

INFORME DE **BALANCE** Enero-Junio 2021

de implementación del Plan Estratégico 2017-2021



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The Executive Secretariat presents the following report on the results obtained from the implementation, between January and June 2021, of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021, approved 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 to each of the five 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.

The IACHR thanks the member states, permanent observers, and Institutions whose voluntary contributions were made during the first half of 2021 and were vital for achieving the results presented. We are grateful to Canada, Costa Rica, France, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Panama, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the Pan American Development Foundation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The IACHR dedicates its work to the memory of the victims and recognizes the leading role of civil society organizations and social movements in building societies that are more just and respectful of human rights.

Main achievements

Inter-American Justice more accessible to the inhabitants of the Hemisphere (SO1)

- Victims of human rights violations, and in particular individuals and groups historically discriminated against, have better and more effective access to the inter-American human rights system.
 - Management of the case system and its decisions-making processes were streamlined and resulted in an increase in the number of petitions and cases analyzed in recent years. That achievement also entailed improved access to justice through the IAHRs for victims of human rights violations who resort to the IACHR for assistance.
 - 115 admissibility reports were approved, 89 of which referred to admissible cases and 26 to inadmissible cases (88% compared to 2020), 23 reports on the merits were approved and 44 prepared (a 69% increase compared to those prepared in 2020; no increase in the number of approved reports), and 26 cases were remitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (113% of the 2020 annual figure).
- Victims of human rights violations have alternative avenues for accessing full reparation.
 - Expanded use of the Friendly Settlement (FS) Mechanism with the signing of three friendly settlement agreements, the approval of seven friendly settlement agreements, five with partial compliance and two with full compliance with recommendations.
 - During the first half of 2021, use of the FS mechanism expanded with the entry of 25 new negotiation proceedings into the friendly settlement process.
 - Effectiveness of the friendly settlement mechanism strengthened thanks to the implementation of [Resolution 3/2020](#) focused on addressing the procedural backlog in friendly settlement agreement procedures.
- Precautionary Measures protection mechanism strengthened.
 - Resolution 2/20 implemented, resulting in increased capacity at the IACHR Executive Secretariat for handling precautionary measures, which has made it possible to effectively meet the increased demand resulting from the worsening of the human rights situation in various parts of the Hemisphere, as well as to expand familiarity with the mechanism, while continuing to review the 587 petitions received and to monitor the 594 measures in force.

Timely prevention of risks and human rights violations; and enhanced establishment of inter-American human rights standards (SO2).

- Strengthening of the inter-American system with the development and/or broadening of **14** new inter-American human rights **standards** in the region, for the protection of the rights of vulnerable persons and groups.
- Monitoring of the human rights situation in the region and expansion of the scope of monitoring activities in the region.

- Adoption and publication of the country report on the situation of human rights in Brazil.
- Publication of 4 thematic reports/guides: [Practical Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Risk Mitigation Plans for Human Rights Defenders](#); [Practical Guide on how to make family unit protection and family reunification more effective in situations of human mobility and mixed movements, and in the context of the pandemic](#); [Compendium on the Obligation of States to Adapt Their Domestic Legislation to the Inter-American Standards of Human Rights](#); and "[Compendium on Truth, Memory, Justice, and Reparation in Transitional Contexts](#)".
- The IACHR was able to respond in a timely and coordinated manner to situations involving a risk of human rights violations, and provide a structured, coordinated, and timely response to critical human rights situations through the Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI, by its Spanish acronym).
 - 2 SACROI deactivated (Chile and United States).
 - 5 country SACROIs (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Haiti).
 - 1 thematic SACROI (COVID-19) up and running.
- Public presence (both face-to-face and virtual) of the IACHR expanded and reinforced in the countries of the region.
 - Two working visits conducted (to Mexico and Colombia), plus one promotional visit (to Honduras).
 - 42 public hearings conducted with approximately 280 civil society organizations from 14 countries in the region.
- Freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights were all monitored and standards on new topics were developed.

Capacities created and strengthened in States and civil society organizations for the defense and promotion of human rights, in accordance with inter-American norms and standards (SO3)

- Strengthened the capacity of member states to incorporate inter-American human rights standards at the domestic level, bolster the institutional framework, and formulate public policies with a human rights approach.
 - 15 training activities conducted on standards and mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system, for a total of 580 participants.
 - 62 promotional activities carried out jointly with multilateral institutions and organizations in the region and the world on the mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system and inter-American human rights standards on a range of issues.
 - 8 open webinars conducted.

- Effective collaboration established with the Caribbean and Central American countries to strengthen human rights and democratic institutions.
 - Adoption by the IACHR of the Strategy for Strengthening the Work of the IACHR in the Caribbean (2021).
 - 6 virtual training courses held for civil society and human rights organizations on inter-American standards and memory, truth and justice in transitional justice contexts. In addition, two virtual training courses were designed for justice operators in Guatemala and Honduras, together with a course on racial discrimination and discrimination against women was designed for government officials of the State of Saint Lucia.
 - Requests for cooperation and counseling were received from government agencies in Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- The IACHR has made progress in technical cooperation in the area of institutions and public policies with a focus on human rights, including the following:
 - 3 open meetings with civil society organizations from 19 member states within the framework of the 179th period of sessions of the IACHR and 4 open meetings with civil society organizations from 19 member states within the framework of the 180th session of the IACHR.
 - Meeting with the heads and representatives of the NHRIs of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.
 - Meetings during IACHR sessions with the International Coalition of Human Rights Organizations in the Americas.
- The IACHR has expanded channels and mechanisms for collaboration and social participation with civil society and academia in IACHR activities.
 - 19 universities and academic centers currently participate in the IHRS Specialized Academic Network.

Expanded coordination with the Inter-American Court, international, regional, and subregional human rights organizations for actions to defend and promote human rights in the Americas (SO4)

- Coordination, cooperation, and complementarity with United Nations bodies and other agencies, strengthened and expanded.
 - Articulation with the United Nations Human Rights Council expanded and strengthened through increased participation of the IACHR in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, the participation of the OHCHR in 8 hearings during 2 periods of sessions of the IACHR, 1 Declaration and 4 joint communiqués.
 - Strengthening of the joint mechanism with OHCHR for the protection of human rights defenders in the Americas through joint work with the focal points.
- More robust coordination and ties with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

- Joint organization with the Inter-American Court of Justice of forums and other dissemination and training events on inter-American standards to confront violence and discrimination against women and girls, targeting justice operators and security officials in Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico.

Modern institutional management focused on results, with efficient, effective, and measurable institutional development, financial sustainability, transparency, accountability, and gender and diversity policies (SO5)

- Increased public presence of the IACHR due to its more robust use of digital media, including conducting its 179th period of sessions virtually, during which 21 public hearings were held on a variety of topics and countries.
- Enhanced communication capacity thanks to more social media outreach, including use of the YouTube channel and social forums on online platforms.
- Ongoing implementation of the work environment improvement plan.
- Financial sustainability plan under way The IACHR has the funding needed for its 2020 day-to-day operations. The goals of the financial resilience plan are being satisfactorily met.
- Both the Regular Fund budget and specific funds have been bolstered.
- Technological innovations have been successfully introduced.
- Customer service has improved thanks to enhanced information and documentation management.

Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations (Program 21)

- Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System -SIMORE implemented with 128 recommendations.
- Follow-up on cases with published reports on the merits (Article 51).
 - Progress in the implementation of the **17 recommendations** during 2020, **12 of which are of a structural nature** - mostly based on actions for the adoption and modification of legislation or regulations - and **5 are of an individual nature**.
- Special monitoring mechanisms created and implemented:
 - Technical Assistance Group (TAG) for the Ayotzinapa Case installed in Mexico City, in the new stage of the Follow-up Mechanism (MESA);
 - Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) operating from IACHR headquarters, with results to show from its ongoing work and actions undertaken in relation to Nicaragua;
 - Renewal of the technical cooperation agreement with the Special Technical Advisory Board for compliance with IACHR human rights recommendations (MESAT) until December 2021;
 - Special Follow-up Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE) up and running and seeking to strengthen its monitoring activity in Venezuela and respond in a timely manner to the new challenges posed by the serious human rights crisis in that country. One notable achievement is completion of the country report.

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:

- Management of the case system and its decisions-making processes were streamlined and resulted in an increase in the number of petitions and cases analyzed in recent years. That achievement also entailed improved access to justice through the IAHRs for victims of human rights violations who resort to the IACHR for assistance.
- Initial studying of petitions is up to date, that is to say, they are studied and resolved as they are received, following resolution of all petitions received that had still to be reviewed.
- 115 admissibility reports were approved, 89 of which referred to admissible cases and 26 to inadmissible cases (88% compared to 2020), 23 reports on the merits were approved and 44 prepared (a 69% increase compared to those prepared in 2020; no increase in the number of approved reports), and 26 cases were remitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (113% of the 2020 annual figure).
- The friendly settlement mechanism was strengthened thanks to Implementation of Resolution 3/2020 focused on addressing the procedural backlog in friendly settlement agreement procedures.
- The precautionary measures mechanism was strengthened, all 587 applications filed in 2021 were examined, 31 precautionary measures were granted (25) and broadened (six). In addition, Resolution 2/2020 on strengthening the monitoring of precautionary measures in force was implemented.
- “Active transparency” was enhanced through accountability reports to member states, Observers, donors, and users in general. In addition, implementation of the IACHR's Policy on Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data is in its final phase and showing progress in IACHR users' access to information. More frequent meetings with States and petitioners have also served to bolster transparency.

Based on the foregoing, it would be safe to say that in the first half of 2021 highly satisfactory outcomes were achieved under Strategic Objective 1.

P1: Special Procedural Backlog Reduction Program

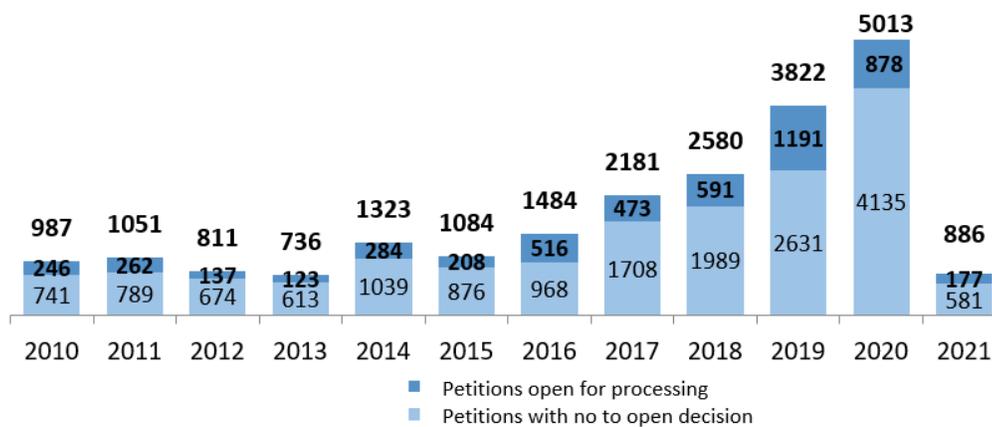
Under this program, the Commission has accorded priority to attending to cases in chronological order, in the order in which the petitions were filed, as a way to overcome the chronic backlog. This has been the strict criterion applied to the studying of petitions, and in the admissibility and merits stages as a matter of priority, with a view to eventually resolving all petitions and cases pending under this program. Thus, during 2021, priority has been given to all cases prior to 2001 at the merits stage and prior to 2014 for cases at the admissibility stage. Likewise, the Commission addressed petitions and cases that set standards with respect to its priority issues, as reflected in its Rapporteurships. The management and processing of petitions at the admissibility and merits stages were streamlined, reducing by 85% the difference between incoming communications related to petitions and cases and the processing and response capacity of the IACHR, compared to 2020. Similarly, the share of procedurally competed contentious proceedings in the portfolio of petitions at the admissibility and merits stages increased by two percentage points, from 47% at the end of 2020 to 49% as of June 30, 2021. In 2021, the Inter-American Commission continued to implement Resolution 1/16, on Measures to Reduce the Procedural Backlog, thus far announcing 169 decisions to defer the analysis of admissibility until the debate and decision on the merits, in accordance with Article 36.3 of the Rules of Procedure. Such decisions for the whole of 2021 are therefore likely to surpass the number reported in 2020, which closed with 212 such notifications.

► Initial review

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR received a total of 1,126 petitions, and evaluated 886 of them (79%). Of that total, it was decided to open 177 for processing (20%); not to open 581 (66%); and to request additional information regarding 128 petitions (14%).

The IACHR is constantly following up on those petitions in which additional information was requested from the petitioners, and in general following up periodically on petitions from previous years that have already been evaluated, to ensure that all decisions have been executed.

Decisions to Open and Not to Open for processing



(*) Partial figure for 2021: January to June. All other figures are annual.

In 2021, the Commission reaped the fruits of major efforts to eliminate the procedural (initial study) backlog, which explains the decrease in the number of evaluations because now petitions are being evaluated in the same year that they are lodged.

Although the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has made it difficult to access the physical files for digitization, negatively impacting the Executive Secretariat's ability to notify the parties of the initiation of the processing of petitions opened for processing, during the first half of the year, the IACHR gave notice of 120 initiations of processing, involving 24 OAS member states, prioritizing to a large extent those linked to the criteria set forth in Article 29.2 of its Rules of Procedure.

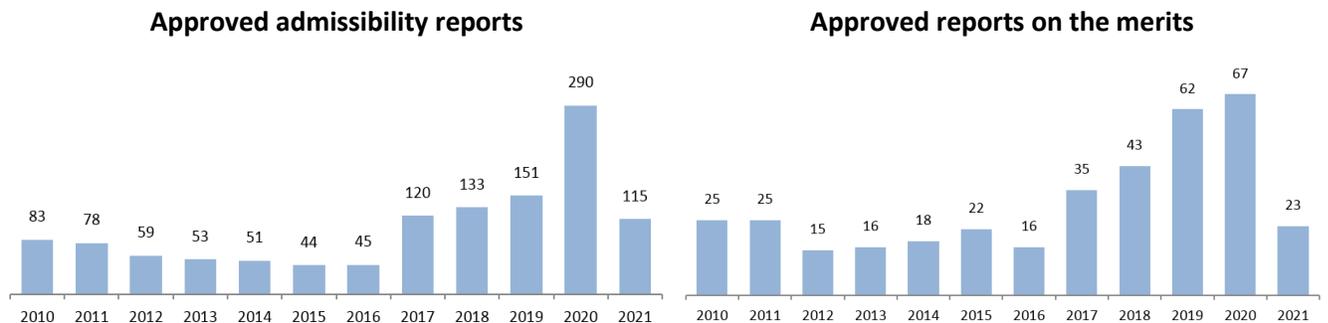
As regards application of the archiving policy envisaged in Article 42 of the Rules of Procedure, 82 notifications were issued to advise the petitioning party of the possibility that their case might be archived, in connection with petitions with a decision to process, pending notification to the parties, involving 16 countries.

➤ **Admissibility and merits stages.**

Management and decision-making in the case system were streamlined, increasing the number of petitions and cases analyzed compared to the years prior to the Strategic Plan. During the Initial Study stage, 886 petitions were evaluated, while 102 admissibility reports and 44 merits reports were drawn up.

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR approved 115 admissibility reports (89 admissible and 26 inadmissible cases): an increase of 72% over the 67 reports approved in the same period of 2019. Reports approved in the first half of 2021 represent 88% of the historical figure achieved in 2020, indicating stabilization in the number of approved reports.

During the same period, the IACHR approved 23 of the 44 merits reports, which resolved a total of 23 cases. While there was no increase in the number of reports approved during the first half of the year, there was an increase in the number of reports produced, which increased by 69% compared to 2020 and by 25% compared to the figure for 2019 reports.



(*) Figure for 2021: January to June. Previous figures are annual.

As regards the reports adopted, the IACHR decided on 150 cases that are at the transition stage. It ruled on the adoption of extensions for compliance with the recommendations of the reports on the merits in accordance with Article 46 of its Rules of Procedure, the publication of the report or the referral of the case to the Inter-American Court. In order to promote compliance with the recommendations of the merit reports, the IACHR decided to hold 10 working meetings. It decided to proceed with the publication of

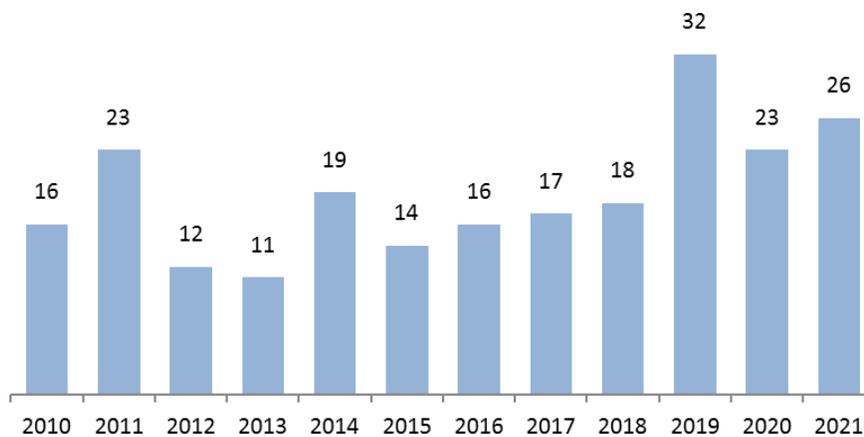
three reports in view of the positive results obtained during the transition phase. Those reports will be published in accordance with Article 47 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure and Article 51 of the American Convention.

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

Pursuant to Article 51 of the American Convention and Article 45 of its Rules of Procedure, during the first half of 2021, the Commission submitted 26 cases to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court, 113% more than in 2020. Through the cases submitted to its jurisdiction, the Court will have the opportunity to pronounce on the responsibility of the States and order the corresponding reparations in favor of the victims.

The cases remitted cover various issues that include serious violations such as extrajudicial executions, torture, and forced disappearance. In addition, the Commission remitted cases that will make it possible to develop jurisprudence on issues of great relevance to the inter-American public order, such as judicial independence, the duty to investigate acts of medical malpractice with a gender perspective, the prevention and investigation of terrorist acts, the right to judicial protection against discriminatory acts based on sexual orientation or disability, the right to political participation on an equal footing, permissible restrictions on personal liberty and the compatibility of concepts such as “arraigo” (ne exeat order not to leave a jurisdiction) or life imprisonment.

Cases submitted to the Court



(*) Figure for 2021: January to June.

In the proceedings before the Inter-American Court, the Commission continues to participate in all cases submitted in accordance with the provisions of the American Convention and the Rules of Procedure of the Court. Among other actions, the Commission presents its observations in relation to possible preliminary objections, offers expert evidence when inter-American public order is significantly affected, and presents its oral and written observations in relation to the arguments of the parties. The Commission complied with its mandate under the Convention to appear at all hearings before the Court, participating in 26 hearings as of June 2021. It also submitted more than one hundred briefs with observations by the Commission requested by the Inter-American Court.

➤ **Standards in reports on the merits**

With respect to the standards developed in the first half of 2021 in reports on the merits, the following are worth highlighting:

No.	Standard developed
1	The statute of limitations for civil suits for reparation in labor matters, linked to the effects of crimes against humanity, in circumstances in which the private employer is involved in such violations and there is no additional remedy available to take action against the company, impairs the victims' right of access to justice and reparation.
2	The progressive reduction of criminal penalties for crimes against humanity merely because of the passage of time and for alleged reasons of legal certainty is largely incompatible with the obligations to adequately punish those responsible for serious violations.
3	The establishment of a penalty based on the judge's perception of the results of a treatment of minors, making use of stereotypes based on the characteristics of the accused, and not limited to the criminal act committed, violates the principle of criminal legality, making deprivation of liberty incompatible with the American Convention. It also violates the special obligations to serve the best interests of the child.

P2: Program to Expand the Use of Friendly Settlements

In the 2021 period covered by this report, efforts to stimulate the use of friendly settlements and disseminate the mechanism yielded the following significant results:

➤ **Results achieved and promotion of new friendly settlement follow-up methodologies**

Thus far this year, 18 cases under the friendly settlement mechanism were cleared through 7 approvals and 11 closures of negotiations at the request of the parties. In relation to the friendly settlement agreements approved and published in the course of 2021, it should be noted that the Commission decided to approve the following cases:

1. Report No. 39/21, Petition 245-03, - 50 245, Walter Mauro Yáñez (Argentina)
2. Report No. 136/21, Case 12.277, Fazenda Ubá (Brazil)
3. Report No. 115/21, Case 13.171, Luis Argemiro Gómez Atehortua (Colombia)
4. Report No. 41/21, Case 13.642, Edgar José Sánchez Duarte and family (Colombia)
5. Report No. 114/21, Case 12.737, Carlos Raúl Morales Catalán (Guatemala)
6. Report No. 42/21, Case 12.961E, Ecar Fernando Zavala Valladares et al (Honduras)
7. Report No. 40/21, Case 11.562, Dixie Miguel Urbina Rosales (Honduras)

It should be noted that of these 7 approved agreements, 5 were approved with partial compliance and 2 with total compliance. This testifies to the willingness of States to implement the measures included in the friendly settlement processes and to build trust based on compliance with the agreements.

In this regard, in the findings reached in connection with the review of the friendly settlement agreements subject to approval in the reporting period, the Commission verified that, between January and June 2021, progress was made in the implementation of 31 reparation measures, given that 23 measures achieved total compliance, 2 achieved substantial partial compliance and 6 achieved partial compliance. The countries that recorded the highest levels of progress in the implementation of measures were, in first place, Brazil with 13 measures in place, of which 7 achieved total compliance, 2 substantial partial

compliance and 4 partial compliance. Significant progress was also made in Honduras, which made progress in complying with 7 measures, of which 5 were fully complied with and 2 were partially complied with. Finally, the Commission also noted significant progress in the area of compliance by the Argentine State, which managed to make progress in 5 reparation measures, all of which were fully complied with. Of the total number of measures put in place in this period, in terms of compliance, it is also worth noting that 7 were structural in nature and 24 of an individual nature.

Among the measures fully complied with in 2021, the Commission notably participated in the implementation of the friendly settlement agreement in Case 13.571 Carlos Mario Muñoz Gómez from Colombia. In this regard, it should be noted that, as agreed between the parties owing to the circumstances of social isolation imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic, on May 18, 2021 the public act of acknowledgment of responsibility took place and was chaired by Ana María Ordoñez, Director of International Legal Defense of the National Legal Defense Agency of the Colombian State (ANDJE) and was attended by Oscar Villegas Posada, in his capacity as representative of the Victims; as well as the victim's family members and the Presiding Commissioner and Rapporteur for Colombia, Antonia Urrejola; accompanied by the IACHR Deputy Executive Secretary for the area of Petitions and Cases as well as the technical staff of the IACHR. That event was broadcast live on YouTube and can be accessed by the general public.

➤ Promotion and dissemination of friendly settlement agreement negotiation processes

In the first 6 months of 2021, the Commission promoted and disseminated friendly settlement processes by facilitating 22 working meetings on different matters under negotiation and monitoring the implementation of friendly settlement agreements (FSAs), 32 technical meetings to promote bilateral and tripartite friendly settlement processes with the presence of petitioners, States, Commissioners and facilitators of the Friendly Settlements Section (FSS), and applying alternative dispute resolution methods.

The IACHR also held 4 exploratory meetings with representatives of Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Costa Rica to follow up on the work plans developed by the parties in the framework of the negotiations, to identify opportunities for progress at the different stages of the friendly settlement processes, and to request the prioritization of compliance with the agreements.

In light of the adoption of IACHR Resolution 3/20, one consultation memo was drawn up during the period under review to decide on the course of action for a friendly settlement process regarding Argentina. In this process, the parties began negotiations on November 19, 2021, and when the Commission realized that the process was not viable, it decided to close the FSP, notifying the parties of that decision on June 10, 2021. On the other hand, during the period covered by this report, technical advice was provided to the parties in case 11,545 Martha Saire of Honduras, to familiarize the parties with to the standards for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities with a view to amending a friendly settlement agreement originally signed in 2003, which was not in line with current standards in this area. Thanks to the facilities and counseling provided to the parties, the technical obstacles were overcome, a memorandum of understanding was signed during the 179th session, and progress is currently being made with the preparation of the draft approval report.

During the reporting period, a workshop was held for 36 public officials from COPADEH and the Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General*) of Guatemala on practical and procedural aspects of using the friendly settlement mechanism. The workshop examined theoretical and practical aspects of procedure

in the friendly settlement mechanism based on its legal framework. It also covered technical tools for negotiation, including case-by-case application of the information supplied as well as a practical simulation of the steps needed to reach a friendly settlement.

The adoption of new methodologies includes efforts to publicize the signing, compliance with, and approval of friendly settlement agreements, to which end the IACHR has issued 12 press releases thus far in 2021.

As a result of the Commission's facilitation and the willingness of States and petitioners to opt for non-contentious solutions, three friendly settlement agreements have been signed. Thus, on March 4, 2021, in the city of Bogotá, the friendly settlement agreement was signed in relation to case 13.571 Carlos Mario Muñoz Gómez of Colombia. The case concerns the international responsibility of the Colombian State for deeds related to the alleged illegal detention, forced disappearance, and death of Mr. Carlos Mario Muñoz Gómez at the hands of two National Police officers on October 29, 1990. The agreement included measures of satisfaction (act of atonement and publication of the facts), guarantees of non-repetition (training of members of the security forces in human rights and IHL, using the case in the curriculum), and financial compensation.

Also noteworthy is the signing of the friendly settlement agreement in relation to case 13.654 Juan Simón Cantillo Raigoza, Keyla Sandrith and Family of Colombia, on June 29, 2021. The case refers to the alleged responsibility of the Colombian State for the murders of Juan Simón Cantillo Raigoza and his six-year-old daughter Keyla Sandrith Cantillo Vides, allegedly committed by members of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), who operated in the area with the acquiescence of the State in the Department of Cesar. In the agreement signed by the parties, the State undertook to carry out a public act of acknowledgement of responsibility, to publish any approval report issued by the IACHR, to provide health rehabilitation measures to the victims' families and to grant them financial compensation. On the same date, a friendly settlement agreement was signed in case 12.961 J Faustino García Cárdenas et al. of Honduras. The case refers to the responsibility of the Honduran State for alleged mass dismissals of National Police personnel, allegedly in connection with a purge of said institution. In the agreement signed by the parties, the Honduran government undertook to grant financial compensation to the beneficiaries, in an amount based on their position at the time of dismissal.

Finally, it should be noted that, in light of Resolution 3/20, the portfolio of cases at the negotiation phase has been managed in a very expeditious manner, with 90 friendly settlement mechanism processes at that stage currently under way, having entered the portfolio between January and June 2021. Based on a preliminary diagnosis --currently being finalized-- of the first year of application of Resolution 3/20, it transpires that only 26 cases for which processes began before 2016 remain to be settled. Fortunately, that suggests that, under the guidelines on the duration of negotiations established in that instrument, the procedural backlog in settlement procedures could be addressed within the framework of the Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

P3: Program to Strengthen Precautionary Measures

During the first half of 2021, through its precautionary measures mechanism, the IACHR continued to protect the rights of persons throughout the Hemisphere who are at serious and imminent risk of irreparable harm, either through the timely granting of precautionary measures or through closer

monitoring of the implementation of the measures in force. At the same time, the IACHR continued implementing Resolutions [3/2018](#) and [2/2020](#) verifying ongoing compliance with the requirements of Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure.

► Strengthened institutional management

In the first half of 2021, the Commission implemented [Resolution 2/2020](#) "Strengthening of the monitoring of precautionary measures in force", developing tools and new methodologies that allow tighter monitoring by the IACHR of the implementation of precautionary measures in force, such as follow-up resolutions, bilateral meetings, change in the methodology applied to the sending of letters, among others.

The IACHR has also improved its internal results-based management tools in PMs and improved the flow of internal coordination with the Commission's thematic and special rapporteurships and special mechanisms to address specific situations through the different functions they perform.

In addition, the Commission published an [Precautionary Measures Informational Booklet](#) on the Commission's website, which explains how to file a request for precautionary measures, with questions and answers, clarifies how the process works and what tools are available for monitoring measures in force. The booklet is available in the 4 official languages of the OAS. The IACHR also published 42 press releases on precautionary measures, thereby bolstering the dissemination of information about them.

Likewise, the [IACHR's web page](#) on precautionary measures was reformulated and is being updated periodically, maintaining timely publication of the resolutions adopted.

► Results Achieved

In the first half of 2021, a total of 587 requests for precautionary measures were received. All the applications received to date have been evaluated and classified by degree of seriousness and imminence of the risks involved in accordance with the requirements established in Article 25 of the Regulations: resulting in a legal evaluation rate of 96.5% of them per year¹. The largest number of applications received was in relation to Colombia (158), followed by Mexico (91) and Argentina (62).

As of June 30, 2021, the Commission granted 25 precautionary measures, extended 6, and lifted 18, bringing the total number of precautionary measures in force in the portfolio to 594, and deliberated on 461 cases in all. With those decisions, the IACHR impacted more than 16,087 beneficiaries. Likewise, the Commission extended 6 precautionary measures in favor of 40 persons, bringing the total number of those currently benefiting from precautionary measures to more than 86,000, in addition to the beneficiaries of identified groups. The beneficiaries of precautionary measures include human rights defenders, indigenous peoples, journalists, persons deprived of their liberty or whose whereabouts are unknown, among other persons or groups of persons in highly vulnerable circumstances.

Also, considering the significant number of requests for precautionary measures registered in 2020 alleging risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IACHR followed up on these in the first half of 2021, with a view to making a final decision. Currently, a final decision has been reached on 279 of the 345 such applications filed in 2020¹. Between January and June 2021, 93 new requests were filed for precautionary

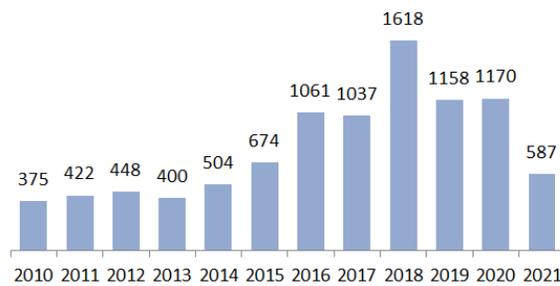
¹ 8 MCs were granted, 6 of which are still in force.

measures related to the pandemic, all of which have received an initial legal evaluation. As of the date of this report, there are 6 precautionary measures in force in this area.

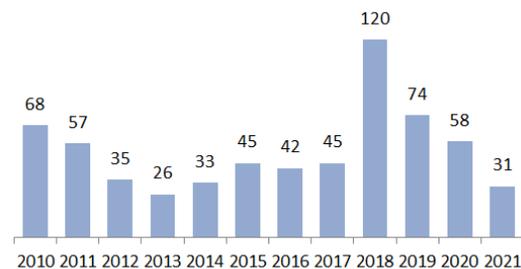
It should also be noted that in the first half of 2021 the IACHR concluded, by taking a final decision, the analysis of the portfolio of precautionary measures registered in 2018. This is particularly important in view of the historically high number of applications registered in that year (1,618 new applications) and progress was made in the review of the portfolio for 2019, with 99.48% completed through to a final decision.

With that, the Commission has been able to guarantee the efficiency and timely response of the precautionary measures mechanism, expediting its decision-making, concentrating its efforts and available resources on the analysis of the cases of persons who are at risk and who require a precautionary measure to safeguard their rights.

Requests for Precautionary Measures received per year



Precautionary Measures granted and extended.



(*) Figure for 2021: January to June.

➤ **Increased visibility and monitoring of precautionary measures**

During the first half of 2021, the Commission monitored precautionary measures in force by having its [Special Protection Supervision Group \(GESP\)](#) implement Resolution 2/2020. Accordingly, the IACHR held 20 bilateral meetings with representatives and/or beneficiaries, 2 portfolio meetings with States and 17 working meetings with both parties and the IACHR. It is worth noting that since the establishment of the GESP, the **IACHR** has managed to **work more closely with the parties**; improve and expand the information received on compliance with the recommendations issued; and promote compliance. The IACHR also decided to **extend 6 precautionary measures in force**.

In addition, the IACHR held two public hearings in the 180th period of sessions in relation to four precautionary measures, in order to highlight the situation of beneficiaries of the measures and to receive first-hand up-to-date information from the parties regarding ongoing risks: [MC 51-15 \(Wayuu People\) CO](#); and [MC 563-20, 679-20, and 754-20 BR \(Indigenous Peoples affected by COVID-19\)](#).

The Commission also drew attention via press releases to certain risk situations related to precautionary measures in force or cases of non-compliance by States:

- IACHR and the OHCHR Regional Office for South America urge Brazil to ensure [comprehensive protection of Yanomami and Munduruku indigenous peoples](#)
- The IACHR expresses concern about impeachment proceedings brought against members of the [Constitutional Court of Guatemala](#);
- The IACHR condemns the application of the [death penalty](#) imposed on Lisa Montgomery, beneficiary of precautionary measures, in the United States of America;
- The IACHR laments the death of two [beneficiaries of precautionary measures](#) in Venezuela and calls on the State to take all precautions to prevent the materialization of identified risks.

With a view to publicizing the whole set of measures in force, the Commission updates [an interactive map](#) of the precautionary measures granted since 2013. This map has filters to facilitate the search for specific information and provide access to information for those interested in the IACHR's precautionary measures. The IACHR also published three video documentaries voicing the views of the beneficiary populations:

- [Wayuu - Sol Sal Sed \(MC 51-15 CO\)](#)
- [Precautionary Measures - the Berta Cáceres case \(MC 405-09/112-26\)](#)
- [Precautionary Measures - Jorge Santana Public Penitentiary in Brazil \(MC 888-19\)](#)

The Commission also analyzed the ongoing validity of the precautionary measures, in accordance with Article 25 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure, deciding to **lift 18 precautionary measures in force**. The lifting resolutions, in addition to assessing the persistence of risks, abide by the standards applicable to precautionary measures; they assess the progress made by the States in the protection of beneficiaries; they call for the implementation of any protection still pending and draw attention to any cases of non-compliance. They also allow the IACHR to focus on issues where ongoing risks are identified.

As part of the monitoring of the measures in force, **more than 560 letters** were sent **during the follow-up phase**. Worth highlighting is the implementation of a new methodology for letters requesting information, in which the parties are given longer deadlines and are asked specific questions regarding the implementation of the measures.

► Briefs with observations regarding provisional measures granted by the I/A Court H.R.

The Commission submitted **35 legal briefs** in connection with the monitoring of existing provisional measures issued by the Inter-American Court, including **a new request for provisional measures**, granted on June 24, 2021, related to the Juan Sebastian Chamorro et al. case regarding Nicaragua. In turn, the IACHR presented oral observations before the Inter-American Court in the following public hearings on provisional measures:

140Th period of sessions:

- Matters related to the Garifuna Communities of Triunfo de la Cruz and Punta Piedra v. Honduras cases.

141st period of sessions:

- Case of Vélez Lóor v. Panama (May 6, 2021)

- Matter regarding the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CENIDH-CPDH) (May 6, 2021)

142nd period of sessions:

- Matters relating to the Plácido de Sá Carvalho Penal Institute, the Curado Complex, the Pedrinhas Complex, and the Socio-educational Internment Unit in Brazil (June 2, 2021)
- The Choreachi Indigenous Community matter in Mexico (June 11, 2021)

It is important to note that the Commission, as part of its statutory functions, submits its observations on the provisional measures in force and, for its part, follows up on these cases to ensure better implementation and agreement on these measures.

P4: Program for Transparency and Access to Information

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR continued its efforts to bolster transparency, accountability, and access to information, as follows:

➤ Access to Information Policy (AIP) and its Protocol

In 2020, the draft of the AIP was completed and presented to the IACHR at its 178th session, pending the submission of observations by the Commissioners. Progress was also made with preliminary drafting of the IAP Protocol.

➤ Active Transparency Policy (ATP)

With respect to active transparency measures, the Executive Secretariat constantly updates its institutional information, as well as its Reports, Resolutions and other decisions adopted in compliance with its mandates.

The proposed preliminary ATP is also currently being reviewed in-house.

➤ Archives Policy and its Protocols

In the area of archives management, the IACHR's Archives Management Policy was submitted for internal consultation and the input provided by the sections is currently being received and systematized. Progress has also been made in the drafting of internal implementation protocols for specific areas and sections.

➤ Published reports

The Annual Report is the main instrument for IACHR accountability vis-à-vis the 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 IACHR.

The [2020 Annual Report](#) was presented on April 16, 2021, to the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP). This report is governed by Article 59 of the IACHR's Rules of Procedure and documents and summarizes not only the human rights situation in the region, but also progress made and achievements accomplished in accordance with the parameters established in its mandates and objectives.

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR published performance/status and accountability reports that disclose how the IACHR is managing the various areas it works in:

- On February 27, 2021, the IACHR submitted its [progress report](#) for the [fourth year of implementation of the Strategic Plan](#) and a summary of the main results of its work during 2020, aimed at increasing transparency and accountability to the international human rights community.
- On May 3, 2021, as part of the 2020 Annual Report of the IACHR, the [Annual Report](#) of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression was presented to the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP).
- The Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) continued to publish [monthly newsletters](#) which report on progress with this mechanism, as well as on the human rights situation in Nicaragua.

More than 160 petition and case reports¹ (English and Spanish) were drawn up for publication on the IACHR website.

► Responses to requests for access to information

22 requests for access to information received by the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR were answered, with an average response time of 36 days. Of the 22 requests handled, 11 were answered within more than 30 days, and 11 requests were responded to within 30 days.

► Other transparency actions

The IACHR has continued to announce, through press releases, the dates for the holding of its periods of sessions and the schedules for the hearings granted.

In addition, on February 1, 2021, the [results of the fourth year of the Procedural Backlog Reduction Program were published](#), detailing the progress made by the IACHR in this area in 2020. On June 3, 2021, the IACHR published [the selection of Tania Reneaum Panszi as Executive Secretary](#) for the position of executive secretary. Finally, the first transparency newsletter is currently being edited and formatted and is expected to be published in the second half of this year.

The Commission, committed to meeting the objectives outlined in its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, especially those referred to in SO1/P4: Transparency and Access to Information Program, in order to guarantee access to information related to the fulfillment of its mandate and to foster a culture of active transparency of all information under its control, including information on petitions and cases in litigation, provided information on the status of the portfolio of cases pending before the IACHR with respect to 19 member states. Thirteen of those cases were initiated ex officio by the Commission.

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:

- Development and/or broadening of **14** new inter-American human rights **standards** in the region, for the protection of the rights of vulnerable persons and groups.
- Broader monitoring and coverage of the human rights situation in the region:
 - **89 recommendations** issued through the publication of Brazil's Country Report.
 - **4 thematic reports** published.
 - At **least 8** regional **trends** identified.
 - More than **46 recommendations** issued through 69 press releases.
- Increased IACHR presence in the region:
 - **42 public hearings** conducted with approximately **280 civil society organizations** from **14** countries in the region
 - Two **working visits** conducted (to Mexico and Colombia), plus one on-site **promotional visit** (to Honduras).
- Structured, coordinated and timely response to critical human rights situations through SACROI.
 - **2 deactivated SACROIs** (Chile and the United States) and **5 country SACROIs** (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Haiti) and **1 thematic SACROI** (COVID-19) up and running.
- Freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights were all monitored and standards on new topics were developed.

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

The institutional changes promoted in recent years in Human Rights Monitoring in the region yielded important results in the first half of 2021, such as:

➤ **Development and/or broadening of 14 innovative human rights standards in the region.²**

In the first half of 2021, substantial progress was made with defining standards for broadening the scope of protection for individuals in the Americas and advancing the interpretation of human rights recognized in inter-American instruments. Those standards are built into in the different mechanisms of the Commission and were espoused by the Commission during the period under review:

[Practical Guide on How can family unit protection and family reunification be made more effective in situations of human mobility and mixed movements, and in the context of the pandemic?](#)

1. Protection of the principle of **family unity in situations of human mobility** and in the context of pandemics.
2. Guarantees to ensure the **reunification** of children and adolescents separated as a result of human mobility and its impacts in the context of the pandemic.

[Advisory Opinion on differentiated approaches to treatment in the context of deprivation of liberty \(OC-29\)](#)

1. **General obligations of States** to guarantee the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and to adopt measures with a differentiated approach to ensure that these groups' detention conditions are appropriate to their particular circumstances.
2. For **pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women deprived of liberty**: specific obligations regarding: i) food; ii) access to pre- and postpartum medical and psychological assistance; and iii) access to information regarding their special condition. In addition, on the particular situation of pregnant women: duties related to: i) adequate clothing; ii) minimum conditions during labor and delivery; and iii) safety measures taken during transfers. Regarding **incarcerated mothers with children in early childhood outside the facility**: measures to ensure that they maintain a close bond.
3. For **children living in detention centers with their mothers**, specific obligations regarding: i) the right to family life including contact with the other parent; ii) the right to health; iii) the right to food; and iv) adequate development, emphasizing community integration, education and recreation.
4. Regarding **LGBTI persons**, States' obligations in terms of: i) determination of the place of accommodation that respects self-identified gender identity; ii) prevention of acts of violence, including keeping a record of such incidents, and avoiding segregation of this population; iii) medical care including treatment in the transition process; and iv) right to intimate visits.
5. With respect to **indigenous** persons, particular obligations focusing on: i) preservation of their cultural identity, in particular, their customs, rituals, and food; ii) medical care, linked to respect for their medicinal practices and traditional medicines; iii) participation in activities or programs inside the prison, and disciplinary hearings; iv) use of mother tongues; v) prevention of acts of violence.

² This section mentions some of the new standards developed during 2021, rather than a detailed list of them. For more information, please see the documents cited.

6. With regard to the **elderly**, specific obligations of States regarding: i) the right to accessibility and personal mobility in detention centers; ii) medical and psychological care, including palliative care; iii) external contact with their family; and iv) social reintegration.

[Press release 119/21: IACHR and Offices of Special Rapporteurs Condemn Harassment of Artists, Journalists, and Activists in Cuba and Call on State to Cease Acts of Persecution Against Those Exercising the Right to Freedom of Expression and Artistic Creation](#)

1. **Hunger strikes are a form of peaceful social protest** and freedom of expression and autonomy, as well as the right to health and well-being, must be guaranteed. Specifically, the State must ensure that those who choose to protest in this way have **consensual access to health care** without threat, pressure, or coercion by the State.

[Report entitled “Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of Persons of African Descent”](#)

1. Duty to implement intercultural policies for access to public health and disease prevention for people of African descent, with an intersectional approach.
2. The duty of States to develop a legislative and political framework that provides for measures to prevent and combat political violence against Afro-descendent women, as well as a system of complaints that addresses cases of this kind of violence, including security measures, and adopts an intersectional and intercultural approach.
3. Duty to formulate intersectoral and intercultural public policies that promote the right to historical memory of persons of African descent and the African Diaspora.
4. Duty to adopt comprehensive reparation measures for Afro-descendants and tribal communities for serious human rights violations, tailored to a context of discrimination and related forms of intolerance based on ethno-racial origin.
5. The duty to have special mechanisms that guarantee this population access to justice, measures of satisfaction, restitution of rights, guarantees of non-repetition, and compensation.

► **Methodology and work processes integrated for thematic and country monitoring. Progress in the monitoring of priority issues**

In the first half of 2021, the following progress was made with broadening the scope of protection for individuals in the Americas, and, at the same time, advancing the interpretation of human rights recognized in inter-American instruments. The priority issues advanced by the IACHR include the following:

- **Trends in human rights in the region**

The monitoring work carried out in the first half of the year, through the different mechanisms, revealed the prevalence of **at least 8 trends related** to the human rights situation in the **region**. In this regard, the report highlights the weakening of democratic institutions, independence of the branches of government, and human rights institutions; high levels of inequality and discrimination; militarization/securitization of civilian services; high levels of impunity and corruption; increased channels of communication between organized crime and state structures; disproportionate use of force in contexts of social protest; differentiated impact of COVID-19 with respect to people at special risk; and migratory and humanitarian crises.

With respect to **Mesoamerica**, the IACHR identified **9 trends linked** to the human rights situation, including the impairment of democratic and human rights institutions, impairments of judicial independence and increased impunity, violence, criminalization, stigmatizing statements that seek to delegitimize the work of human rights defenders, the high levels of violence against groups in special situations of exclusion and citizen insecurity; factors such as militarization, poverty, inequality, and discrimination, high levels of migration and forced internal displacement, impunity for serious past crimes, lamentable conditions in prisons, and high levels of corruption.

The IACHR further observed that the human rights situation was linked to **9 trends**, such as the impairment of democratic institutions; the high levels of citizen insecurity and increase in cases of police abuse; the increase in cases of physical and sexual abuse of children and adolescents; high levels of violence against LGBTI people; the criminalization of same-sex relationships; the death penalty; people in human mobility, mainly from Haiti, Cuba, and Venezuela; trafficking in women and girls, mainly of Venezuelan origin; the trafficking of women and girls, mainly of Venezuelan origin in Trinidad and Tobago; and the lack of prior consultation with indigenous peoples and tribal groups.

Finally, in **South America**, the prevalence of **9 trends** linked to the human rights situation, which include the impairment of democratic and human rights institutions; the impairment of judicial independence and increased impunity in Venezuela and Bolivia; violence, criminalization, stigmatizing statements that seek to delegitimize the work of defenders and social leaders; the high levels of institutional violence against groups in a special situation of exclusion and citizen insecurity; militarization in Venezuela and Colombia; poverty, inequality, and discrimination, especially in Brazil and Colombia; the high levels of migration and forced internal displacement; impunity for serious crimes of the past in Brazil; attacks on sites for preserving the memory of human rights violations in Chile and Uruguay; and the increase in initiatives and movements against recognizing and guaranteeing human rights, particularly those of women and LGBTI people.

- **Rights of Human Rights Defenders**

During the period covered by this report, the IACHR continued to receive troubling information about acts of violence against human rights defenders and therefore issued **18 recommendations** to the States through its (Twitter) social network. Stigmatizing pronouncements and acts of harassment continued in a number of countries in the region. In this regard, in Mexico, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, speeches were made by the highest authorities of the State which had the effect of delegitimizing the work of human rights defenders. As regards murders, the Commission learned of the murder of human rights defenders in Honduras, Mexico, Ecuador, and Colombia.

With respect to Colombia, and in light of the prevalence of violence against social leaders, in January 2021, the IACHR issued **3 recommendations** in its [press release No. 13/21](#) for compliance with the obligation to protect the life and personal integrity of those who defend human rights when they are in a situation of risk, even when that risk stems from the act(s) of a non-State agent.

The Commission also made a statement on the judicial proceedings under way for the [assassination of the indigenous leader Berta Cáceres](#) and issued **a recommendation on** effective access to justice, clarification of all the facts, establishment of the truth about what happened, and the punishment of all the perpetrators and instigators. In Honduras, human rights defenders play a fundamental role in the construction and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law.

The situation of justice operators in the Americas posed a number of challenges during the period covered by this report. In this regard, through [press release 65/21](#), the IACHR voiced its concern about impeachment proceedings against members of the Constitutional Court in Guatemala and issued a **recommendation** for the State to cease acts that represent severe threats to the independence of the judges of the Constitutional Court and, in particular, to refrain from promoting impeachment proceedings based on legal opinions or criteria of judicial personnel (justice operators).

The IACHR also expressed its concern over the dismissal of five magistrates of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice in El Salvador and of the Attorney General through [press release 110/21](#) and issued **2 recommendations** to preserve democratic institutionalality and ensure that the removal procedure be adopted in strict observance of the principle of legality and due process. Likewise, regarding Peru, the IACHR expressed its concern regarding the process for selecting and appointing judges to the Constitutional Court.

The right of association was also threatened during this period in Guatemala and Venezuela. In this regard, through press releases ([press release 128/21](#) and [press release 108/21](#)), the IACHR issued at least **3 recommendations** on the role of freedom of association as a fundamental tool for the full and complete exercise of the work of human rights defenders, and on the need for States to have competent bodies for the registration of their organizations that do not have a wide margin of discretion, nor provisions containing vague, ambiguous, and discretionary language that could arbitrarily and disproportionately curtail the exercise of the right of association.

- **Rights of Older Persons**

In its [Resolution 1/2021](#) concerning COVID-19 vaccines, the IACHR emphasized that the various groups in situations of special vulnerability face differentiated impacts derived from structural problems of exclusion and discrimination, and recommended that States adopt measures that include differentiated approaches, paying special heed to the situation of older persons in shelters and care centers. It also recommended **that States prioritize vaccination of the elderly**, among other groups, due to their higher risk of infection.

In this regard, on the occasion of the commemoration of the "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day" on June 15, 2021, the IACHR and its REDESCA issued **3 recommendations** by means of [press release 149/21](#), recalling the importance of prioritizing the elderly in the vaccination process against COVID-19.

With regard to the process of ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons, the IACHR welcomed, in its [press release](#) on March 9, 2021, the deposit by **Peru** of the instrument of accession, making it the **eighth country to ratify this Convention**. In addition, the IACHR continued its promotional efforts to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention, in events organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner and the Supreme Court of Chile.

- **Memory, Truth, and Justice**

During the first half of the year, the Commission embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at systematizing and disseminating the standards developed in the area of Memory, Truth, and Justice (MVJ). In this regard, **9 recommendations** were issued to the States on the matter via Twitter.

During the period under review, the Commission drafted the ["Compendium on Truth, Memory, Justice and Reparation in Transitional Contexts"](#), the main objective of which is to provide a **tool** for technical cooperation aimed at improving and strengthening the legislation, policies, and practices of States to move towards the fullest protection of human rights. Thus, the compendium calls on States to make diligent efforts to apply the legal standards of the inter-American human rights system. In addition, the IACHR promoted the standards relating to the right to truth at [a Regular Meeting of the OAS Permanent Council](#), on the occasion of the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims and through [press release 70/21](#) in commemoration of that day.

In addition, in the period covered by this report, the Commission published the Brazil which addresses impunity for serious human rights violations committed during the civil-military dictatorship. In particular, the IACHR analyzes the main Memory, Truth, and Justice (MTJ) measures adopted by the State in recent years and develops **6 recommendations** on comprehensive reparation, access to justice, and search for victims of enforced disappearance of that period.

- **Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR continued to monitor the situation of indigenous peoples, in particular, situations involving violations of territorial rights, consultation, and free, prior and informed consent, extractive and investment projects, and violence against indigenous peoples. In this regard, it issued on Twitter **19 recommendations** to States to mitigate the violations observed.

The IACHR issued **4 recommendations** through two press releases in conjunction with the OHCHR Regional Office for South America to address situations of violence and legal initiatives that impair the rights of indigenous peoples. In this regard, the first [joint communiqué 129/21](#) focuses on the acts of violence that have harmed the Yanomami and Munduruku indigenous peoples in Brazil, and on a series of bills before the legislature that violate the territorial rights of indigenous peoples. In a similar vein, the second [press release 195/21](#) focuses on the criminalization of Garifuna women human rights defenders dedicated to the defense of land, territory, and natural resources.

The Commission has also paid special attention to the situation of Colombia's indigenous peoples. In this regard, between February and April 2021, **seven virtual meetings** were held with representatives of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples to gather information on the challenges of implementing the Ethnic Chapter of the Peace Agreement. At those meetings, indigenous and Afro-Colombian representatives from the Pacific, Amazon, Orinoco, Andean, and Caribbean regions of Colombia stated that, despite the signing of the Peace Agreement, they **continue to suffer human rights violations** as a result of a series of factors, including the presence of armed actors, extractive projects, the planting and eradication of illicit crops, and the criminalization, violence, and murders of leaders.

- **Rights of LGBTI persons**

During the first half of the year, the Commission continued to monitor the human rights situation of LGBTI persons in the region and to promote Inter-American standards in this area. Thus, the IACHR has identified State measures that represent a setback in the recognition of the rights of LGBTI persons, particularly because they violate the rights to identity of trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse persons, including children and adolescents, and foster a general environment that is permissive of discrimination against trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse persons. As a result, **21 recommendations** were issued to States regarding measures to mitigate the setback observed.

The Commission has also stepped up its monitoring of situations involving violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sexual characteristics in the region. During the period covered by this report, following up on the **recommendations issued in the thematic reports**, the IACHR observed the **implementation of measures** by two countries in the region (Argentina and the United States).

In response to the increase in complaints about alleged efforts to modify or suppress diversities in the sexual orientation or gender identity of persons in the region, the Commission issued and widely disseminated the inter-American standards on the subject via [press release 102/21](#), in which it issued **at least 4 recommendations** for the protection of the human rights of lesbian women against practices that attempt to modify their sexual orientation.

The IACHR has also disseminated rights of LGBTI persons through press releases in the context of the days commemorating [Trans and Non-Binary Visibility](#), [International Day against Homophobia, Lesbophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia](#), the [Pride Celebration](#) and the [application of the gender approach as a tool to combat structural discrimination against LGBTI people and women](#). Via press releases, the IACHR issued at least **12 recommendations** and highlighted a number of **good practices** to address challenges in employability and discrimination against LGBTI persons, including the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation with specific protections for sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, as well as the adoption by the State, local governments, and autonomous state agencies of job quotas for trans persons.

- **Women's Rights**

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR **issued 21 recommendations** to the States through its social network in response to regressive measures observed in the region that hinder the exercise of rights by women, girls and adolescents, especially sexual and reproductive rights.

It also issued **3 recommendations** in [press release 198/21](#), highlighting the significance and usefulness of the **gender perspective** and calling on States to implement it as a key tool to combat structural discrimination against women and LGBTI people. Also, in an effort to compile and analyze the regressive measures adopted in the region, during this period the Rapporteurship finalized the **Technical Note** on current challenges to the rights of women, girls, and adolescents, related to the setbacks observed in the region. Through the analysis of concrete examples, the Commission reiterates the **main standards** in this area, as well as its most relevant recommendations, with a view to providing States and their officials, civil society organizations, academics, human rights defenders, students, and the general public with tools with which to act, demand, support, and influence full compliance with inter-American standards in this area.

The IACHR has also monitored progress and sound practices for addressing violence against women, with special emphasis on violence associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, it held **two digital forums** on social protection programs and measures to combat gender-based violence, as well as best practices for dealing with domestic violence in the context of the pandemic. In this regard, it stressed the importance of allocating sufficient resources for gender equality policies that promote public investment and ensure women's participation in economic recovery; this recovery must take into account the redistribution of resources, time, and power from a gender perspective.

The IACHR held **two meetings of female experts**, with the participation of representatives of organized civil society, international organizations in the field, and academic experts on the subject with experience

in the **countries of northern Central America**, who provided the latest information on **three topics**, namely: how gangs have adopted new ways of punishing and murdering women with acts that involve deprivation of liberty, sexual abuse, torture, dismemberment, decapitation, and concealment of remains in clandestine graves and cemeteries, designed to dehumanize, objectify, and exercise dominion over women, and to send a message of control and domination over the population; the need to formulate plans for the dissemination and promotion of women's rights that are also accessible and culturally acceptable, in particular, by strengthening essential health and justice services to provide better care, as well as allocating greater financial and technical resources to develop the capacities needed to address the problem; and, the great risk entailed in supporting reports of violence against women, who must face gangs, organized crime and extractive companies without effective or preventive protection for their work.

- **Rights of Afro-Descendants and efforts to combat Racial Discrimination**

The Commission also drew attention to the persistence of racial profiling patterns with respect to Afro-descendants in the actions of police and security forces in such countries as the United States, Brazil, Colombia, and Honduras. In view of this situation, the IACHR [reiterated](#) its recommendations regarding the eradication of such patterns of behavior and the fight against biases based on ethno-racial origin that result in racial profiling, as well as the need to move ahead with the granting of comprehensive reparations. Thus, the Commission issued **14 recommendations** to States via Twitter to mitigate the racial discrimination observed in the region.

During its visit to Colombia, the IACHR noted that racial discrimination is exacerbated in a context of [protests](#) and social demonstrations. The IACHR has likewise received information on political violence against Afro-descendent women in the Americas; on this, it issued at least **4 recommendations** to States in its [press release 191/21](#), including the development of a legislative and policy framework that provides for measures to prevent and combat this type of violence and multiple discrimination. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recommendations were also geared to the adoption and implementation of intercultural public health access policies for people of African descent that incorporate an intersectional approach.

The thematic report entitled "[Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of Persons of African Descent](#)" was also adopted. The report contains **58 recommendations in all**, including 19 recommendations on the principle of equality and non-discrimination; 2 recommendations on access to justice and the criminal justice system; and 37 recommendations on economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

The IACHR has been monitoring the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rights of this group, especially the violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. Through Twitter, it issued **6 recommendations** aimed at mitigating those impacts. In addition, setbacks were identified with respect to access to the right to work and the right to health, especially in relation to the continuity of medical treatment, along with difficulties in access to distance education, and restrictions on cultural activities. These aspects were mentioned in the presentation by the Rapporteur for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the OAS Permanent Council meeting, in the Annual Debate on the rights of persons with disabilities at the United Nations, and in the course organized by the Ministry of Public Defense of

Paraguay. This information also formed the basis of inputs for the report being prepared on Pandemic and Human Rights.

- **Rights of Migrants**

Through its various mechanisms, the IACHR continued to monitor, in particular, the impact of border closure policies on international protection processes, such as access to asylum, complementary protection, and statelessness adopted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; the persistence of national regulations to facilitate deportations and collective expulsions; as well as actions to restrict this population's access to vaccines and immunization procedures. The IACHR issued **18 recommendations** to States on this matter via Twitter.

In addition, the Commission issued [press release 82/21](#) in which it expressed its concern over the increase in mixed migratory movements and the recent tightening of migration policies in the region, both of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, along with at least **3 recommendations** as to how to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

The Commission also continued to observe the persistence of family separations associated with human mobility. [Practical Guide: How can family unit protection and family reunification be made more effective in situations of human mobility and mixed movements, and in the context of the pandemic?](#) This instrument identifies the challenges reportedly faced by States in maintaining family unity and preventing family separation in contexts associated with human mobility; proposes applicable inter-American standards in light of the States' international obligations; and offers **20 recommendations** to guarantee family unity and prevent the risks of family separation, guarantee family reunification, and minimize and overcome the effects of family separation on children and adolescents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to an increase in vulnerabilities that could result in people becoming victims of trafficking, especially sexual and labor exploitation. Despite that, in compliance with the recommendations issued in [Resolution 04/19 Guyana](#), for instance, took steps in this area that led to more robust legal frameworks to combat and prevent crime.

- **Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty**

The IACHR continued to keep close track of the situation of persons deprived of liberty in the context of the pandemic. In particular, the start of vaccinations, resumption of prison visits, holding of criminal hearings by videoconference, and the situation of persons at special risk. In addition, the rapporteurship for persons deprived of liberty (RPPL) continued to monitor the challenges posed by structurally embedded conditions, such as overcrowding, excessive use of pretrial detention, and high levels of violence. In this regard, the IACHR used Twitter to issue **18 recommendations** to States to take steps to remedy this situation.

In particular, the IACHR paid close attention to the situation of women deprived of liberty in the region. In that context, in [press release 159/21](#), the IACHR pronounced on the greater risk faced by women of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment; and, accordingly, called upon States to take measures with a gender perspective to prevent torture. It issued **3 recommendations** for States to adopt -- with all due diligence -- concrete measures to prevent and combat torture of women deprived of liberty.

In connection with the Request to the I/A Court HR for an **Advisory Opinion** on differentiated approaches to deprivation of liberty, the IACHR developed guidelines on the protection of groups at special risk. In particular, it developed guidelines on issues related to detention conditions tailored to particular circumstances, medical care, security measures, and social reintegration. The IACHR also participated in the public hearings on the subject convened by the Court from April 19 to 21. They were attended by 86 delegations, including representatives of States, OAS bodies, international organizations, and civil society organizations.

- **Rights of children and adolescents**

During the period covered by this report, the IACHR monitored the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rights of children and adolescents. In particular, the Commission tracked the to and fro surrounding the return to face-to-face classes and also took note of the progress made with initiating the vaccination of adolescents against COVID-19. The Commission also followed up on efforts to combat violence and discrimination against women, girls and adolescents. As a result of its work, **10 recommendations** were issued to States to address the situation observed.

In turn, the IACHR received **eight requests** for an introductory meeting to present the cooperation initiative with the organization *Both Ends Believing* for voluntary implementation of the *Children First* software application. As a result of these efforts, **two countries** have already formally expressed their support for the project, and **Panama** has already begun the implementation phase. This innovative trilateral cooperation initiative could potentially have a direct impact on the lives of thousands of children and adolescents in the region.

During this period, the IACHR also conducted the **Adolescent Forum - Honduras**, in which adolescents identified different situations in daily life in which girls and adolescents face inequality, discrimination, and violence. In particular, they expressed concern about discrimination and inequality in educational and family environments. As a main outcome of the Forum, the adolescents expressed their commitment to continue participating in inter-American human rights system activities.

In addition, the Commission held the [first IACHR hearing simulation event](#), which was attended by **45 adolescents** from **13 countries** in the region. Participants simulated three hearings on issues related to the fight against gender-based violence and played the roles of civil society, States and IACHR. This novel initiative provided a safe opportunity for adolescents from several countries to learn about this important IACHR mechanism.

- **Coordinated strategy to address the human rights crises in Cuba and Haiti**

- **Situation of Human Rights in Cuba**

The IACHR has paid special attention to the human rights situation in Cuba. Thus, during the period covered by this report, it monitored the San Isidro Movement, the impact of the pandemic, food shortages, and other developments. As a result, **2 press releases** were published, containing at least **5 recommendations** to the State.

At the same time, progress was made with the dialogues with local organizations, activists and Cuban workers, using a variety of methodological tools for documenting information and taking testimonies. In that regard, **4 testimonies** were taken on labor rights matters.

- **Situation of Human Rights in Haiti**

The IACHR kept close track of the worsening political, institutional, social, and citizen insecurity crisis in the country during the past few months. In [press release 38/21](#) the IACHR issued at least **four recommendations to the State** to resume political dialogue, preserve democratic institutions, investigate and clarify all violations of rights in the context of political and institutional tensions, as well as to adopt measures to ensure their non-repetition.

In light of the crisis in Haiti, characterized by political polarization, institutional distrust, and increasing violence, including the action of armed groups in the capital Port-au-Prince and the displacement of more than 14,000 people since June 2021, the IACHR has conducted more robust and in-depth monitoring through its Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI-HAITI).

- **89 recommendations issued through publication of the Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Brazil**



On March 5, 2021, the IACHR published its report on the [Human Rights Situation in Brazil](#). The Report contains a comprehensive diagnosis of the human rights situation in the country through December 2019, based on the abundant information received during and subsequent to the [visit to Brazil conducted from November 5-12, 2018](#), as well as in country and thematic public hearings, among other sources. In its analysis, the Commission observed that, despite having rule of law, a democratic system, and human rights institutions, Brazil faces structural challenges related to historically neglected discrimination, which hits specific groups hardest, such as people of African descent, women, *quilombola* communities, indigenous peoples, peasant and rural workers, street people, and people living in slums or peripheral areas on the outskirts of cities.

In the Report, the Commission formulates [89 recommendations](#) to consolidate a system for the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with commitments entered into by the State of Brazil in the inter-American and international spheres. However, the Report also warns of a set of actions that tend to undermine and even eliminate this system, such as the weakening of democratic safeguards.

- **4 thematic reports drawn up and published**

- During the first half of 2021, **4 thematic reports** were drawn up and published:

The Commission approved and published [Practical Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Risk Mitigation Plans for Human Rights Defenders](#). The document aims to provide a tool for civil society and the States in the region that addresses the basic aspects of mitigating risks faced by human rights defenders. It also makes **19 recommendations** with a view to contributing to mitigation of the risks faced by these groups in the Americas.

At the same time, together with UNHCR, the IACHR published the [Practical Guide: How can family unit protection and family reunification be made more effective in situations of human mobility and mixed movements, and in the context of the pandemic?](#) The Guide makes **20 recommendations** addressed to States for maintaining family unity, preventing the risks of separation, and taking all necessary steps to reunite families that have been separated in contexts associated with human mobility.

The Commission also approved and published two compendiums. On the one hand, the compendium "Obligation of States to Adapt Their Domestic Legislation to the Inter-American Standards of Human Rights", designed to provide a technical cooperation tool, available to individuals and actors who use the system, such as public policy operators, other State agents, and representatives of civil society, social movements, academia, and so on. In addition, it is worth mentioning the "Compendium on truth, memory, justice and reparation in transitional contexts", which systematizes the standards developed during the IACHR's monitoring of, and reaching decisions on, cases involving the rights to truth, justice, and reparation for serious human rights violations in connection with transitions from dictatorships to democracy or in peace-building and consolidation processes. The same document also addresses memory and guarantees of non-repetition as fundamental pillars for strengthening the rule of law and a culture of human rights in the region.

► **Two working visits conducted, plus one promotional visit.**

Location/ State	Date	Type of visit	Subject(s) / Issues/ rapporteur(s)
Mexico	January 11 and 12	Working	The Commission completed the second part of its virtual working visit to Mexico that began in December 2020 on people in a situation of human mobility. The purpose of the visit was to obtain information on the human mobility situation in Mexico; in particular on cross-border issues in the country. Link to the press release. Link to preliminary observations - 16 recommendations issued.
Honduras	May 11 and 13	Promotional	The Commission conducted a virtual working visit of a promotional nature with a view to promoting inter-American standards in the fight against violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents, as well as collaborating with the State of Honduras in the implementation of the recommendations issued by the IACHR in the thematic report on Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents. In this regard, the Government of Honduras emphasized its commitment to continue efforts to prioritize the issue , with a view to achieving more effective state responses and boosting resources for the prevention, eradication, and punishment of gender-based violence and discrimination. Link to the press release.
Colombia	June 8 to 10	Working	The Commission conducted a working visit to Colombia in connection with the social protests. As a result of the visit, the IACHR presented observations and recommendations with a view to contributing to the consolidation of dialogue as a mechanism for overcoming social conflict. Link to the press release. Link to the observations and recommendations - 41 recommendations issued.

➤ **42 public hearings related to monitoring and new human rights situations in the region**

The IACHR followed up on and drew attention to a significant number of human rights situations at thematic hearings that it convened. To that end, during the first half of the year, the Commission held **2 (two) periods of sessions** in virtual format owing to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, through **42 public hearings**, the IACHR was able to listen to the views of representatives of **approximately 280 civil society organizations from 14 countries** in the region. That represents a **56% increase in the number of countries represented** (9 countries) and a **163% increase in the number of hearings** (16 hearings), compared to the same reporting period last year.

Within the framework of the Sessions held between March 15 and 26, 2021, the IACHR held **21 public hearings**. Hearings were held regarding the States of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Five of those hearings addressed regional issues, such as the human rights situation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, women deprived of liberty, cross-border indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees in South America during the pandemic, and sexual and reproductive rights. In addition, a regional hearing was held on Internet content moderation and freedom of expression in the Americas.

In addition, from June 21 to July 2, 2021, the IACHR held its [180th Period of Sessions](#) with **21 public hearings**. Of those, 8 were on human rights issues in the States of Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Venezuela. Two hearings were also convened ex officio, one on the general human rights situation in El Salvador and a second on the human rights situation in Brazil in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, a regional hearing was held on the use of virtual hearings in criminal proceedings in the region in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

➤ **Impacts -- thanks to the issuance of 21 requests for information made to 16 member states -- on preventive measures and factors that lead to human rights violations**

During this period, the IACHR issued **21 letters requesting information from States** in the region: Three of them were prepared in accordance with Article 18 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and 18 pursuant to Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

Using that mechanism, the IACHR addressed human rights situations in **16 countries** in the region: Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States, and Uruguay. **14 replies** were received **from the States**, representing **60.8% of the total** number of letters sent, while 8 remained unanswered. During the period analyzed, the IACHR addressed the following issues: the situation of migrants, political rights in the context of elections, women's rights, children's and adolescents' rights, legislative and constitutional reforms, human rights in the context of protests, state response to demonstrations, the rights of LGBTI persons and laws that may limit the rights of trans and gender-diverse persons, democratic institutions, and the situation of persons deprived of liberty.

► **69 press releases issued by the IACHR related to monitoring of the human rights situation in the region, individual countries, and priority issues for the IACHR**

Through press releases, the IACHR was in a better position to work in favor of the protection and promotion of human rights in the region. In the first half of 2021, **69 press releases** were issued: an **increase of 13%** compared to the 61 press releases issued during the same previous-year period.

Through this mechanism, the Commission addressed the human rights situation in **16 countries in the region**, either across-the-board or in relation to certain issues and specific segments of the population in the country. As a result, the IACHR issued more than **46 recommendations** to States to address the human rights situation.

In particular, 7 press releases deal with various issues and countries in connection with human rights violations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The topics addressed included: protests, racial discrimination, migrants, persons deprived of their freedom, human rights defenders, excessive use of force, the rights of women and girls, the rights of LGBTI people and the elderly, the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, issues related to memory, truth, and justice, democratic institutions, 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

► **Action Plan approved**

In early 2021, the IACHR approved the **2020-2023 Triennial Plan** of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, presented by Special Rapporteur Pedro Vaca, whose term began in October 2020. The Plan, which is based on a reading of the current situation in the region, linked to increasingly poor public debate of the main issues at stake and failures to comply with commitments to advance plurality and inclusion in the Americas, proposes the following **five strategic pillars**: a) Protect, promote and advance inter-American standards of freedom of expression; b) Denounce the impact of more widespread authoritarianism on freedom of expression; c) Address the digital challenges to freedom of expression; d) Help deal with imminent challenges facing the region; and e) Institutional strengthening of the Office of the Special Rapporteur.

The Plan was discussed and shared with different stakeholders, including member states, donors, civil society, and academics in the region, who agreed on many of the concerns and challenges identified through the Office's monitoring. The Plan aims to build on the consolidated bases and achievements of past mandates, and to propose a cross-cutting approach with a gender perspective and attention to historically discriminated groups.

► **Inter-American standards disseminated and promoted**

The Office of the Special Rapporteur organized and participated in approximately **33 events to disseminate** inter-American **standards** and provide training on freedom of expression. Due to the confinement measures and restrictions on movements recommended during the pandemic, all events were held virtually. In that context, interventions by the Rapporteurship focused on major current issues.

During the first half of 2021, the Office of the Special Rapporteur paid special heed to issues concerning freedom of expression on the Internet: the regulation and moderation of online content and expression, specific challenges to them in Latin America, and possible regulatory approaches that might be developed to ensure that digital environments promote democratic safeguards and are aligned with international human rights standards. The Rapporteurship also participated in multiple events and organized private meetings to address emergencies regarding the safety of journalists in the Americas, threats to freedom of expression, and the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Partners in organizing dissemination events include the Inter-American Dialogue, the Government of Canada, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, OHCHR-Mexico and Central America, *Race and Equality*, guarantor bodies in the region, and various civil society organizations.

The Office of the Special Rapporteur also addressed other issues, including challenges faced by journalists, inequality, violence against -- and arbitrary detentions of -- women journalists, human rights violations in connection with social protests in a number of countries in the region, the presentation of the 2020 Annual Report of the IACHR and its chapter on freedom of expression, and the status of freedom of expression in Chile. Finally, the Rapporteurship also held a series of working meetings with OAS Permanent Missions, donors, partners, and civil society organizations regarding the creation, development and coordination of the **Inter-American Dialogue on Freedom of Expression on the Internet**.

It is worth highlighting the moment for reflection created in connection with Nicaragua's National Journalists' Day, March 1, with the participation of representatives of the international community, organized jointly with the Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for Central America and the Dominican Republic. Those organizing that event presented a [declaration](#) in which they invited the international community to continue and intensify its observation of the plight of journalists in Nicaragua.

► **Monitoring of freedom of expression**

The Office of the Special Rapporteur (RELE) also accomplished important objectives in connection with the monitoring of the worst situations in the Americas, including the presentation of its [2020 Annual Report](#) on the situation of freedom of expression in the Americas. During the 179th Regular Session of the IACHR, the IACHR and the Rapporteurship convened a **thematic hearing** on moderation of content on the Internet and freedom of expression in the Americas that then led to the Dialogue on freedom of expression on the Internet entrusted by the IACHR to the Rapporteurship through the press release [in which it warns of a turning point in freedom of expression on the Internet and calls for a dialogue in the region](#). The Rapporteur also took part in **4 thematic** and country **hearings** on issues of great relevance to the Office because they addressed freedom of expression.

In the first half of the year, the Office of the Special Rapporteur also took part in the [working visit of the IACHR to Colombia](#), which took place from June 8 to 10. The Rapporteur shared his expertise on the standards protecting the exercise of protest, especially as of the 2019 Report on Protest and Human Rights sponsored by his office. The Rapporteur, as part of the delegation, held meetings with national and municipal authorities in Cali and Bogotá. He also met with various victims of human rights violations, human rights defenders, women's groups, Afro-descendants, indigenous people, journalists, representatives of social movements, business associations, and law enforcement officers. He also received testimonies from different media outlets and journalists, visited demonstration sites, and contributed to the preparation of the **Observations Report**, particularly with considerations regarding

journalistic work, roadblocks (*cortes de ruta*) and the Internet as a forum for protest, and recommendations in that regard.

Worth highlighting is the participation in **2 important initiatives** of the IACHR in connection with [SACROI COVID-19](#). The first of these involved contributing to the drafting of [Guide N° 3 How to promote universal access to the Internet during the COVID-19 pandemic?](#). The guide is part of a series of innovative tools to contribute to the observance of, and guarantees for, human rights and it includes specific recommendations on public policies to guide the practices and decisions adopted by States in dealing with the pandemic. A second initiative in which RELE provided essential inputs was the drafting of [Resolution No. 01/21 - COVID-19 Vaccines](#) within the framework of inter-American human rights obligations. Specifically in the sections related to the active dissemination of appropriate and sufficient information on vaccines and counteracting disinformation; the right to free, prior, and informed consent; and the right of access to information, transparency, and the fight against corruption.

Worth highlighting, finally, is the launching of the **Tech4Rights** Fellowship Program, aimed at strengthening specialized civil society capacities in the region, and those of the Office and of the IACHR, for greater intersection with the global technology industry. The **two positions** for 2021 were awarded to nationals from Peru and El Salvador, who have been contributing a digital perspective to the work of RELE in the use of protection mechanisms in the inter-American human rights system.

➤ Press Releases and Communications to States

During the first half of 2021 the Office of the Special Rapporteur published [12 press releases](#) which were replicated by a number of international media outlets. Among other topics, they addressed the situation of violence against journalists and events in **Mexico**; the persistent harassment of journalists, artists, and human rights defenders in **Cuba**; attacks against the press and journalists in **Ecuador**; the situation of freedom of expression in **Nicaragua**; attacks on journalists and human rights defenders and the closure of democratic outlets in **Venezuela**; and the emerging challenges and current state of freedom of expression in digital environments. A final communiqué, published jointly with the United Nations Special Procedures, addressed the issue of State repression of protests in **Colombia** and served as a prelude to the visit to that country.

In addition, the Office of the Special Rapporteur requested information from States regarding situations that could impair freedom of expression, through **4 letters** issued under Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights. The letters addressed structurally embedded violations of freedom of expression. Two were sent to **Honduras** and **Guatemala** regarding cases of threats and intimidation of journalists and press workers. One was sent to **Mexico** concerning the exposure of journalists and media outlets in morning press conferences in order to combat fake news; and one to **Chile** regarding violations of the right to freedom of expression in that country.

➤ Promotion of strategic petitions and cases

The I/A Court H.R. held public hearings in the following **three cases** related to the right to freedom of expression: *Jineth Bedoya et al v. Colombia*, *Palacio Urrutia et al v. Ecuador*, and *Maya Kaqchikel de Sumpango Indigenous Peoples v. Guatemala*. The Court will now have an opportunity to pronounce in greater depth on the obligations of States to protect journalists and on the administration of justice with a gender perspective, including **investigation of crimes of sexual violence**; to delve deeper into the guarantees of **independence and impartiality** that judicial bodies must have in the face of external pressures in criminal proceedings related to journalists and the media, and to make progress with respect

to the **decriminalization of “honor crimes”** and the proportionality of civil sanctions; and finally, to develop its doctrine on the obligations of States regarding **the freedom of expression of indigenous groups**, particularly through community radio stations, and their right to non-discrimination.

In addition, the Office of the Special Rapporteur submitted to the IACHR, and the Commission approved, the Report on Admissibility and Merits of *Yoanis Sanchez v. Cuba*. In that Report the Cuban State is found guilty of violations of various rights including personal integrity, freedom of expression, assembly, and movement.

Finally, the IACHR remitted the cases of *Santiago Leguizamon and Family v. Paraguay* and *Rogelio Viteri Ungareti and Family v. Ecuador* to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These cases address the issues of **violence against journalists and the issue of impunity, and whistleblower protection**, respectively.

Regarding the petitions system, during the first half of 2021 the Office contributed with its **technical opinion** to an admissibility report drafted by the IACHR, concerning failure to punish prejudiced expressions against LGBTI persons uttered by a public official in Brazil, while performing his representative functions (**P 906-16**).

As for the **precautionary measures** mechanism, the Office of the Special Rapporteur collaborated in the study of **28 requests for precautionary measures, nine of which were granted** by the IACHR. **Three** of them correspond to protection granted to independent journalists and communicators in **Nicaragua** in the context of the repression and restriction of press freedom that the country has been experiencing since the protests of April 2018: MC 907-20 (Nicaragua) - granted to TikToker Kevin Monzón; MC 366-21 (Nicaragua) - granted to independent journalist Kalúa Salazar; and MC 1606-18 (Nicaragua) - extension in favor of Javier Iván Olivares, a journalist working with *Confidencial*. **Six** of them correspond to independent journalists, human rights defenders, and activists in **Cuba** who have been victims of harassment, threats, and arbitrary detentions: MC 211-20 (Cuba) - granted to members of the Citizens' Committee for Racial Integration (CIR)-; MC 374-20 (Cuba) - granted to independent journalist Roberto de Jesús Quiñones Haces; MC 522-20 (Cuba) - granted to independent journalist María de los Ángeles Matienzo Puerto and human rights defender Kirenía Yalit Núñez Pérez; MC 241-21 (Cuba) - granted to independent journalist Yoel Suárez Fernández; MC 211-20 (Cuba) - extension in favor of Esber Rafael Ramírez Argota, member of the CIR; and MC 1101-20 (Cuba) - extension in favor of Aminta D'Cardenas Soroa and Carlos Manuel Álvarez, members of the San Isidro Movement.

Office of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights - SRESCER

► Three-Year Plan drawn up and approved

One of the main achievements of the semester was the drafting of REDESCA's Strategic Agenda 2021-2023, which contains the action plan for the Special Rapporteur's new term. It highlights, in particular, activities carried out in connection with the annual and strategic planning of the mandate. Thus, six workshops were held to forge **REDESCA's Three-Year Plan for the 2021-2022 period**, including one with external experts in ESCER to discuss progress and challenges in this field, as well as strategic lines of action. On March 26, during the 179th Period of Sessions, the IACHR approved by acclamation the **Strategic**

Agenda 2021-2023, with the following **strategic** priorities: Right to Health and its social determinants; Pandemic and food crisis; Climate emergency and the human right to water; Human mobility and ESCER; Business and human rights; Labor and trade union rights; Fiscal and economic policies: impacts of corruption on ESCER; Education, science, technology: academic freedom and university autonomy.

➤ **ESCE rights promoted and mandate disseminated**

During the first half of 2021, SRESCER organized and/or participated in **45 promotional and academic activities** on various topics related to its mandate in several countries in the region and took part in additional working meetings. Those events were coordinated with universities, public institutions, international organizations, and/or civil society organizations.

Notably, **4 of those events** were held to disseminate **Resolution 1/21**:

- Presentation of the resolution by the President of the IACHR and the Special Rapporteur at a meeting of the Permanent Council.
- Event on "Resolution 1/21: Dialogue on pandemics, vaccines, and human rights in the Americas, with the participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, the President of the IACHR, Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, as well as representatives of key entities such as ECLAC, UNESCO, PAHO and leading experts.
- Social Forum on COVID-19 vaccines organized within the framework of the 180th Period of Sessions of the IACHR.
- Dissemination of Resolution 1/21 at the event "Access to COVID-19 vaccines in the framework of international human rights obligations: obligations to cooperate internationally and not to discriminate in their distribution domestically," organized by the *American University Washington College of Law*.

To promote rights related to a **healthy environment**, at least **5 events** were held, including, notably, the following:

- Presentation on health and environment during the 4th International Forum on Environmental Justice and Law, organized by the Environmental Tribunal of Chile.
- Joint organization of the Colloquium -- together with the International Network on Climate Change, Energy and Human Rights (RICEDH) and the Max Planck Institute -- on the implementation of Environmental *Ius Commune* in the region, marking the presentation of three literary works on the subject.
- Drafting of a technical assistance note, at the request of the Congress of the Republic of Peru, on a bill for the protection of the rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama).
- Sponsorship and participation in a virtual discussion forum, from a human rights perspective, on management of environmental damage in the Brazilian mining sector.
- Presentation on the obligation of States to conduct Social, Environmental and Rights Impact Assessments before authorizing mega-projects and inter-American standards.

Major events regarding the right to **education** included:

- Organization of the "International Conference for Academic Freedom", in which the Special Rapporteur highlighted the close relationship between the right to academic freedom and guarantees for ESCER.

- Participation in the celebration of the second anniversary of the Abidjan Principles on the Right to Education.
- Participation in the event organized by Mexico's National Institute of Access to Information: "Education and public information: key rights for the prevention of gender-based violence", in which the Special Rapporteur gave a presentation on education as a key tool for promoting equality and access to information.

In its **Business and Human Rights** area, the following 6 events are highlighted:

- Technical support from REDESCA with drafting the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights of Peru and Ecuador.
- Together with the Institute of Legal Research and IHRS Observatory of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the law school of the University of Monterrey (UDEM) and its Center for Business and Human Rights organized the Twelfth Public Conference on Business and Human Rights.
- Participation in the Regional Consultation for the Americas in support of the 2021 Task Force Report at the invitation of the Columbia University Center on Sustainable Investment, UDEM, Universidad Andrés Bello, and the United Nations Working Group on the issue of Human Rights, Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises.
- Participation in the *Berlin Dialogue on Business and Human Rights*, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, in which the Special Rapporteur on ESCER gave a presentation on the contents of the report entitled "Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards."
- Participation in the event to disseminate the "Special Dossier on Business and Human Rights: Advances, challenges, and proposals to expedite a collaborative work agenda" on April 7, organized by the Special Dossier of the Electronic Journal of the Human Rights Council of the CABA Ombudsman's Office (REC).
- SRESCER participation in the launching of the FIO-RINDHCA report on private security.

Finally, with respect to **human mobility** and ESCER, the Office participated in a panel organized by the International Conference of Donors in Solidarity with Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela on the challenges faced by refugees and migrants from Venezuela in finding adequate housing. Also worth noting in this connection are two training courses on poverty, inequality, and ESCER in Central America and Mexico for public officials from different portfolios and for National Human Rights Institutions.

► **Monitoring the situation of ESCER in the region**

SRESCER continues to actively and permanently monitor the situation of ESCER in the Americas, sharing its findings, in particular, with the various Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Units (SACROIs) of the IACHR. The monitoring has focused on the right to health, its social determinants, and follow-up to the guidelines established by [Resolutions 1/2020, 4/2020, and 1/2021](#). In the current context, SRESCER has also emphasized the development, access to, and equal and non-discriminatory distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. In addition, in connection with its monitoring activities, in the period covered by this report, the Office issued [9 press releases](#).

As part of its monitoring activities, SRESCER promoted several virtual meetings with different stakeholders in the region. Thus, it participated in the meeting with NHRIs from **Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras** on April 26, where the general human rights situation of these countries and the institutions themselves were discussed. SRESCER also participated in the SACROI meetings of the countries with currently acute

situations, namely **El Salvador** and **Colombia**. Regarding this last point, SRESCER made a joint statement with independent experts from the UN and RELE condemning the violent repression of peaceful protests in **Colombia** and called on the Government to conduct a thorough and independent investigation into reported deaths, sexual violence, allegations of torture, cases of alleged arbitrary detentions, and enforced disappearances.

At the same time, with respect to specific country situations, close contact was maintained with Nicaraguan medical and scientific organizations on the pandemic situation and the implementation of vaccination plans in **Nicaragua**. On April 13, a meeting was held with the **Venezuelan Alliance for Labor Rights** to follow up on the situation of labor rights and other ESCER in the country. Likewise, in relation to **Brazil**, a meeting was held with civil society organizations to discuss the situation of the pandemic in that country and their main concerns in that regard.

At the same time, during this period SRESCER issued press releases on a series of situations that are affecting guarantees for, and protection of, ESCER in the region. First, in relation to **Cuba**, SRESCER issued a joint press release with the IACHR expressing concern about the persistent and acute food shortages in Cuba, which have been impacting food security and living conditions and the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of the population, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, SRESCER issued a joint communiqué with the IACHR and RELE, condemning the harassment of artists, journalists, and human rights defenders in Cuba, and called on the State to cease acts of persecution against those who exercise their right to freedom of expression.

With respect to **Brazil**, SRESCER and the Commission voiced their concern over the high number of infections and deaths recorded in Brazil as a result of COVID-19. They called upon the State to reinforce the measures taken to safeguard the rights to life, physical integrity, and health of the affected population, in particular by adopting broader public health measures, with the provision of adequate medical supplies, materials, and services for the medical care of persons requiring treatment for COVID-19, as well as ensuring the labor rights and biosecurity of health workers. In addition, SRESCER together with RELE issued a joint communiqué voicing their concern over the activation of criminal defamation mechanisms against a university professor in Brazil and calling on the State to respect academic freedom.

Likewise, in relation to the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement, SRESCER participated in two pronouncements. One was issued with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the IACHR; the second was drafted by SRESCER and signed jointly with the IACHR. Both were published on April 22, 2021 and pointed out that SRESCER and the IACHR consider that the Escazú Agreement reinforces the principles and obligations established in inter-American norms and jurisprudence on the right to a healthy environment, highlighting the need to guarantee the so-called "access rights" to ensure their enforcement, such as the effective protection of the right of people to defend the environment. Thus, they called on the Latin American and Caribbean States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to this important treaty, which does so much to consolidate the recognition and effective protection of environmental rights in the region.

► **Inter-American system strengthened in the context of the pandemic**

On the occasion of World Health Day on April 7, 2021, the IACHR published a press release announcing **Resolution 1/2021 on vaccines and human rights**. The Resolution itself sets a **new inter-American human rights standard** on COVID-19 vaccines and, at the same time, consolidates pre-existing inter-American standards on seven major issues: equality and non-discrimination; pro-active dissemination of adequate and sufficient information; the right to free, prior, and informed consent; the right of access to

information, transparency, and the fight against corruption; business and human rights; and international cooperation.

This development of standards takes place in a new and hitherto unexplored setting, for which the standards developed in these aspects and in relation to the right to health, by Resolutions 1/2020, 4/2020, the Report on Business and Human Rights, and other instruments were of great importance. The **35 recommendations** contained Resolution 1/2021 accordingly create new standards in this field.

► **Specialized contributions and opinions in the processing of petitions and cases**

The Special Rapporteurship also continued to provide specialized assistance in the petitions and cases system at all stages of proceedings before the IACHR, as well as with the precautionary measures for which its views were requested. SRESCER provided expert input for **6 draft reports on the merits** and **14 draft precautionary measures**, 2 of which were granted.

In addition, SRESCER participated in the hearing before the Inter-American Court in the case of **Vera Rojas v. Chile**. The meeting afforded an opportunity for the Office of the Special Rapporteur to present arguments regarding the protection of the right to health in the context of catastrophic diseases. Likewise, in its arguments, the Rapporteurship was able to include the right to care as a point to be considered by the Court.

SRESCER also participated in the hearing before the Inter-American Court in the case of **Pavez v. Chile**, which refers to the alleged international responsibility of the State for the disqualification, based on sexual orientation, of Ms. Sandra Cecilia Pavez from teaching religion in a public educational institution, a position she had held for more than 22 years.

► **Working visits conducted**

SRESCER was part of the delegation that conducted the virtual visit to Mexico on December 16-17, 2020, and January 11-12, 2021. It is worth noting that SRESCER played a significant role, contributing substantially to the content of the observations on the visit and the press release. In the same vein, SRESCER seeks to continue reinforcing efforts with the Executive Secretariat to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms that yield valuable information for the performance of its mandate.

From June 8 to 10, a SRESCER consultant was part of the delegation during the IACHR working visit to Colombia, surveying and monitoring the human rights situation in that country, with the constant backing and support of the Special Rapporteur. In that regard, a series of recommendations were made within the framework of the ESCER.

P7: Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI)

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR updated and reorganized its SACROIs, with a view to making a more effective and timely impact on emerging human rights situations in the region. In that connection, the IACHR decided to deactivate the Chile and United States SACROIs and to keep the thematic (COVID-19) SACROI and Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Haiti SACROIs in operation.

- **COVID-19 SACROI**

During the reporting period, the IACHR continued to implement its plan of action for the [COVID-19 SACROI](#). In that context, one notable development was the adoption of obligations” which formulates **35**

recommendations to the States on the subject, along with the publication of two Practical Guides: [How to promote universal Internet access during the COVID-19 pandemic?](#) and [Protecting family unity and reunification in situations of human mobility in the context of the pandemic](#). Both guides provide guidelines for States to enable them to comply with 1. the obligation to provide Internet access to individuals and groups who, owing to various (socioeconomic, geographic location, age, and other) factors, lack such access and 2. the principle of family unity and reunification in international migration procedures.

Accordingly, the IACHR monitored and followed up on compliance with the recommendations issued in Resolutions 1/20, 4/20, and 1/21. To that end, the Commission systematically recorded media and press coverage in a database, along with the various measures and resolutions adopted by authorities and branches of government in the region, including judicial bodies.

In addition, the IACHR issued **6 press releases** on human rights situations in the context of the pandemic, namely: [access to justice, public health and human rights associated with decisions and public policies on vaccines, transgender and gender-diverse people's rights in the measures of partial restriction of human mobility rights of trans and gender-diverse people during partial restrictions on mobility principle of enhanced due diligence and the right of access to justice; and](#) and [older persons in the vaccination process](#).

- **SACROI Colombia**

During the period covered by this report, SACROI Colombia intensively monitored the human rights situation in the context of the protests that began on April 28 in that country. In that connection, it held meetings with several key State actors, the international community, and civil society.

It also issued **5 press releases** on the situation, highlighting the [large number of complaints of human rights violations during the social protests](#), the [repression of peaceful protests](#), [the working visit](#) and the [opportunity for dialogue](#); and [international obligations, forms of violence, and gross violations of human rights](#).

From June 7 to 10, the IACHR conducted a [working visit to the country](#) and on July 7 published its [observations and 41 recommendations](#).

- **SACROI El Salvador**

On May 2, the IACHR decided to install a SACROI for El Salvador, with a view to monitoring and addressing the serious situation affecting institutions and human rights in the country. The installation of the SACROI was announced in a press release, in which [the IACHR condemns the removal of the judges of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice without respect for due process and urges El Salvador to preserve the rule of law](#).

Within this framework, during the period covered by this report, meetings were held with key players in the State, the international community, and civil society. The IACHR held one on El Salvador in which it expressed its concern regarding the impairment of democratic institutions and judicial independence, the militaristic approach adopted in citizen security policy, and its impact on the enjoyment of human rights of the population.

- **SACROI Haiti**

In the framework of SACROI Haiti, the IACHR published a press release in which it [reviewed with concern the political and institutional situation in Haiti, and called for dialogue with respect for human rights and the rule of law.](#)

- **SACROI Brazil**

In connection with the Brazil Sacroi, during the period covered by this report, the IACHR held meetings with key actors of the State, the international community, and civil society to monitor the human rights situation in the context of the pandemic in that country. Thus, the IACHR held an [ex officio hearing entitled "Human Rights Situation in the Context of the Pandemic in Brazil,"](#) in which it reiterated its solidarity with Brazilian society in the face of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while expressing its particular concern for the human rights of individuals and groups in situations of vulnerability in that context.

P8: Integrated Information Analysis and Management Platform (IIAMP)

The establishment of this platform is aimed at consolidating a homogeneous methodology for the collection, recording, analysis, management and production of information by the IACHR. To perform its functions more effectively in a context of limited resources, the Commission continues to build strategic partnerships with universities and other relevant stakeholders, as well as to strengthen its monitoring capabilities.

In addition, the IACHR is continuing its efforts to attract funding for the implementation, with the help of the Technology Unit, of the various management and computer system components of the IIAMP.

In terms of methodology, the IACHR has defined common criteria for classifying information so that it can be recorded and systematized it in its monitoring and follow-up systems. As for technology, the IACHR currently has software that allows it to record, classify, systematize, analyze and incorporate information according to established (thematic, geographic, and structural) parameters, thereby facilitating coordination of the work of the different areas. It is currently the main information management tool used by state entities, academia, civil society organizations, the media, international organizations, and other bodies, as well as by the Monitoring and Technical Cooperation areas of the IACHR and its Special Rapporteurships. Using an integrated use of information methodology, the Commission seeks to ensure strategic and timely decision-making and reporting.

In addition, thanks to the information platform, the IACHR presents its analytical findings via periodic panels on the outlook for, and analysis of, the human rights situation in the Americas. In the first half of 2021, the IACHR presented an analysis of the human rights situation, conducted as part of the preparation of its [2020 Annual Report](#), and its analysis of [the human rights situation in Brazil](#).

S03

To promote democracy, human dignity, equality, justice, and fundamental freedoms based on a pro-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

- Through numerous events, courses, and other training activities during the first half of 2021, the IACHR strengthened the capacities of state institutions and civil society organizations of member states to incorporate inter-American human rights standards at the domestic level and strengthen institutions and public policies with a human rights approach. The activities carried out during the six months covered by this report comprise the following categories:
 - 15 training events on standards and mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system, for some 580 participants.
 - 62 promotional activities in conjunction with multilateral institutions and organizations in the region and the world.
 - 8 open webinars.
- Cooperative ties established with Caribbean and Central American countries to strengthen human rights and democratic institutions, resulting in:
 - 6 virtual training courses held for civil society and human rights organizations on inter-American standards and memory, truth, and justice in transitional justice contexts.
 - 2 virtual training courses designed for justice operators from Guatemala and Honduras.
 - Meeting with the heads and representatives of the NHRIs of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.
 - Adoption by the IACHR of the Strategy for Strengthening the Work of the IACHR in the Caribbean (2021).
 - Detailed analysis and review of the human rights situation in each of the 14 CARICOM countries.
 - Requests for cooperation and counseling from government agencies in Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
 - Training for Saint Lucia government officials on racial discrimination and discrimination against women.
- The IACHR advanced technical cooperation in the area of institutions and public policies with a focus on human rights, resulting in the following:

- 3 open meetings with civil society organizations from 19 member states within the framework of the 179th Period of Sessions of the IACHR
- 4 open meetings with civil society organizations from 19 member states within the framework of the 180th Period of Sessions of the IACHR
- Meetings during IACHR sessions with the International Coalition of Human Rights Organizations in the Americas
- 19 universities and academic centers currently participate in the IHRS Specialized Academic Network.

P9: Expanded Program for Training and Promotion of Human Rights-oriented Thinking and Culture

► Promotion and training on the IAHRs

The IACHR engaged in activities to disseminate -- and train users in -- its working mechanisms, inter-American human rights standards, and decisions and jurisprudence developed in the IAHRs with a view to fostering greater understanding of their scope and encouraging their application and inclusion, with a human rights-based approach, in decisions, regulatory frameworks, and public policies.

Throughout the first half of 2021, the Commission, through its Special and Thematic Rapporteurships and other departments, managed to consolidate its promotion and training activities by using new virtual tools, such as synchronous and asynchronous configuration platforms, including the *Massive Open Online Course* (MOOC) and Virtual Classrooms. During the period covered by this report, 15 training activities were carried out for some 580 participants, including the following:

International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights-IPPDH Mercosur

The 5th International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights, held jointly with the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH), began on May 11, and will end in October. The objective of this course is to train relevant actors in the region in the human rights approach to public policy. 100 people from 24 OAS member states were selected, including government officials, members of the judiciary, and members of civil society organizations and academia. For the first time, this course is completely virtual. Six synchronous classes have so far been conducted on the following topics: Democracy and Human Rights, Introduction to the Inter-American Human Rights System, Regional Integration Processes, the COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Access to Rights, and Public Policy Concepts. Participants have submitted their preliminary project and it is currently in the process of being corrected. The specialized course on the ISHR was scheduled for September with the whole course ending in October.

Workshops on inter-American standards to confront violence and discrimination against women and girls, targeting justice operators and security officials in Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico - *Canada Project*

As part of this project funded by Canada, four training workshops were held for justice operators and security officials from Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico to support the implementation of Inter-American standards to combat violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents in their respective countries. The first round of training was held virtually on May 24 and 25 and the second round on June 14 and 15, 2021. 90 officials from the aforementioned States participated.

Training for the Judiciary of Guatemala and Honduras on the Application of Inter-American Standards - Virtual Classroom

Within the framework of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) Northern Triangle Project, work was carried out on the design and implementation of a virtual classroom on oversight of compliance with the American Convention on Human Rights, analysis of sentences, and due diligence for justice operators in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. It resulted in the development and implementation of a course on the Application of Inter-American Standards by the Judiciary. That course seeks to strengthen the capacity of justice operators to check consistency with the Inter-American Convention in their decisions and interventions. It also seeks to enhance their knowledge of the ISHR, as well as the State's obligations in relation to the application of Inter-American standards in concrete cases.

The course was developed in cooperation with the Portal of the Americas. It was conducted for the first time in June, with 100 participants from Honduras and Guatemala. The course consists of four modules with an approximate duration of 10 hours, to be completed over the course of two weeks, and combines virtual classroom content with virtual meetings with Commissioners and specialists from the Executive Secretariat.

Training program for civil society in Nicaragua: Transitional Justice capacity building for Nicaragua

During the first half of 2021, 6 training sessions were held for civil society organizations and victims of human rights violations and their families on standards of memory, truth, and justice. Those initiatives used a variety of virtual procedures to reach a larger number of people in the context of restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Following is a brief description of those training courses.

- **Transitional Justice Training - Virtual Classroom - PADF Project**

Within the framework of the Regional Human Rights and Democracy Project executed jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), work was done on the design and implementation of a Virtual Classroom on the inter-American human rights system and its mechanisms for Memory, Truth, and Justice, targeting Nicaraguan civil society. Its purpose is to strengthen civil society's knowledge and capacities in the promotion and protection of human rights of the inter-American human rights system with a view to enhancing its participation in Memory, Truth, and Justice processes in Nicaragua.

The project included, first and foremost, three training sessions aimed at three groups of up to 30 people each composed of: victims and relatives of victims of human rights violations, human rights defenders, and lawyers. The course consisted of four modules that were taught over 4 weeks during the month of June and synchronous meetings with specialists on the different modules of the course, particularly on the documentation of cases of human rights violations. Second, in June, two synchronous training sessions were held for two groups of 40 people each. These groups were composed of representatives of civil society organizations in general.

- **Promotional activities**

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR carried out and/or was invited to participate in 62 promotional activities aimed at disseminating the ISHR standards and building the capacity of government officials, social organizations and networks, and academics to defend human rights, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these activities were organized jointly with other stakeholders, thereby bolstering cooperation with civil society organizations, regional and international institutions, and States in the region.

As part of its promotional activities, the IACHR held 8 open webinars. They include, notably, two Virtual Roundtables with the participation of the ten finalists in the competition for the position of Head of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. The sessions were moderated by the then President of the IACHR, Commissioner Joel Hernández. They were transmitted via Zoom to an audience of 422 participants.

Another webinar was held to disseminate the thematic report "Persons deprived of liberty in Nicaragua in the context of the human rights crisis", which attracted 79 viewers via Zoom.

Finally, in connection with the project "Eradication of Violence and Discrimination against Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean", financed by the Government of Canada, a digital forum was held on sexual violence and health policies during the pandemic. The forum sought to bring together experts from different fields, particularly from international organizations, to discuss protection of the rights of women and girls, especially in emergency situations. The event was attended by Commissioner Margarete May Macaulay and 163 participants.

► Campaigns for disseminating standards

The standards dissemination campaigns were designed and formulated on the basis of the reports and documents prepared by the different areas of the Commission. Each campaign includes graphics and messages with strategic information relating to the rights addressed in the thematic reports.

During the reporting period, 4 information campaigns on standards were conducted based on reports and documents produced by the IACHR. The campaigns were designed with content in Spanish, English and Portuguese:

1. Report on [Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents](#)"

In March 2021, a second campaign to disseminate the Report was conducted to highlight the main standards and recommendations on violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents, systematized in the report.

2. [Resolution 1/21 COVID-19 vaccines and inter-American human rights obligations](#) (SPA/ENG)

Following the publication in April 2021 of Resolution 1/21, which addresses the production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines within the framework of inter-American human rights obligations, a campaign was developed to disseminate the criteria and recommendations for States to promote fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, as well as to ensure that all processes of production, acquisition, distribution, and administration of COVID-19 vaccines espouse a human rights perspective. Through social networks, the Resolution reached 192,325 people.

3. Report ["Trans and Gender-Diverse Persons and their Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights"](#)

The IACHR developed and disseminated a campaign on the main obstacles to the full enjoyment of economic, social, and environmental rights, good practices of States, with emphasis on recommendations to ensure the social inclusion of trans and gender-diverse persons. The campaign reached 530,059 people through social media.

4. [Guidelines for the Protection of the Rights of Human Rights Defenders](#)

In April, the Commission launched its Practical Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Risk Mitigation Plans for Human Rights Defenders. The guide provides basic content and recommendations for States and civil society aimed at contributing to the mitigation of risks faced by human rights defenders.

in the region. The guide asserts as an indispensable requirement observance of, and guarantees for, the right to defend human rights and that this right can be exercised in an enabling environment free from any kind of intimidation. Through social networks, the Resolution reached 393,515 people.

P10: Program for Assistance and Collaboration with Central America and the Caribbean

Pursuant to its mandates, the IACHR is implementing a strategy to advance technical cooperation activities in the area of human rights with the Caribbean and Central American States, as well as to carry out special projects focusing on the cross-cutting themes of the Strategic Plan. Following is more detailed information regarding this strategy:

► **Project on Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.**

As part of the implementation of the Regional Project entitled "Human Rights and Democracy", executed jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), a series of activities were conducted to bolster capacity among key actors in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This initiative forms part of the framework of public policies, regional and national civil society networks, and governmental and international cooperation priorities and aims to strengthen systems for the promotion and protection of human rights.

► **Project on Governance and Human Rights in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua**

In the first half of 2021, the IACHR continued implementation of the second phase of the Program to Strengthen Governance and the Protection of Human Rights with an Emphasis on Vulnerable Populations in the Northern Triangle Countries and Nicaragua, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the purpose of which is to help improve respect for, and protection of, human rights and good governance of natural resources with an emphasis on indigenous peoples' and Afro-descendants' territories. Under this program, as mentioned in other sections of this report, various activities were carried out by different mechanisms of the IACHR.

► **Transitional Justice capacity building**

As part of the multiple promotional and strengthening activities for Nicaraguan civil society, six training activities on transitional justice were conducted, reaching more than 250 people. These are described in another section of this report.

► **National Human Rights Institutions**

To strengthen cooperation mechanisms with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), on May 26, 2021, the IACHR met with the heads and representatives of the NHRIs of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The purpose of the meeting was to create an opportunity for dialogue and exchanges of views on best practices, challenges, and analysis of the human rights situation in those countries. In particular, the idea was to analyze the various challenges to democratic and human rights institutions and opportunities for advancing a coordinated work agenda between the IACHR and NHRIs. This activity is being carried out for the fifth consecutive year.

► **Collaboration with the Caribbean**

To promote the activities under this program, the Secretariat hired a specialist during the period covered by this report and made significant progress with strengthening the Commission's work with the

Caribbean States. That progress included: approval of the Strategy for Strengthening the Work of the IACHR in the Caribbean (2021); more robust monitoring of the situation in the countries of the subregion; strengthening the current relationship with the States; stronger partnership with civil society organizations; capacity-building on the inter-American human rights system; and raising awareness of inter-American standards and the work of the Commission.

Key achievements include:

- Adoption of the Strategy for Strengthening the Work of the IACHR in the Caribbean (2021): On March 16, 2021, during its 179th session, the Commission approved this Strategy to bolster States' and civil society organizations' defense and promotion of human rights in accordance with inter-American norms and standards. In line with that objective, the Executive Secretariat initiated the design of individual country strategies for the 14 CARICOM countries³, focusing mainly on improving the human rights monitoring system and strengthening relations with State and non-State actors through various mechanisms employed by the Commission.
- Strengthening of monitoring mechanisms in the Caribbean. Of particular note here is the more detailed analysis and review of the human rights situation in each of the 14 CARICOM countries. That was reflected in Chapter IV.A of the 2020 Annual Report, which analyzed the cross-cutting and diverse challenges that Caribbean countries are currently facing, mainly in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the IACHR used various mechanisms to monitor the situation in these countries, while other actors, too, resorted to increased use of the same mechanisms. Thus, requests were submitted for three public hearings in connection with the 180th period of sessions.
- Strengthening the current relationship with States: In this regard, relations with the Caribbean States were strengthened and consolidated through meetings with representatives of the Permanent Missions. The Commission convened dialogues with the Caribbean States during both sessions held this year, in order to provide them with an update on its activities and work program for 2021. Thus, the Strategy for Strengthening the Work of the IACHR in the Caribbean (2021) was presented during the 179th period of sessions. During the 180th session, CARICOM delegations openly shared the challenges they face with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, equitable distribution of vaccines, intellectual property rights, and climate change. In addition, bilateral meetings were held to explore monitoring processes in greater depth, along with the corresponding contributions required from the member states for Chapter IV.A of the report. States were provided with information on preparations for the drafting of the reports. In particular, meetings were convened with the States of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.
- Consolidation of cooperation with civil society organizations: The Commission strengthened its ties with CSOs in the sub-region through the convening of meetings focusing on awareness of inter-American standards and the compiling of more accurate information, with a view to

³ CARICOM is comprised of 15 fully entitled member countries, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Montserrat. However, Montserrat is not a member of the OAS, so for the purposes of the IACHR's work with CARICOM, there are 14 countries.

improving monitoring of the human rights situation in each participating country. To that end, the IACHR convened a closed-door meeting in May with indigenous and tribal leaders from seven Caribbean countries to address challenges to the right to self-determination. In addition, in April, the Commission held talks with CSOs from Suriname and Guyana. Several meetings were also held with CSOs from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbuda, and Guyana, which yielded information on the general human rights situation in each of those countries.

- Training on the inter-American human rights system: The Commission began a series of training programs on the inter-American human rights system at the request of the State of Saint Lucia. Building on the introductory module to the inter-American system in 2020, a second training module was delivered for Saint Lucia in May of this year, on combating racial discrimination and discrimination against women. A third and final module is planned for before the end of the year, which will focus on discrimination against people with disabilities. In addition, CSOs from four CARICOM countries benefited from the training exercises provided at the 5th Annual International Course on Public Policy and Human Rights, convened by the IACHR and the MERCOSUR Institute for Public Policy on Human Rights.

Finally, the IACHR also participated in at least one regional conference in Jamaica with INDECOM, *Open Society Foundations*, and Amnesty International on citizen security. The IACHR has also received expressions of interest in promoting and strengthening the use of the technical cooperation mechanism from countries such as Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

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

The technical cooperation mechanism, consolidated in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, aims to support national efforts to promote human rights and formulate public policies with a human rights approach on various human rights issues. During the first half of 2021, the IACHR signed 2 cooperation agreements and is implementing another 6 agreements entered into with other entities. It also made progress with crafting technical assistance proposals with various governmental institutions in Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Panama, and Peru. The idea here is to promote the inter-American human rights system through training strategies on different topics within the scope of the IACHR.

► Technical and Public Policy Cooperation with States

Within the framework of this program, the IACHR made progress in various technical assistance initiatives targeting those involved in the formulation of public policies, as well as in the consolidation of ties to provide technical assistance and support strategies for institutional strengthening of the States and to engage in cooperative activities with other institutions.

► Cooperation Agreements

During the first half of 2021, a Cooperation Agreement was signed with the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Federal Institute of Public Defense of Mexico, aimed at establishing a regulatory framework with respect to cooperation mechanisms between the Parties designed to develop and implement joint actions in the areas of counseling, information sharing, training, assistance, and other

activities within each organization's sphere of competence; as well as to promote the use of the inter-American human rights system and its standards, through theoretical and practical tools.

► Implementation of cooperation agreements

With regard to the implementation of the agreements entered into, worth highlighting is the series of public conferences on the inter-American system and, in particular, on the mechanisms of the IACHR, organized with the Mexican Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, that began on April 21. During the first six months of 2021, 4 events were held, and the last dialogue will take place on August 4 to address actions taken by the IACHR with respect to the pandemic and human rights.

Also noteworthy is the implementation of the agreement with *Both Ends Believing*, which promotes the right of children and adolescents to live in families through the adoption of a software system that creates digital profiles of children living in institutions and orphanages around the world, so that potential foster parents can advocate on their behalf. Within the framework of this triangular cooperation agreement, a series of meetings were held with States interested in participating in the initiative. These include Mexico, Ecuador, El Salvador, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Paraguay.

Under the agreement with *International Land Coalition*, materials were received for dissemination of the 2016 Indigenous Women's Report. In addition, the IACHR participated in a conference on verification of constitutionality organized in the framework of cooperation with the Metropolitan University of Ecuador.

Under the agreement signed with the International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights (CIPDH), progress was made with organization of the Thematic Hearings Competition before the IACHR. This contest is being organized for the third time in conjunction with the CIPDH and this time will be held virtually in the month of August, with the participation of specialists from the Executive Secretariat as Judges and with the presence of the Commission's Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in the final round of the contest. The Executive Secretariat of the IACHR will participate in the opening and closing ceremonies for the final round.

In addition, within the framework of implementation of the agreement signed with the Commission for Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition of Colombia, meetings and exchanges were held to promote access to the information in the IACHR's archives for that Commission to use in its upcoming report.

► Technical Cooperation with National Human Rights Institutions

For its part, the IACHR has made headway with strengthening ties with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the region. Thanks to such initiatives, collaboration between the IACHR and the institutions has been remarkable, particularly as regards mutual capacity-building. Notable activities include support with monitoring the human rights situation in Guatemala, Colombia, and El Salvador, and the participation of technical staff from Guatemala and Honduras in training courses organized by the IACHR, such as the one on Public Policies or Standards to check consistency with the Inter-American Convention (*control de convencionalidad*). In particular, during the first half of the year, the 5th meeting with the NHRIs of Guatemala and El Salvador was held on May 26. Details are included in the Program 10 section of this report.

► Technical advice to member states on human rights matters

Progress was made with crafting technical assistance proposals for implementing the cooperation agreement with the State of Colombia. The objective of the agreement is to promote the inter-American human rights system, through its instruments and standards, by providing technical assistance to the State of Colombia for implementation of the Peace Agreement. In effect, a Technical Cooperation Work Plan Proposal was submitted to the State for consideration and approval. That proposal includes a series of specific items that address the most significant issues related to the agreement.

In addition, during the first half of this year, the IACHR worked on technical cooperation proposals with various government institutions. In the case of Colombia, the initiative is framed as part of the activities of SACROI Colombia and aims to strengthen the work of the institutions in the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, in particular the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In the case of Ecuador, the Ombudsman's Office, the Attorney General's Office (FGE), and the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic (PGR) requested technical assistance for capacity building in the area of inter-American human rights standards. Panama expressed interest in receiving technical cooperation to strengthen the capacities of public officials and, in the case of Peru, follow-up actions were taken after the visit to that country, particularly in relation to the dissemination of standards on rights to social protest. In accordance with the way the IACHR's technical cooperation mechanism operates, initiatives undertaken are part of a process of rapprochement and joint work to advance according to the needs and scope of each case.

The IACHR underscores its willingness and readiness to continue providing technical assistance for institutional strengthening and the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies aimed at guaranteeing and promoting the exercise of human rights in the Americas based on inter-American standards. It also reiterates its readiness to continue supporting the actions and initiatives of civil society and academia, as well as other relevant actors, for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Hemisphere through strategic partnerships.

► Human rights counseling for member states and political bodies

One of the functions of the IACHR is to provide advisory services in human rights to states; those services are offered, along with others, through the IACHR's ties with the political bodies of the OAS: the General Assembly (GA) and the Permanent Council (PC) and its committees, particularly the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). Thus, it is worth highlighting the eight presentations made by the IACHR to the Permanent Council during this period on various topics, strengthening the IACHR's role as a consultative body of the OAS on human rights, especially the presentation it delivered during the meeting on the *current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and access to vaccines*. Meetings were also held to review the portfolio of cases and petitions with States that requested them; along with meetings with representatives of member states and observers, and with groups of States.

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the IACHR maintained its leading role as a consultative body on human rights, adapting quickly to the new reality and providing technical inputs to the member states needed for decision-making, through presentations to the political bodies of the OAS. The IACHR participated with presentations in 28 meetings in the first half of 2021, of which 8 were to the Permanent Council, 18 to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, one to the Summit of the Americas

Secretariat, and one to the LGTBI *Core Group*. It is worth noting that this is the highest number of submissions to those bodies ever recorded in a six-month period.

Along the same lines of expanding dialogue with the States for the exchange of information, meetings were held with various groups of countries during the 179th and 180th Periods of Sessions, on March 17 (Central America and the Dominican Republic; Canada and the United States; CARICOM), March 22 (South America and Mexico), June 22 (Central America and the Dominican Republic; Canada and the United States; CARICOM; South America and Mexico) and June 25 (Permanent Observers), in addition to 36 bilateral meetings with States.

Likewise, States continued to express interest in meetings to review the portfolio of petitions, cases, precautionary measures, friendly settlements, and follow-up on recommendations. In the first half of 2021, 2 such meetings were held with the following States: Ecuador (February 25) and Argentina (June 1).

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 for dialogue with civil society and academia

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR continued to expand and deepen civil society participation in its activities.

The IACHR continued its practice of holding open meetings with civil society in connection with its virtual periods of sessions. During the [179th period of sessions](#), the IACHR held three open meetings with civil society organizations from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Venezuela, to receive information on the human rights situation, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the [180th period of sessions](#), the IACHR held four open meetings with civil society organizations from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Venezuela. During both periods of sessions, the IACHR also held meetings with the International Coalition of Human Rights Organizations in the Americas.

Within the framework of the SACROIs operating at the time, the IACHR held periodic meetings with civil society to receive updated information on the human rights situation in each of the countries.

During the [working visit to Colombia](#), from June 8 to 10, the IACHR met with various victims of human rights violations, human rights defenders, women's groups, Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, journalists, representatives of social movements, and business associations, among others. In preparing its observations and recommendations, the IACHR took into account information received before, during, and after the visit from civil society organizations, among other sectors.

► Academic Network specializing in the inter-American human rights system

The purpose of the Specialized Academic Network for Cooperation with the IACHR (Academic Network) is to provide technical support for the work carried out by the Commission, in particular its 13 thematic and special rapporteurships, and the Recommendations Follow-up Section.

The IACHR is collaborating on ten projects with 19 universities in the region as part of the Academic Network, the launching of which was announced on March 2, 2021 in its press release [No.048](#). Through this network, inputs have been developed to provide technical support for the work of the thematic and special rapporteurships in their monitoring, promotion, and protection of human rights. Those inputs included, in particular:

- The creation of a working group to establish a chair at the University of Sao Paulo to promote the Commission's general work among the academic community and students in Brazil.
- The development of curricular materials for two courses via *YouTube* that will be transmitted from the University of Sao Paulo to civil society and other actors to provide detailed information on the Inter-American human rights system and the monitoring of compliance with the Convention (conventionality control) with the incorporation of cross-cutting themes on the issues relating to women, migrants and follow-up to recommendations.
- Regarding the human rights situation of human rights defenders, the University of Mar de Plata in Argentina organized two Latin American forums on the subject with the participation of the IACHR.
- Concerning the rights of persons with disabilities, the ICESI University in Colombia is drawing up a report on the participation of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of public policies.
- The Universidad Indoamericana in Ecuador has already produced inputs as part of a study on violence against women in Ecuador before and after the dismantling of the 2009 public policies implemented in that country, in the context of Covid-19.
- The Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro provided inputs for the Memory, Truth and Justice rapporteurship in Brazil.
- With regard to the human rights of indigenous peoples, the International Institute of Law and Society finalized the curriculum for a mixed international course that will be conducted over several weeks, as of September, on the protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples.
- The Aula Abierta (Open Classroom) Organization and the Universidad Central of Venezuela, as well as the Centro Académico en Riesgo and the University of Ottawa submitted comments on the Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom currently being drafted by the Special Rapporteurships for Freedom of Expression and for Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights.
- The Inter-American Observatory Consortium of Brazil has already provided methodological inputs as part of a mapping of successful cases, lessons learned, and sound practices in the country on the protection of the rights of children and adolescents based on thematic and reports and reports on merits produced by the Commission.
- The Universidad del Externado in Colombia is preparing a report that will identify current challenges and best practices for complying with the recommendations of the IACHR regarding the human rights of indigenous peoples in the context of the pandemic, particularly with respect to prior consultation in the context of access to nature and water in the Amazon region.

Finally, it should be noted that, within the framework of the Academic Network, roadmaps with work schedules have been signed with each university, thereby facilitating the beginning of cooperation between the IACHR and the academic institutions participating in this first edition of the network.

➤ **Associate Staff Program in the IACHR**

The Secretariat has negotiated institutional agreements to enable the IACHR to host fellows or associate personnel from other institutions, universities, or academic entities. This exchange helps to raise awareness about the mechanisms of the IAHRs and at the same time supports the work of the Executive Secretariat. During the period covered by this report, 1 professional from Brazil joined the Executive Secretariat as part of the Associate Staff Program.

In addition, professionals were incorporated as scholarship holders within the framework of Cooperation Agreements with academic institutions. During the period, five people joined the Secretariat: from El Salvador (1), Mexico (2), Peru (1) and Trinidad and Tobago (1).

SO4.

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

Results Achieved

- Coordination, cooperation, and complementarity with United Nations bodies and other agencies, strengthened and expanded.
 - Expanded and more robust collaboration with the United Nations through technical cooperation actions and joint actions to address the COVID19 pandemic.
 - Ties with the United Nations Human Rights Council expanded and strengthened through increased participation of the IACHR in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, the participation of the OHCHR in 8 hearings during 2 periods of sessions of the IACHR, 1 Declaration and 4 joint communiqués.
 - Strengthening of the joint mechanism with OHCHR for the protection of human rights defenders in the Americas through joint work with the focal points.
- More robust coordination and ties with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights
 - Joint organization with the Inter-American Court of forums and other dissemination and training events on inter-American standards to confront violence and discrimination against women and girls, targeting justice operators and security officials in Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico.

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

➤ Collaboration with the United Nations other international agencies expanded and strengthened

In the first half of 2021, the IACHR stepped up its collaboration with the UN human rights system on different fronts, despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The IACHR promoted a series of bilateral meetings at the technical level and some at a high political level, in order to discuss points of convergence and common concerns and deepen cooperation, such as the meetings of the Interim Executive Secretary María Claudia Pulido with the Office of OHCHR Colombia (February 5), with the Joint Mechanism of Human Rights Defenders, with the participation of President Joel Hernández (March 11), and with the Director of the Americas of the UNHCR, José Samaniego (April 13). Also noteworthy was the

meeting between the IACHR Plenary and the United Nations Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect (April 15), and the meetings of Executive Secretary Tania Reneaum with High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet (June 13) and with OHCHR Director for the Americas, Alicia Londoño (June 18).

Another fruit of these stronger ties was the participation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the 179th and 180th Periods of Sessions of the IACHR, where it participated in 8 thematic hearings (4 in each Session), the highest number of participations recorded in a six-month period.

Other visible results were the Joint Declaration of the IACHR and the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers on access to justice in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the following joint communiqués:

- "[Honduras](#): UN and IACHR Experts Urge Immediate Adoption of Law to Protect Internally Displaced Persons" (January 27)
- "[The IACHR and the Regional Office for Central America](#) (OHCHR) welcome the return of more than 300 Nicaraguans to their country and urge States to continue cooperating to ensure their safe, dignified and voluntary return" (February 17)
- "IACHR and the OHCHR Regional Office for South America urge Brazil to ensure [comprehensive protection of Yanomami and Munduruku indigenous peoples](#)" (May 19)
- "[The IACHR and the OHCHR](#) categorically condemn the criminal prosecution of presidential pre-candidates and urge the State of Nicaragua to immediately release them" (June 9)

A meeting was also held between the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and the official in charge of the subject at OHCHR on February 22, to exchange information and explore possibilities for cooperation.

At the technical level, existing cooperation has continued, including meetings of the IACHR technical staff with the Regional Offices of United Nations entities in Panama and officials responsible for the Dominican Republic (both on January 29), in order to exchange and compile information; the joint training offered to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Brazil on inter-American standards in the context of the COVID19 pandemic (February 8); the participation of UN Brazil and OHCHR in the meeting of experts on the pandemic (April 13); and a series of meetings with the Treaty Bodies, the OHCHR Office of Petitions, the OASPG and UNHCR.

Finally, Commissioner Julissa Mantilla participated in the "*Expert Meeting on Strengthening the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons in COVID-19 and Beyond*" of the OHCHR on February 11, the participation of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights in the "*Wikipedia Earth Day Campaign on environment and human rights*" on April 1, the participation of President Antonia Urrejola in the "*Webinar of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with representatives of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the Americas on Covid-19*" on April 20 and in the "*Americas Regional Forum on Minorities*" on April 27, as well as the participation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the virtual launch of "*Resolution 1/21 on COVID19 Vaccines and Human*

Rights" on May 10, the highest ever number of joint activities between the High Commissioner and the IACHR recorded in a six-month period.

➤ **Ties with the United Nations Human Rights Council expanded and strengthened**

Since 2018, the IACHR has participated more systematically in the sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. In 2021, for the third time, the IACHR intervened in the High Level Segment of the sessions, on February 24; likewise, at the same 46th Council Session, the IACHR President, Commissioner Joel Hernández, intervened in the side event "*Peru: undermining rights, the defense of human rights hindered by economic interests*" on February 25, in the "*Annual Debate: Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (res. 7/9 and 43/23)*" on March 3, and at the "*Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders*" on March 8. Worth mentioning, too, is the participation of Commissioner Julissa Mantilla in the "*Intersectional Meeting on Prevention of Genocide*" on February 10 and the IACHR's contribution to the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Trinidad and Tobago.

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

➤ **Progress with implementing the Mechanism**

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to strengthen their ties through their Joint Actions Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

Within the framework of that mechanism, during the period covered by this report, the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders held a preparatory meeting with the OHCHR focal point in Geneva in order to develop a work plan for 2021. As a result of that preparatory meeting, a virtual meeting was held with all the focal points that make up the Joint Mechanism, at which it was agreed to prepare the work plan for 2021 and possible routes for joint action. On that occasion, it was agreed to hold a meeting with the Rapporteur for human rights defenders of the IACHR and the country representatives of the OHCHR. That meeting took place in March.

On Mother Earth Day, a [joint press](#) release was issued highlighting the risks faced by environmental defenders in the region and the importance of their work for environmental protection. Likewise, constant communication has been maintained with the Offices in Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico to ensure continuous exchange of information. In that regard, together with the OHCHR Mexico office, an *Op. Ed.* was published in the newspaper "La Jornada" highlighting the importance of human rights defenders in the region.

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

► Interagency Cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Within the framework of the Project "Eradication of Violence and Discrimination against Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean," conducted with the support of the Government of Canada, the Commission worked jointly with member states to support the implementation of inter-American standards on the rights of women, girls and adolescents in the region. As part of this project, on June 14 and 15, Ricardo Pérez Manrique, a Judge of the I/A Court H.R., took part in two training workshops for justice operators and security officials from Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico to support the implementation of inter-American standards to combat violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents in their respective countries. Judge Pérez Manrique elaborated on the jurisprudence of the I/A Court in addressing violence and discrimination against women and girls and on monitoring of compliance with the American Convention.

In addition, during the first half of 2021, together with representatives of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the IACHR organized the fourth Forum of the Inter-American Human Rights System, scheduled to take place on October 14 and 15, 2021.

S05

To guarantee the human resources, infrastructure, technology, and budget needed for full implementation of the mandate and functions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights through results-based institutional management for efficient, effective, and measurable institutional development.

Results Achieved

- Increased public presence of the IACHR due to its more robust use of digital media, including conducting its 179th period of sessions virtually, during which 21 public hearings were held on a variety of topics and countries.
- Enhanced communication capacity thanks to more social media outreach, including use of the YouTube channel and social forums on online platforms.
- Ongoing implementation of the work environment improvement plan.
- Financial sustainability plan under way The IACHR has the funding needed for its 2022 day-to-day operations. The goals of the financial resilience plan are being satisfactorily met.
- Both the Regular Fund budget and specific funds have been bolstered.
- Technological innovations have been successfully introduced.
 - Virtual event signal retransmission tool implemented
 - Collaborative tools for data logging and data management implemented
 - Live broadcast of the 180th PS hearings on Twitter for the 1st time.
 - E-learning training
 - New electronic tool to convene meetings digitally, implemented
- Customer (user) service has improved thanks to enhanced information and documentation management.
 - The most common requests for information from users systematized and answered through a frequently-asked-questions section on the website.
 - Minutes protocol to standardize their drafting, use, and archiving

The IACHR has successfully maintained the positive performance that it achieved in the area of institutional management in 2020, as well as making progress with regard to communication and institution-building. With respect to technology and systems, although the IACHR has made incremental progress, additional resources need to be mobilized if it is to meet the Program 18 objectives.

P17: Institutional Management and Development Program

► Accountability

In the first half of 2020, the IACHR Executive Secretariat prepared and sent 26 financial reports, interim or final, to the following donors: UNHCR (1), Canada (1), European Commission (1), Ireland (1), Netherlands (2), PADF (6), Spanish Fund (1), Switzerland (3), Trust/Wellspring (2), and United States (3). Likewise, in this period, the Executive Secretary prepared and submitted 21 interim or final narrative reports for the following donors: UNHCR (1), Canada (1), European Commission (1), Ireland (1), Netherlands (2), PADF (6), Spanish Fund (1), Switzerland (3), Trust/Wellspring (2), and United States (3).

► Strengthening the organizational structure

During this period, the selection process for the position of Head of the Executive Secretariat was completed in accordance with the procedures contained in Article 11 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure. On May 4, 2021, the IACHR selected Tania Reneaum Panszi and forwarded her name to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, proposing her appointment for a four-year term. Tania Reneaum Panszi began her duties as Executive Secretary on June 1, 2021.

The selection process was completed for three competitions in specific funds to fill positions at the P02 level in the Initial Study - Admissibility Section, in the Monitoring Section III (Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child), and a Gender Specialist assigned to the Office of the Chief of Staff.

In addition, calls were issued for applications to 11 positions financed by specific funds to strengthen the teams working on the petitions and cases system, precautionary measures, monitoring, promotion and technical cooperation, press and communication, processing, and administrative management. The IACHR closed a call for applications to fill a regular fund position at the P03 level as a Project Management Specialist. In the coming weeks, the selection processes will be carried out in accordance with the GS/OAS General Standards.

In the first half of the year, the ES/IACHR was notified of the results of the reclassification requests for Coordination positions that had been pending since the beginning of 2020.

During that period, the winter-spring session of the Internship Program ended, with 24 interns joining the IACHR Executive Secretariat. The summer session started virtually on June 10 with the participation of 30 interns.

► Implementation under way of the collectively drafted work environment improvement plan

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the main activity during the period was to seek to promote the well-being and mental health of ES/IACHR collaborators in these difficult times. In this regard, in coordination with the GS/OAS Department of Human Resources, the IACHR had to reschedule several scheduled classroom courses on topics such as leadership, resilience, and workplace harassment. Thirty IACHR specialists were trained in results-based management in a course managed by the IACHR and financed by *Global Affairs Canada*.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), based on the ES/IACHR initiative under its "Cuidar Cuidando Cuidando" (Caring by Caring) program, is still underway. All OAS staff, including consultants, fellows and interns, have access to EAP services, as do the people who make up their households. The benefits of the

program include access to professional counselors who will provide specialized advice and support on a wide range of issues such as work-life balance, family problems, stress at work or at home, mental health issues, cultural adaptation, and others.

During the first half of the year, the results of the ES/IACHR's labor atmosphere diagnosis were received. The consulting firm of experts hired for that purpose gave a presentation of its findings, recommendations, and proposals to both the IACHR and the entire staff. At the suggestion of the ES/IACHR's Work Environment Committee, all personnel were asked what they thought of the proposals presented by the consulting firm. Based on the outcomes of this consultation and the consulting firm's report, the IACHR Working Group on labor environment issues, together with the Executive Secretary and the Labor Environment Committee, will be deciding on initial improvements to be undertaken in 2021 and the following years.

The "Open Door Policy" continued, under which personnel have the opportunity to meet with the executive secretary to raise issues of interest to them. The Work Environment Committee prepared a draft information sheet to be shared with all personnel geared to defining the nature, composition, and powers of the Committee.

In addition, a Protocol was implemented for the selection of consultants that standardizes ES/IACHR practices for this process. An evaluation form was also created for consultant contracts to ensure that they receive an evaluation of their services at the end of each contract.

➤ **Expanding the IACHR's public presence in the region through roaming and virtual sessions**

The IACHR held its 179th period of sessions virtually, from March 15 to 26, 2021. Choosing a virtual format continues to be a way to comply with the mandates and functions of the IACHR given the dire impacts for the region and the world of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the 179th Period of Sessions, the IACHR held 21 public hearings. Hearings were held on topics involving the States of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Five of those hearings addressed regional issues, such as the human rights situation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, women deprived of liberty, cross-border indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees in South America during the pandemic, and sexual and reproductive rights. In addition, a regional hearing was held on Internet content moderation and freedom of expression in the Americas. Finally, four of the public hearings were on cases related to Panama, Guatemala, Peru, and Colombia.

➤ **Communicational capacity of the IACHR strengthened**

The IACHR continued a series of campaigns to raise awareness and disseminate reports, resolutions, and guides on a variety of human rights issues, as well as statements on social networks, press management, and the permanent updating and improvement of its website, in addition to developing microsites and communication tools to guide the actions of its mechanisms and strategies.

- **Campaigns**

Six **information** and awareness **campaigns** were conducted. The campaigns were conducted in Spanish and English:

#	Campaigns for disseminating reports
1	Resolution 1/21 COVID-19 vaccines and inter-American human rights obligations (SPA/ENG)
2	Observations and recommendations from the visit to Mexico



3	Report on transgender people and ESCER
4	Brazil Report (SPA/PT)
5	Guide for Human Rights Defenders
6	Report on Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents

• **Scope of the Web Portal**

The IACHR's web portal is the communications tool that contains all the information related to its work, from reports to cases and precautionary measures, and so on. The portal had **2.5 million visits** in the first half of the year, in its different sections, which represents an increase of 38% compared to the first half of the previous year. Press releases had **449,986 visits**, representing an increase of 600% compared to the first half of 2020. Of them, **231,031** were visits to **161** press releases published in the first half of the year. These results reflect the broadening of the scope of IACHR press releases and also an increase in the number of press releases published, as 21 more press releases were published than in the first half of 2020.

The most visited press releases were:

Press release	Publication date	# Visits
137/21: IACHR Condemns Serious Human Rights Violations in the Protest Context in Colombia, Rejects All Forms of Violence, and Stresses that the State Must Comply with its International Obligations	April 25	26.449
No. 143/21: The CIDH Announces Working Visit to Colombia in Response to Social Protests	June 4	19.746
No. 049/21: IACHR and IPPDH Announce International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights	March 4	12.827

Of the various sections of the website, the two that received the most visits were:

- [Home page](#): 200,485 visits
- [Mandates](#): 91,988 visits

The IACHR website incorporated new software components and sections during the period covered by this report, namely:

• **Website databases**

Eight databases were designed and created for processing resolutions, thematic reports, country reports, annual reports, country visits, promotional activities, questionnaires, IACHR sessions and calendar of hearings, I/A Court HR judgments, I/A Court HR provisional measures, I/A Court HR advisory opinions, requests for advisory opinions to the I/A Court HR and jobs.

Software tools were developed to migrate the existing contents of the IACHR and I/A Court HR websites to the new databases. Modifications were also made to the data structures used for the reports published on admissibility, friendly settlement, merits, and cases before the Court, in order to incorporate the

summary sheets on full compliance with friendly settlements, as well as those prepared as part of the project on "Disseminating the standards for the protection of human rights in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)", in partnership with the Institute of Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (IDEHPUCP) and the Rule of Law Program for Latin America of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS). All those improvements are aimed at facilitating access to information for users and visitors to the website and making information searches more effective. Especially noteworthy was the creation of the tool for disseminating human rights standards.

- **Updating and improving Web Content**

A series of forms/spreadsheets were designed and programmed for automated updating of the contents of the aforementioned databases. Included in the programming were a variety of modules for managing website content.

The web pages of the Rapporteurship on Memory, Truth, and Justice were designed, developed, and launched, while the pages of 11 Rapporteurships were completely revamped, in Spanish and English, creating 384 new pages with automatic updating capabilities, in both languages. The

Spanish and English contents of the Friendly Settlements website were redesigned and updated, and the various modules that automatically display case reports were reprogrammed to incorporate full compliance files.

The contents of activities and impact examples were migrated to the central database of activities and those pages were programmed in such a way as to facilitate their updating.

In addition, the pages on precautionary measures were redesigned and updated in four languages, to include new pages describing their practices, supervision and history, as well as an informative brochure in Spanish and English. The precautionary measures database contains records of 37 resolutions granted and 20 that were lifted. At the same time, the IACHR redesigned the Precautionary Measures Map posted on the Channel <https://www.canalcidh.org/mapa-medidas-cautelares>.

The site for the Annual Report was completely redesigned to facilitate its updating, make it easier to visualize, and integrate it with other pages of the website. The annual reports for 2011 to 2019 were migrated, and the 2020 annual report was published. The microsite for the Impact Observatory was designed and developed in Spanish and English.

The Follow-up to Recommendations pages were redesigned and a search element was added to the list of follow-up sheets on published reports on the merits.

All these actions explain the increase in visits, since they improved the positioning of information and facilitated efficient searches for it, thanks to efforts made to transmit information in a more didactic manner.

- **Expanding the reach of social networks**

The IACHR's social networks are key, strategic instruments for its communication activities. They enable it to disseminate its work and contribute effectively to the generation of awareness and access to information on human rights and Inter-American standards. In the first half of 2021, both the IACHR's social networks and its web portal significantly increased the number of users and followers compared to previous years.



Comparative six-month period			
Social Network	2019	2020	2021
Website (visits)	1,669,000	1,969,195	2,536,921
Facebook (followers)	535,877	574,133	599,724
Twitter (followers)	550,993	615,000	713,000
Instagram (followers)	2,361	4,524	28,300
YouTube (followers)	10,600	12,200	17,600
Mailchimp (subscribers)	22,116	22, 575	25,845

The IACHR's main social network is **Twitter** with the [@IACHR](#) account, which has more than **712 thousand** followers; during the first half of 2021 it added more than 100 thousand new followers. **Facebook** is the network with the second largest reach, with **599 thousand** users. Worth highlighting is the growth of the account on Instagram from 10 thousand, in April 2021, to 28 thousand since the beginning of May.

The **YouTube** Channel has 17,670 subscribers, and has published more than 100 videos since January 2021, including webinars conducted by the IACHR, [periods of sessions](#) and other communications. One of the most widely viewed videos in the past quarter was the press conference about the visit to [Colombia](#) with 7,721 views.

On **Flickr**, a tool for disseminating images of all the IACHR's work, such as periods of sessions, country visits, and campaigns, in 2021 it received **7,514,735** cumulative visits since its creation.

The figures point to significant growth of the IACHR's outreach on social networks and via its website, which shows that more and more users of those instruments are interested in the work done by the Commission in its different areas, which in turn broadens its impact. In this way, the IACHR is enhancing its strategic contribution to the dissemination of inter-American human rights standards.

- **Support for SACROI COVID19**

As of Resolution 1/20, 24 press releases were issued on human rights in the context of the pandemic. Campaigns using digital posters and 6 thematic videos were conducted to disseminate the press releases containing the standards. All press releases are disseminated on social networks (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn). It is worth noting that Resolution 1/20 achieved 237 thousand impressions on the IACHR Twitter account, with more than 850 retweets. The Facebook account reached more than 77 thousand user accounts.

- **Consolidation of the IACHR Channel**

The [IACHR Channel](#), inaugurated in 2019, is a strategic initiative that uses new technologies and interacts with art to draw attention to people who fight for their rights and bring about changes in the place where they live, through inspiring stories presented through reports and interviews.

The Channel has more than 60 videos on the visits to different countries made by the IACHR through August, including [Colombia](#), the series of videos with victims of violations of human rights [Tenemos Derechos](#), and more than 10 awareness-raising videos on different topics such as [poverty](#). On the channel you can also find the [Map of Precautionary Measures](#) granted by the IACHR since 2013 and [14 interviews](#)

with emblematic individuals. A video was also published about human rights defender [Berta Cáceres](#), who was a beneficiary of precautionary measures at the time of her murder.

- **Press management**

The IACHR maintains a permanent dialogue and presence in international and regional media and in different countries of the region. Journalists from different media pick up in notes, reports, and op eds on communiqués, pronouncements, thematic and country reports, cases sent to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, precautionary measures and other IACHR news. In addition, there is a direct presence of the Commissioners in the media, through journalistic interviews. More than 50 journalists attended the two press conferences held on the working visit to Colombia in June. In addition, the public hearings during the 179th and 180th Periods of Sessions were widely covered in the media, as was the election of the historic board of directors, composed entirely of three women commissioners.

A total of 28 interviews were conducted in the first half of 2021 and 486 articles were published, on the different mechanisms of the IACHR, different countries, and topics.

P18: Program of Technological Innovation Applied to Human Rights

➤ **New systems implemented**

Given the constant growth of technology and its scope, together with the need to reach more people who can exercise their human rights and the goal of continuing to develop and facilitate communication in the Periods of Sessions, meetings, and virtual seminars in an innovative way, efforts were made to acquire and implement cutting-edge tools that innovated and publicized the 178th, 179th, and 180th Periods of Sessions (PS) as never before. That was achieved following constant testing to ensure the correct functioning, execution, and operability of those tools.

➤ **Technological innovation implemented**

At the 180th PS, for the first time, live broadcasting of the hearings was achieved via an additional social platform (Twitter), thereby continuing the IACHR's commitment to innovation and making it possible to reach out, contribute, and transmit, live, the work done by the IACHR; making it easier for users to have access to this information and share it, within a secure environment.

In addition, virtual E-learning in-house training was provided, promoting knowledge and enhancing performance, aimed at facilitating the distance learning experience with training modules for people joining the ES/IACHR and reinforcing existing users' knowledge and skills.

As new functions have been built into the different technological platforms that are managed and implemented in the ES/IACHR, manuals and didactic aids have been created, developed, and constantly updated to provide users with all the new advantages associated with cutting-edge technological advances in the tools in use.

Finally, a new electronic tool was introduced to convene meetings digitally.

➤ **Updates and upgrades of existing tools**

Progress continues to be made with the project to redefine and redesign the IACHR's central systems, with the compilation of requirements and meetings on progress and development in collaboration with DOITS and the areas of the ES/IACHR involved in the processes. A test environment has been delivered,

achieving progress and improvements with regard to a number of functionalities such as the generation of files in digital format and the creation of new records. This project is moving forward with a view to streamlining the information processed, automation, improved response times for users of the IAHR and systematization of the work done by the IACHR Executive Secretariat.

The E-VOTE electronic voting system continues to be an indispensable tool for the Commission's consultations and decision-making, and new functionalities for the system continue to be regularly supported and updated, after first being evaluated in the test environment. Improvements and corrections have been made with respect to notifications, as well as in the reporting modules, manual and automatic closing of inquiries, and simplification of the notifications generated, among other updates. During the first half of 2021, 708 votes were taken on different issues.

Given the importance of maintaining the quality, access control and optimal security of the Inter-American Recommendations Monitoring System, SIMORE, which makes recommendations formulated by the IACHR through its different mechanisms to member states and civil society, a second layer of security was implemented for the operators performing SIMORE functions.

P19: Financial Sustainability Plan

► Increase in the Regular Fund budget approved

For the year 2021, the General Assembly approved a budget for the IACHR of \$10,081,900, of which \$6,960,100 is for personnel expenses and \$3,121,800 for operating expenses. Although the increase in the 2020 budget (\$10,627,900) completed the last stage of the doubling of the regular budget following the Cancun Agreement in 2017, the budget for the current year remained at levels similar to those of the immediately preceding year.

The IACHR is grateful for the commitment of the member states, which has made it possible, despite a very difficult year due to the pandemic, to continue working on the consolidation of the administrative structure and the expansion of its capacities thanks to the approved budget.

As regards the Program-Budget for the year 2022, during the first half of the year 2021, the Executive Secretariat already submitted a budget proposal to the Secretary General and is prepared to work hand in hand with the member states and the OAS General Secretariat to consolidate said proposal.

The IACHR thanks the member states, permanent observers, and institutions whose voluntary contributions were made during the first half of 2021 and were vital for achieving the results presented. We are grateful to Canada, Costa Rica, France, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Panama, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the Pan American Development Foundation, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

► Financial Sustainability Plan: the quest for diversification of sources

The ES/IACHR continued the process of implementing the various components of the financial sustainability plan, particularly as regards communication strategy and improving accountability to donors, as mentioned above.

In addition, the ES/IACHR continued to strive to mobilize funds for the diversification strategy to be implemented in 2021 and 2022. Thus, during the first half of 2021, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR

prepared 8 funding project proposals for presentation to donors: Strengthening the international protection of migrants, displaced persons, and refugees (\$80,000) (approved); Grant to support the Rapporteurship on LGBTI persons for the ARCUS Foundation \$150,000 (approved); Bases for transitional justice in Nicaragua - Phase II submitted to PADF \$200,000 (approved); Democracy and Human Rights Program in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (\$250,000); Implementation of the GIEI Bolivia submitted to the Ford Foundation (\$100,000) (approved) and to the U.S. Mission (180,000) (approved); Proposal to support the Petition and Case System submitted to Ireland (50,000 Euros) and Proposal to increase the protection and defense of human rights in the Americas submitted to the USA (\$4.9mn).

P20: User Assistance Center

During the first half of 2021, the ES/IACHR tailored its strategies and working methods so that, despite the special circumstances of remote work derived from the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, it could guarantee effective and continuous attention to users and efficient information management. That section reports the following developments:

► Updating of the SCAGI website

The creation of the section's microsite facilitated access by users to relevant and frequently consulted information. During this period, the most common requests for information from users were systematized and addressed via a frequently-asked-questions section that was placed at their disposal on the website. That also contributed to the added transparency promoted by the IACHR.

► Increased customer service

Through its telephone services, the Section contributed substantially to the dissemination of relevant information for users. During the first half of 2021, **1,241** telephone calls were answered⁴. More than 2,660 queries were received from users requesting support through the electronic mailbox of the Individual Petition System Portal. In addition, **2,353** e-mail queries from users were answered and **33** meetings were held with users either virtually or via video calls.

At the same time, **56** forms and information on the procedure for submitting petitions and/or requests for precautionary measures were sent out by mail, some to recipients pertaining to particularly vulnerable groups, such as persons deprived of liberty.

► Registration of petitions and precautionary measures

Petitions were registered within at most 4 days⁵ and precautionary measures within⁶ 2 days. In the first half of 2021, 1,111⁷ petitions were registered and 595⁸ requests for precautionary measures were received. Additionally, during registration of petitions and precautionary measures, *per saltum* criteria and COVID-19 related matters were identified in the system. That facilitated the identification of issues that, by their very nature, need to be prioritized in the ES/IACHR.

► Document management

⁴ Telephone calls are handled on a part-time basis during the morning shift.

⁵ Exceptions include holidays, non-working days due to weather conditions or system failures.

⁶ This period mainly corresponds to weekends, except as indicated in the previous note.

⁷ Cancelled records are not included. This count includes those registrations made during the year 2021 regardless of the year referred to or to which they were assigned.

⁸ Ibid.

The SE/IACHR received, screened, and channeled **22,211** electronic communications received through the CIDHDenuncias@oas.org account. In addition, **45,558** information files corresponding to petitions, cases, and precautionary measures were entered into the Document Management System (DMS). Through the Individual Petition System Portal (Portal), 23,011 files were received and entered. Through other means, 22,547 files were received and entered. The constant influx of documents into the system ensured that, even in a teleworking context, the different sections of the IACHR had sufficient inputs to continue to discharge most of their duties. As for the management of documents sent by mail, **740** packages sent by users were received, classified and digitized.

Finally, an oversight and registration system (oversight table and implementation protocol) was developed for electronic correspondence from the States.

► **Reports, publications, and translations**

During the reporting period, the following reports were prepared for publication: 1. Basic Guidelines for Investigating Crimes against Human Rights Defenders in the Northern Triangle, in English and Spanish; 2. Design/layout of the report on the Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights of Persons of African Descent. Inter-American Standards for the Prevention, Combating and Eradication of Structural Racial Discrimination; and 3. Compendium on the obligation of States to bring their domestic legislation into line with Inter-American Human Rights Standards, in English and Spanish.

► **Promotion of the use of the Portal and new users**

The ES/IACHR continues to make significant efforts to publicize and promote the use of the Portal. In this regard, the staff of the ES/IACHR took every opportunity to interact with users to inform them about the advantages of the Portal and help them use it. During the period covered by this report, **2,179** users subscribed to the IACHR's Individual Petition System Portal.

► **Creation of protocols and review of information material**

A Minutes Protocol was drafted⁹ to establish standardized processes for the drafting, use, and filing of the different types of minutes that the IACHR prepares and the regulations applicable to these processes.

⁹Still pending approval for implementation.

P21

Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations

Results Achieved

- Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations implemented ([Inter-American SIMORE](#)):
 - **128 recommendations** from different thematic reports classified in accordance with the search criteria defined for the Inter-American SIMORE. Of those recommendations, 37 are from [Resolution 1/2021](#).
 - **Number of active accounts** for users increased to a total of **22 accounts for 6 Member States**; 38 new active accounts for civil society, reaching a total of **84 accounts for representatives of 52 organizations**.
 - Uploading of information on compliance with recommendations increased with the addition of **18 new follow-up sheets**, for a total of 31 follow-up reports published by the State of Honduras with respect to 24 recommendations from its country report published in 2019.
- Follow-up on cases with published reports on the merits (Article 51).
 - Progress in the implementation of the **17 recommendations** made during 2020, **12 of which are of a structural nature** - mostly based on actions for the adoption and amendment of legislation or regulations - and **5 are of an individual nature**.
 - States maintained the same similar level of response as they did in 2019 to case follow-up requests, with a roughly **44% response rate in cases subject to follow-up**.
 - Appropriate steps taken by States to continue reporting measures implemented, with an **increase of almost 10% in their response rate**.
 - Seven States (**Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, and the United States**) showed progress with implementing the recommendations included in the merits reports published.
 - The [Follow-up Booklet 1](#), on the Effects of Total Compliance with Structural Recommendations in Cases with Published Merits Reports was published and made available to the public.
- Follow-up on the recommendations issued to eradicate discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean:
 - Preparation completed of a **best practices manual to guide the implementation of the recommendations** issued by the IACHR through its various mechanisms to combat and eradicate discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - Training provided for **280 people** representing the States of Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico.
 - Challenges with implementing recommendations issued by the IACHR were identified during a round-table discussion with officials, attended by **135 people**.

- Follow-up actions on recommendations regarding pretrial detention and detention conditions in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala:
 - A concept note, methodology, and timeline were developed for the report on compliance with the recommendations issued by the IACHR regarding detention conditions and use of pretrial detention in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. An initial selection was also made of IACHR recommendations whose levels of compliance and implementation will be analyzed.
- Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA): The mechanism continued to monitor compliance with the components of precautionary measure 409/14 and deployed technical assistance and support activities through its Technical Assistance Group (Grupo de Acompañamiento Técnico, GAT) in Mexico.
 - Technical assistance provided for the **drafting of at least 3 normative/regulatory instruments**.
- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI): Actions undertaken to monitor the human rights situation in Nicaragua and follow up on the recommendations made to the Nicaraguan State by the Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI).
 - **At least 25 recommendations** made through the publication of 30 statements in social networks.
 - **3 resolutions and/or declarations** issued by international organizations citing and mentioning the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Nicaragua.
 - **130% increase in the number of press releases issued** compared to the same period last year (13 press releases).
- Special Technical Advisory Board for compliance with IACHR human rights recommendations (MESAT – Honduras): The follow-up report on the country report was published and included in the 2020 annual report of the IACHR, and the technical cooperation agreement with Honduras was renewed until December 2021.
 - **12 measures for compliance with the recommendations** issued in the [Honduras 2019](#) Country Report adopted by the State
 - **14 recommendations for which compliance is pending, 12 recommendations with partial compliance, and 3 recommendations with substantial partial compliance**
- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE): The Mechanism continued its monitoring activities and those aimed at raising awareness of the human rights situation in the country. The country report notably includes **10 new recommendations** addressed to the State, based on the systematization of more than **150 testimonies**.
 - **17 recommendations** made through the issuance of [14 pronouncements](#) on the social network Twitter.

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR made significant progress with the development and improvement of methodologies for monitoring and analyzing levels of compliance with its recommendations. The development of these methodologies is aimed at promoting and increasing the effectiveness of its decisions and, hence, improving the human rights situation in the region.

Following are more details regarding the most significant achievements.

► Promotion and dissemination of Inter-American SIMORE

The [Inter-American SIMORE](#) systematizes the recommendations made by the Commission through different mechanisms. SIMORE currently integrates **6 databases with recommendations** contained in published merits reports, friendly settlement agreements, country reports, chapter IV.B of the annual report, thematic reports, and resolutions. Together, these databases contain more than 4,700 recommendations that were classified according to 8 previously defined categories.

In the first half of 2021, the IACHR classified **128 recommendations** from different thematic reports in accordance with the search criteria defined for the Inter-American SIMORE. Of those recommendations, 37 are from [Resolution 1/2021](#) on COVID 19 vaccines in the framework of classified inter-American human rights obligations, which have already been uploaded to the Inter-American SIMORE. The other recommendations will shortly be uploaded to the tool.

The IACHR also **implemented a dissemination strategy** based on letters sent to approximately 729 civil society organizations, of which 359 were sent in the first half of 2021; **a training strategy** that, in the first half of 2021, provided training for 87 persons from both member states and civil society organizations; and **a promotion strategy** based on the preparation of SIMORE information brochures aimed at facilitating its dissemination and participation in portfolio meetings with States, as was the case with the portfolio meeting with the State of Ecuador, and other events aimed at publicizing the functions performed by this tool, such as the one held on May 19, 2021, in the virtual dialogue organized by the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico and transmitted through various social networks.

As a result, **a major increase was reported in accounts created and activated for users**, including 4 new active accounts, to a total of 22 accounts for 6 member states and 38 new active accounts for civil society, reaching a total of 84 accounts for representatives of 52 organizations. The activation of these accounts is essential so that, in the next phases of dissemination of the system, the IACHR can focus on promoting the effective uploading of compliance information into this computer tool.

Additionally, a second relevant outcome of these strategies is related to the uploading of compliance information. In this regard, it is important to report that the State of Honduras continued to **publish 18 follow-up sheets**, reaching a total of 31 sheets published, aimed at reporting on measures of compliance with the recommendations of the country report published by the IACHR in 2019. These monitoring sheets can be consulted and read by anyone, through SIMORE. The publication of this information is key because, in addition to democratizing information on State compliance actions, it allows the IACHR to conduct continuous follow-up analysis of progress and challenges in complying with its recommendations.

► Monitoring of cases with published reports on the merits (Art. 51)

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR continued its follow-up monitoring of cases with merits reports published in accordance with Article 51 of the American Convention on Human Rights. In this way, the Section provided permanent technical advice to the parties to these steps to promote compliance with the recommendations issued in the published merits reports. For example, a technical assistance memorandum was drawn up and sent to guide the implementation of recommendations by the State of Belize, in the context of a case with a merits report published based on Article 51 of the American Convention.

On April 16, 2021, the Commission published [Chapter II. G: Report](#) which included **105 individual follow-up sheets** for each case in which the IACHR continued to classify the level of compliance of each

recommendation, one by one, and highlighted the individual and structural results reported by the parties. That report analyzed the information submitted by the parties regarding compliance with the recommendations issued in cases with published merits reports (Art. 51), with respect to the **105 cases in the follow-up stage of recommendations with merits reports published** after 2000.

In relation to the 2020 Annual Report of the IACHR, it is important to highlight the following results and progress with respect to cases with published merits reports:

- The IACHR appreciated the fact that the rates of submission of information remained at a similar level to that recorded in 2019 with about **44% of replies in the cases subject to follow-up**. It also welcomed the fact that States took appropriate steps to continue reporting measures implemented, with an **increase of almost 10% in their response rate**.
- The annual report acknowledged efforts by **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, and the United States**) to implement the recommendations included in the merits reports published.
- Also, 4 more cases with published merits reports were added to the portfolio in 2020¹⁰.
- Progress in the implementation of the **17 recommendations** made during 2020, **12 of which are of a structural nature** - mostly based on actions for the adoption and amendment of legislation or regulations - and **5 are of an individual nature**:
 - Total compliance with 4 reparation measures (Case 12,310, Report No. 25/09, Sebastião Camargo Filho (Brazil), Recommendation 2; Case 12,183, Report No. 127/01, Joseph Thomas (Jamaica), Recommendation 3; Case 12,417, Report No. 41/04, Whitley Myrie (Jamaica), Recommendation 2; Case 11,656, Report No. 122/08, Marta Lucía Álvarez Giraldo (Colombia), Compliance Agreement Clause C.4);
 - Substantial partial compliance with 7 measures of reparation (Cases 11,826, 11,843, 11,846 and 11,847, Report No. 49/01, Leroy Lamey, Kevin Mykoo, Milton Montique and Dalton Daley (Jamaica), Recommendation 5; Case 12,275, Report No. 58/02, Denton Aitken (Jamaica), Recommendation 5; Case 12,417, Report No. 41/04, Whitley Myrie (Jamaica), Recommendations 1 and 3; Case 12,418, Report No. 92/05, Michael Gayle (Jamaica), Recommendation 3; Case 12,504, Report No. 81/07, Daniel and Kornel Vaux (Guyana), Recommendation 1), and
 - Partial compliance with 6 measures of reparation (Case 12,001, Report No. 66/06, Simone André Diniz (Brazil) Recommendations 10 and 11; Case 11,331, Report No. 99/03, César Fierro (United States), Recommendation 1; Case 11,725, Report 139/99, Carmelo Soria Espinoza (Chile), Recommendation 2; Case 11,565, Report No. 53/01, González Pérez Sisters (Mexico), Recommendation 2; Paloma Angélica Escobar Ledezma et al (Mexico) Recommendations Compliance Agreement 9a).

Some relevant statistics and indicators:

- **105 cases** under follow-up with published merits reports whose follow-up was included in the Commission's 2020 Annual Report.
- **22 countries** with merits reports under follow-up
- Level of compliance with published reports on merits:

¹⁰ Case 13,570, Report No. 211/20, Lezmond C. Mitchell (United States); Case 13,361, Report No. 210/20, Julius Omar Robinson (United States); Case 13,356, Report No. 200/20, Nelson Iván Serrano Sáenz (United States) and Case 12,865, Report 29/20, Djamel Ameziane (United States).

Levels of compliance with published merits reports - 2019 Annual Report								
Categories	Number of cases				Level of compliance			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Full compliance	7	9	9	9	8%	6.8%	8.3%	8%
Partial compliance	66	82	85	88	75.2%	64%	75.2%	75.2%
Compliance pending	30	18	19	18	16.8%	29.2%	16.5%	16.8%
TOTAL	105	109	113	115	100%	100%	100%	100%

There has been a reduction in the percentage of cases for which compliance is pending, which implies an increase in the percentage of cases with partial compliance. The increase in partial compliance reflects the fact that the States are taking positive measures in connection with the recommendations issued.

- Regarding the level of compliance with the recommendations:

Levels of compliance with the recommendations in published merits reports - 2020 Annual Report		
Categories	Number of recommendations	Level of compliance
Full compliance	89	19.6%
Substantial partial compliance	26	5.7%
Partial compliance	116	25.6%
Compliance pending	211	46.5%
Noncompliance	12	2.6%
TOTAL	454	100%

In addition, as part of the follow-up meetings, a portfolio meeting was held with the State of Ecuador (February 25, 2021) to examine the levels of compliance and the information that will permit follow-up on the recommendations of the merits reports published after 2001. The IACHR also implemented a more sustained follow-up strategy through bimonthly working meetings on the cases included in Joint Press Release P-1193-CA, with respect to Peru, on March 26 and May 25, and a working meeting on the case involving the State of Ecuador, for which a report on the merits has been published. It should be noted that, with respect to working meetings, the IACHR implemented a follow-up strategy by sending minutes and subsequent letters to monitor compliance with the commitments made, when appropriate.

Finally, the IACHR published [Follow-up Booklet 1. On the Effects of Total Compliance with Structural Recommendations in Cases with Published Merits Reports](#). This first document provides an initial overview of the possible results of the actions taken by the States in those cases with structural recommendations. The Commission was able to report that compliance with the recommendations in these cases had a significant impact on the strengthening of national judicial systems.

➤ **Follow-up actions undertaken to eradicate discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents in the region**

During the first half of 2021, the IACHR carried out a series of activities aimed at strengthening the processes of implementing IACHR recommendations for eradicating violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean. Those activities were carried out to

generate structural changes in the countries and thereby contribute to addressing the challenges identified with overcoming this problem.

In this regard, a document was drawn up, entitled "**Best Practices Manual: Implementation of IACHR recommendations aimed at combating discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents**". This document contains guidelines aimed at promoting compliance with recommendations in this area, in light of inter-American standards, and divides the process of compliance with recommendations into four stages: identification of the objective of a recommendation; selection and design of a measure to comply with a recommendation; implementation of the selected measure; and evaluation of compliance with the recommendation. The Manual was distributed to justice operators in Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico.

In addition, on June 30, 2021, the IACHR conducted a training course on the implementation of IACHR recommendations aimed at combating discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents for representatives of the States of Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico. Initially, some 320 government officials registered for the seminar, which then achieved a **maximum participation of 280 people**.

The IACHR also held a round table discussion targeting officials of the aforementioned States in order to open up a forum in which they could participate directly and in which they could share the important challenges they had identified with implementing IACHR recommendations in this area. The event was attended by **some 135 government officials** and provided an opportunity to learn about the experience and challenges of implementing recommendations in this field.

► **Follow-up actions undertaken in connection with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras**

The IACHR worked out and implemented some methodological and conceptual routes for following up on recommendations regarding these three countries. The idea is for this report to make it possible to plan an integrated follow-up strategy in these countries so as to increase the level of compliance with the Commission's recommendations in this area. In this regard, the IACHR made progress with the drafting of a concept note aimed at establishing the objective, methodology, and timetable for drawing up a follow-up report on the recommendations that the IACHR has issued to these three countries on the issues of detention conditions and pretrial detention, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the preparation of this report, [questionnaires](#) were published to be used to compile information on compliance with these recommendations by both member states and civil society organizations.

Special follow-up mechanisms:

Through the Special Follow-up Mechanisms, the IACHR continues to implement a novel approach to help the countries of the region to fulfill their international obligations and implement recommendations in light of Inter-American human rights norms and standards.

► **Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case – MESA – Mexico**

In the period covered by this report, the Special Follow-up Mechanisms for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA) continue to monitor compliance with the components of precautionary measure 409/14 and engaged in technical assistance and support activities through its Technical Assistance Group (Grupo de Acompañamiento Técnico, GAT) in Mexico. In connection with this action, the MESA took part in five regular sessions of the Presidential Commission for Truth and Access to Justice in the Ayotzinapa Case (COVAJ) and also accompanied the transfer of skeletal remains for forensic identification at the laboratory

of the University of Innsbruck, Austria, as well as taking part in a field search day with the participation of relatives of the missing students.

In addition, the Special Mechanism has held multiple face-to-face and virtual meetings with Mexican authorities and representatives of the victims in order to follow up on progress made and challenges encountered in the criminal investigation, search, and attention to the victims in this case. In the same vein, within the framework of the [179th Period of Sessions of the Inter-American Commission](#), the MESA participated in the work meeting conducted by the IACHR, State authorities, and the beneficiaries of the precautionary measure. On the other hand, in March 2021, the MESA sent a questionnaire to the Mexican State in order to prepare a thematic follow-up report on the recommendations made by the Mechanism itself. Considering the upcoming expiration of the MESA 2020 work plan in June 2021, the Special Mechanism submitted to the Mexican State a proposal for the MESA 2021 Work Plan in order to renew its mandate.

Technical assistance with the preparation of normative/regulatory instruments

With regard to structural measures on missing persons, MESA participated in two sessions of the National Search System (SNB) in order to follow up on implementation of public policy on the search for missing persons in Mexico. Along those same lines, the Mechanism provided technical assistance with the development of normative and regulatory instruments for the search for missing persons, such as the **"Additional Protocol for the Search for Disappeared Children and Adolescents"**; the **"Summarized Version of the Standardized Protocol for Searching for Disappeared and Missing Persons and their relatives"**, and the **"Guidelines for the Training Program for Family Trainers in the Standardized Search Protocol"**.

In addition to the above, the Special Mechanism provided **technical support in eight meetings** of the Implementation Committee of the Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism (MEIF), as well as in seven meetings of the Commission for the Implementation of the Standardized Search Protocol, in addition to participating as an observer in a variety of training sessions on the Standardized Search Protocol for ministerial and public security authorities. Finally, MESA provided **10 hours of training for federal justice operators** in international standards on forced disappearance of persons in the course entitled "The obligations of the Federal Judiciary in relation to the disappearance of persons", organized by the Federal Judicial Training School of the Federal Judicial Council.

► Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI)

Since its establishment in 2018, MESENI continues to monitor the human rights situation in Nicaragua for purposes related to the IACHR's mandate.

In the first half of 2020, the Inter-American Commission decided to include Nicaragua, for the third consecutive year, in [Chapter IV B of its Annual Report for the year 2020](#). To that end, the IACHR considered that the grounds established in Article 59.6 of its Rules of Procedure had been met. The Inter-American Commission also noted that the human rights crisis in Nicaragua continues to deteriorate due to the persistent refusal to recognize the principle of the separation of powers, the intensification of repression against critics of the government, and the lack of institutional reforms aimed at restoring the rule of law.

Monitoring of the human rights situation

Thanks to the permanent monitoring carried out by MESENI, the IACHR published [30 press releases](#) in the first half of the year: **a 130% increase in the number of press releases issued** compared to the same period last year (13 press releases). These communiqués were related to the serious human rights situation in Nicaragua and the intensification of repression in connection with the electoral process.

The IACHR also held regular meetings with civil society and collected testimony from family members or victims of human rights violations. **More than 60 testimonies had been obtained by July 31, 2021.** In the same vein, MESENI continued to issue [monthly bulletins](#) in which it reports relevant facts regarding the situation in the country and the work of the Mechanism.

Likewise, MESENI continues to be active in the Commission's [social networks](#), addressing situations that require rapid pronouncements, within the framework of its mandate. In connection with the 30 statements it issued, the IACHR made **at least 25 recommendations**. The Commission highlights the fact that on [May 12](#) and [June 13](#) the President of the IACHR, Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, gave an update on the current situation in Nicaragua and the work of MESENI to the OAS Permanent Council.

As a result of the monitoring of the human rights situation in Nicaragua by the IACHR and MESENI, during the period covered by this report, international organizations issued **at least 3 resolutions and/or declarations**. These resolutions/declarations, in addition to citing and mentioning the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Nicaragua, voiced serious concern and stressed the need for the State to implement the recommendations issued by the IACHR.

- During the [47th session of the Human Rights Council Oral update on the human rights situation in Nicaragua](#), Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighted the close coordination with the IACHR for human rights monitoring (Geneva, June 22, 2021).
- Resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council, [Promotion and protection of human rights in Nicaragua](#), adopted on March 23, 2021
- Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner, [Situation of human rights in Nicaragua](#), February 11, 2021

Information records:

The Inter-American Commission also continues to constantly update the records of fatal victims of the crisis, as well as of persons deprived of liberty in the same context. During the first half of 2021, MESENI focused in particular on analyzing and updating the records of fatalities due to the crisis and on a project to redesign the MESENI microsite in order to provide the public with aggregated, statistical and analytical information regarding the crisis in Nicaragua. Thus, the IACHR has registered **355 deceased victims**, and clarified the circumstances surrounding **277 of those cases**. The database makes it possible to identify the profile of the deceased by gender, age, territory and dates of the events. The IACHR has also made progress with its redesigning of the MESENI microsite in order to provide aggregate, statistical, and analytical information to the public, without disclosing information that could be sensitive. The microsite is expected to be performing these functions by the end of June 2021.

Likewise, the IACHR has worked on the database of **persons deprived of liberty** and fatal victims, which shows that, after the last mass protest of September 2018, the number of fatal victims declined exponentially. It also shows a drastic increase in detentions followed by prosecutions with **1,614 persons detained as of June 2020**.

The IACHR has also kept its records of **testimonies by victims** of human rights violations or their relatives permanently up to date. So far, **1,753 testimonies** have been recorded.

Follow-up on implementation of precautionary measures granted:

With regard to protection mechanisms, the Commission granted and/or extended **14 precautionary measures** during the first half of the year, to protect the life, integrity, and other seriously threatened rights of persons suffering from state repression in the context of the human rights crisis in the country. In this regard, the Commission highlights the [granting of provisional measures](#) by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, [at the request of the IACHR](#) to protect the rights of Juan Sebastián Chamorro, José Adán Aguerri, Félix Maradiaga, Violeta Granera, and Tamara Dávila, who are still deprived of liberty. In this regard, there is no concrete information on the current detention conditions or exact whereabouts of those persons, nor on any effective measures to protect their rights at risk or the alleged violations of due process in their cases.

With respect to the protection of persons through precautionary measures, the IACHR **protected more than 78 persons** during the first half of 2021. It is important to note that that number does not include the beneficiaries of the provisional measures presented before the Inter-American Court. For example, the communities of the Miskitu Indigenous People of the Northern Caribbean Coastal Region of Nicaragua have approximately **150,000 inhabitants**.

➤ **Special Technical Advisory Board Mechanism for Honduras (MESAT)**

The Special Technical Advisory Board for Honduras (MESAT) is the result of a cooperation initiative with the IACHR to monitor and follow-up on the human rights situation. In this regard, the activities carried out within the framework of this special technical advisory roundtable include: working visits to Honduras; working groups with the participation of representatives of the State and civil society; bilateral meetings; promotion and training activities for capacity building; public hearings during IACHR sessions; technical advice on public policies; requests for and access to information and documentation, as well as other additional technical contributions .

Within the framework of the MESAT and the follow-up to recommendations, at least **12 measures** were adopted **to comply with the recommendations** issued in the [Honduras 2019](#) Country Report. Those measures were reported by the Honduran State through 31 follow-up sheets included in the Inter-American SIMORE. The compliance measures reported were related to a large number of state policies, programs, and plans on a variety of topics involving different populations in vulnerable conditions or at increased risk.

One positive result of this information upload was the **participation of 14 Honduran entities in the reporting on compliance measures**, reflecting an important level of institutional coordination. The entities involved in the reporting on compliance measures through the Inter-American SIMORE were the following: The Secretariat of Security; Secretariat of Human Rights; the Public Prosecutors' Office (*Ministerio Público*); Secretariat of Finance; National Directorate of Children, Adolescents, and Family; Secretariat of General Coordination of Government; National Women's Institute; Secretariat of Education; Secretariat of Health; National Congress; Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion; National Penitentiary Institute; Forest Conservation Institute; Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Likewise, it is worth noting that, during the first half of 2021, the IACHR published its 2020 Annual Report, which included, in [Chapter V](#), the follow-up report to the Commission's 2019 Honduras country report.

There are currently **14 recommendations for which compliance is pending, 12 recommendations with partial compliance, and 3 recommendations with substantial partial compliance.** Recommendation number 30 was only a call to the State to report periodically on compliance with the Report's recommendations. Worth noting is the lack of compliance by the State of Honduras with respect to the general recommendations on democratic institutions and the rule of law, citizen security, administration of justice and freedom of expression. Those areas were the ones showing least progress, for which the State did not provide sufficient information for a proper analysis.

Currently, the IACHR continues to provide technical advice on public policies with respect to children's rights, human rights defenders, women's rights, indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples, in addition to making other technical contributions. Furthermore, to ensure the successful completion of the activities they have committed to undertake, the IACHR and the Government of Honduras have agreed to extend the MESAT until December 2021.

► **Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE)**

In order to strengthen its monitoring activities in Venezuela and respond in a timely manner to the new challenges posed by the serious human rights crisis in that country, in October 2019, the Commission installed the [Special Follow-up Mechanism for Venezuela](#) (MESEVE). Since its creation, MESEVE has constantly monitored the human rights situation in Venezuela, making a major effort to reach out to victims and civil society organizations on the ground.

During the first half of 2021, MESEVE made progress with the preparation of the country report, including **10 new recommendations** addressed to the State. The new recommendations focus on issues regarding democratic institutions, citizen security, women, human rights defenders, LGBTI people and persons with disabilities. **More than 150 testimonies** were systematically scrutinized in order to draw up this report. The report will be presented during the second half of the year along with a communication strategy.

Monitoring of the human rights situation

Similarly, the mechanism continued its activities to monitor and draw attention to the human rights situation in the country. In this context, during the reporting period, the mechanism prepared **6 press releases** which addressed a variety of issues, for example, the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services; attacks against journalists and human rights defenders; the deaths of imprisoned beneficiaries of precautionary measures; the improper use of military criminal jurisdiction, and other issues. As a result, **at least 22** international and national **media outlets** commented on the country, such as El Nacional, El Carabobeño, Noticiero Digital, among others echoed these publications. The MESEVE also issued **17 recommendations** made through the issuance of **14 pronouncements** on the social network Twitter. The aim was to warn in real time about situations that could violate the State's international obligations. A case in point was the arrest of human rights defender, Javier Tarazona, and the raid on the headquarters of the humanitarian organization, Azul Positivo.

Taking of testimony:

In addition, MESEVE continued to actively collect testimony, coordinating with the special rapporteurships of the IACHR (RELE and SRESCER), and with the rapporteurships on the rights of migrants, women, LGBTI persons and persons deprived of liberty. Within that framework, testimonies were taken from health and care workers; children with illnesses awaiting organ transplants; LGTBI activists; organizations working for the sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women; indigenous people deprived of their freedom; journalists, and others. The database currently has a total of **286** registered **testimonials**.

Conclusions

The progress described in this report points to significant achievements, under each strategic objective, building on the structural advances made in the first years of implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021. It is important to highlight that the results obtained by the IACHR during the pandemic demonstrate the commitment of the Commission and its staff to the promotion of human rights, their protection and the prevention of possible violations in the Americas.

With respect to Strategic Objective 1 (SO1), the results reported allow us to conclude that the IACHR made significant progress with strengthening the System of Petitions and Cases and Precautionary Measures, thereby improving victims' access to inter-American justice. The Commission is aware that this process of improvement must continue over time, maintaining the policies that have proved successful and adopting additional decisive measures in order to effectively achieve more effective, timely and comprehensive inter-American justice. With respect to program 1 for the reduction of the procedural backlog, we can point out that the progress made in recent years has continued. Of the 1,126 petitions received in the initial study stage, 886 were evaluated; 102 admissibility reports were drawn up and 115 were approved (172% over the 2019 figure), 23 merits reports were approved (92% compared to 2019) and 26 cases were sent to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (136% more than in 2019).

With respect to friendly settlements, the Commission has implemented Resolution 3/20 on differentiated actions to address the procedural backlog in friendly settlements, in order to avoid possible delays that prevent the bodies of the inter-American human rights system from ruling on the processing of petitions and cases in a timely manner. Steps have also been taken to disseminate the mechanism and a website has been launched to facilitate the follow-up of friendly settlement agreements. The approval of seven friendly settlement agreements and the corroboration of progress with the implementation of several reparation measures are also noteworthy, which demonstrates the willingness of States to implement the measures included in the friendly settlement processes and to build trust based on compliance with the agreements. As regards precautionary measures, the IACHR was able to guarantee the efficient and timely response of the precautionary measures mechanism, and expedited its decision-making, concentrating its efforts and available resources on the analysis of the cases of persons who are at risk and who need a precautionary measure to safeguard their rights. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IACHR prioritized the evaluation of applications alleging risk in that context. During the first half of 2021, 25 precautionary measures were granted and 6 extended, and an updated diagnosis was performed on the 587 requests so far registered.

The access to information policy is still being developed and is due to be issued shortly. Meanwhile, the IACHR continues to adopt transparency measures, such as the publication of annual and current status reports on the Commission's work and use of resources. Based on the foregoing, it would be safe to say that in the first half of 2021 highly satisfactory outcomes were achieved under Strategic Objective 1.

As regards **Strategic Objective (SO2)**, we should note the lasting results of the Commission's geographical monitoring and thematic work, which has led to the enrichment of standards and new reports. The IACHR has made progress in the international development of human rights through the establishment of inter-American standards on novel issues and with respect to guidelines, advisory opinions, and thematic reports. In addition, the Commission continues to identify the promotion and protection of the right to

freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights as fundamental to the establishment and consolidation of the democratic rule of law. The work of the SACROIs as mechanisms for immediate and timely response to human rights violations has made it possible to react immediately to address crises, particularly those related to COVID-19. Finally, in the period under review, the IACHR was able to prepare reports based on the systematization of information established through the Integrated Information Analysis and Management Platform (IIAMP). With these achievements, the IACHR has shown that it has increased its capacity to act in strategic areas and can thus have a greater impact on preventive measures to address the factors that give rise to rights violations.

In **Strategic Objective 4 (SO4)**, the relationship with United Nations bodies, other agencies, and international human rights organizations has been coordinated and strengthened with increased technical cooperation, dialogues, joint declarations, greater participation of the IACHR in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, and the strengthening of the joint mechanism with OHCHR for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

Progress was also made with coordinating with regional and subregional human rights mechanisms to collaborate and cooperate in joint actions to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In **Strategic Objective 5 (SO5)**, the IACHR continued to consolidate important and structural advances made in previous years while successfully confronting the challenges posed by the pandemic.

In terms of organization and institution building, one of the major achievements of the period under review was the selection of the Head of the Executive Secretariat, Tania Reneaum Panszi, who began her duties as Executive Secretary on June 1, 2021. Another was related to implementation of the various components of the financial sustainability plan. The timely submission of its 26 narrative and financial reports on results-based project implementation and the transparency and quality of those reports have been publicly acknowledged by multiple donors. This prompted the interest of donors to continue supporting her mandate, as reflected in the approval of 8 project proposals submitted during the period, costing more than \$6 million dollars, to be implemented in the current and next two years.

Progress was made with implementation of the Work Environment Plan, particularly as regards the diagnosis of the work environment in the ES/IACHR, with findings and recommendations to be implemented during 2021 and the following years; the development of the Protocol for the selection of consultants in the ES/IACHR; and capacity building for its staff thanks to the training of 30 members of the ES/IACHR by Canadian experts in results-based management.

With regard to the communication strategy, it is worth highlighting the improvement and updating of the website data structure, with the implementation of databases, forms for updating, search systems, as well as improvements and updating of various pages, such as the precautionary measures and follow-up to recommendations pages, which have provided greater coverage and better dissemination, as reflected in a 38% increase in the number of visits compared to the previous year (2.5 million visitors). Social networks such as the IACHR's web portal achieved significant increases compared to other years in terms of users and followers: on YouTube, a 44% increase to 17,600; on Twitter, a 16% increase, adding more than 100,000 followers, who now number 713,000.

In the area of technology, important progress was made with the implementation of new tools and with the redesign of current systems that facilitated the work of the Commission, particularly in the context of the pandemic. The new tools made it possible to hold the first period of sessions with public hearings and to broadcast them live over social networks. The implementation of a tool for recording and organizing

information also facilitated collaborative work in a secure space, and the implementation of E-learning tools strengthened training processes through virtual platforms. Regarding the updating, improvement, and implementation of existing tools, the main progress was to install the IACHR Central System, known as Gaia, in a test environment, which seeks to streamline and automate the information processed, to expedite responses to users of the IAHRs, and to systematize the work done by the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR.

Finally, the establishment of the Customer Service Center and the improvement of documentation management have made it possible to improve the transparency, timeliness, and adequacy of customer service with new tools that allow for increased coverage in customer service.

In **Special Program 21 (P21)**, the IACHR made significant progress with the development and improvement of methodologies for the follow-up and analysis of levels of compliance with recommendations, as well as the preparation of manuals, technical assistance memos, working meetings, and so on.

One of the most important advances achieved during this period was the promotion and dissemination of the [Inter-American SIMORE](#). In addition, the IACHR monitored and followed up on the impact of the recommendations issued in public reports on the merits, achieving the implementation of 17 measures by the States. The IACHR continued its efforts to consolidate and strengthen the Special Mechanisms for Follow-up on Recommendations, highlighting important results in the implementation of recommendations, which contribute to compliance by the countries of the region with their international obligations, in accordance with inter-American human rights norms and standards. Also noteworthy in these mechanisms was the technical assistance provided to the MESA Mechanism for the development of at least three normative/regulatory instruments on the search for disappeared persons.