35	Civil society

Training workshop on IACHR mechanisms and inter-American human rights standards (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Managua, Nicaragua, July 31 to August 1, 2018	14	Civil society
Training workshop on IACHR mechanisms and inter-American human rights standards (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Matagalpa, Nicaragua, August 22 and 23, 2018	23	Human rights defenders
Training on international asylum and protection	International asylum and protection	Managua, Nicaragua, August 29, 2018.	43	Students, human rights defenders, and civil society in general
Training on human trafficking and international standards	Human trafficking and international standards	Managua, Nicaragua, September 6, 2018	15	Women human rights promoters
Training workshop on inter-American human rights standards (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Managua, Nicaragua, September 8, 2018	19	Students, human rights defenders, and civil society in general
Training on the rights of persons deprived of liberty	Persons deprived of liberty	Managua, Nicaragua, September 19, 2018	45	Civil society
Training workshop on inter-American human rights standards (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	San José, Costa Rica, November 30, 2018	24	Human rights defenders
On-site training: Introduction to the inter-American human rights system and its instruments of protection (MESENI)	Standards of the inter-American human rights system applicable to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua	Miami, Florida June 18	33	Nicaraguan Diaspora in the United States and other countries of the region

➤ **Follow-up on compliance with precautionary measures granted**

In 2019, MESENI continues to monitor the precautionary measures granted to individuals in the context of the crisis. It has also received updated information about people in situations of serious risk. In the context of this work, in 2019 the IACHR presented two requests for provisional measures to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: one on [May 15](#), on behalf of 17 people deprived of liberty in a situation of extreme risk and the other on [June 27](#), on behalf of the members of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH), owing to the situation of extreme risk that they face in Nicaragua.

➤ **IACHR database of victims of state repression**

The Commission's databases on victims of state repression are permanently updated by MESENI through a collaborative work plan with human rights organizations, rights defenders, and legal



representatives of detainees and individuals being prosecuted in Nicaragua. During the first half 2019, the databases were used by civil society and the OAS General Secretariat in the context of the talks held by the Negotiation Table.

➤ **Keeping the international community informed**

The response of the Inter-American Commission to the situation of human rights in Nicaragua has been essential for keeping the international community informed about the gravity of the situation in the country. In 2019, based on information gathered by MESENI, the IACHR reported on the human rights situation in Nicaragua to the OAS Permanent Council on **three occasions** and held **three meetings** with the OAS Working Group on Nicaragua.

In 2019, the IACHR has held two Panel Discussions on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua; the first in Washington, D.C. on March 22, the second in Miami, Florida on June 17. Civil society, international organizations, representatives of OAS member states, journalists, community leaders, and Nicaraguans in exile, among others, were invited to both events.

In the framework of the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council the IACHR organized activities to draw attention the attention of the international community to the situation in Nicaragua. In particular, on February 27, 2019, the IACHR spoke at the high-level segment of the session, giving a presentation focusing on the situation in Nicaragua; on March 7, the Commission took part in an interactive debate of the Human Rights Council, and on March 19, 2019, the IACHR held a side event on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua.

➤ **Communication and strategic dissemination strategy**

In 2019, the IACHR has continued its active communication strategy on the situation in Nicaragua via the Commission's own social media accounts, issuing daily reports on the situation in the country, among other actions. The activities carried out to June 30, 2019, include the launch in April of a **monthly bulletin** on the activities of MESENI; **communication campaigns** on social media to commemorate the start of the protests in the country; and **two videos on the work of MESENI and the anniversary of the protests**, which are available on Canal TV CIDH.

➤ **Presentation of the 2018 annual report of the IACHR**, including a special report on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua in Chapter IV.B. Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, President of the IACHR, presented the 2018 Annual Report of the IACHR to the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs. She referred to the special section on Nicaragua in her remarks.

➤ **Special Technical Advisory Group for implementation of the human rights recommendations of the IACHR**

The Commission is in talks with the State of Honduras with a view to establishing a Special Technical Advisory Group for implementation of the human rights recommendations of the IACHR. In the course of the [visit to Tegucigalpa from May 22 to 24, 2019](#) to follow up on implementation of the recommendations made by the IACHR in its preliminary observations on the visit carried out in 2018, the Rapporteur for Honduras, Commissioner Joel Hernandez, held high-level talks with government authorities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat for Human Rights, among others, to move forward the proposition to establish the Group.



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The achievements made in the period covered by this report have been substantive and make it possible to assert that the implementation of this special program has been highly satisfactory.



## Conclusions

Based on the progress described in this report, it is fair to say that significant results have been achieved under each strategic objective, building on the structural advances made in the first two years of implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Under SO1 it was confirmed that the structural measures implemented in 2017 and 2018 are having a sustained impact. The significant uptick in the rate of review and evaluation of petitions and cases registered in previous years became even more pronounced in the first half of 2019 with the implementation of measures that made a major contribution to reducing the procedural backlog. Requests for precautionary measures in the region remained at the high levels seen in 2017. The fact that the Commission is up-to-date in terms of reviewing requests for precautionary measures is a major achievement that shows that the IACHR can guarantee a timely response in the context of that mechanism for addressing urgent cases. The significant progress in the signing of friendly settlement agreements attests to the importance of this mechanism for the protection of human rights.

Under SO2, we should note the lasting results of the methodological integration of monitoring work in geographic and thematic terms, which has led to an enrichment of standards and reporting output. In particular, the Commission continues to regard promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights as fundamental issues for the establishment and consolidation of the democratic rule of law.

With respect to SO3, it is worth drawing attention to the continued activities targeting Central America and the Caribbean that advanced training and technical cooperation efforts as well as closer relations with relevant actors in the area of human rights. Another important achievement is the progress made with respect to training in and dissemination of inter-American standards, as well as the continuity of consultation activities and dialogue with civil society. Additionally, the increased support to States in technical cooperation through the OAS political organs must be noted.

As for SO4, substantial advances were made in terms of cooperation with United Nations agencies and with regional and sub regional human rights mechanisms. That much was evident from the initial implementation with the OHCHR of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

In SO5 the important structural strides made in previous years continued. Thanks to the implementation of the second stage of the staggered increase in the Regular Fund budget, the IACHR has set in motion employment competitions aimed at covering core functions and has been able to broaden the coverage of its basic infrastructure and operational expenditure. With its new, more-integrated and horizontal administrative structure, the IACHR has managed to grow the outputs of all its teams and their response capacity. The financial sustainability plan has consistently yielded positive results since its implementation began, increasing the number and diversity of donors. Lastly, the practice of roaming sessions throughout the region continued, promoting closer ties with many actors of the region and the Commission and the democratization of access to the Inter-American human rights system.



It is fair to conclude that in the first half of 2019 the IACHR has reaped positive results from the structural measures launched in 2017, expanding its response capacity and relevance in confronting significant human rights challenges in the region. In the first six months of 2019, all programs of the Strategic Plan substantially improved their results, generating a more effective IACHR in the use of different tools and, mainly, in the balanced use of its three fundamental mandates: the petition and case system, monitoring the human rights situation and technical cooperation for the users of the Inter-American human rights system.