



Committee of Experts expresses its concern over the possible setbacks in matters of Human Rights of Women in Guatemala

The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) reiterates its concern over the setbacks in the human rights of women and girls in Guatemala, which could arise in connection with a series of regressive legislative initiatives on Constitutional and conventional rights in light of the effective implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention, an instrument signed and ratified by the State.

These initiatives along with public discourses that accompany them based on moral or religious beliefs may affect the free exercise of women's human rights. In this sense, the Committee recently lamented that Dr. Ana Leticia Aguilar Theissen was dismissed as Presidential Secretary of Women (SEPREM) for having spoken in favor of the bill 5376 for the Comprehensive Protection of Girls and Adolescents Victims of Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking.

In this sense, the Committee has been informed of the progress of bill No. 5272 that provides for approval in Congress of the "Law for the Protection of Life and the Family". This bill disputes the human rights of women and girls, recognized internationally and that the State of Guatemala in a sovereign manner has forced itself to recognize.

It should be recalled that Article 4 of the Belém do Pará Convention states that every woman has the right to the recognition, enjoyment, exercise and protection of all human rights and freedoms enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments. Likewise, Article 6 of the Convention establishes that States Party must guarantee that all women and girls are valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination.

Through the [Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention](#), the Committee has indicated that the education system requires a set of norms that ensure that women and girls receive an education free of violence, gender stereotypes and without discrimination. On the other hand, through the [Declaration on Gender and Women's Empowerment as a Benefit of Humanity](#), the Committee has indicated that discrimination and violence against women constitute human rights violations, therefore, justifications based on religious or cultural beliefs or values are not acceptable. In addition, it is explained that gender is an analytical category established by the social sciences and a methodological instrument to examine and reveal the historical relations of inequality between men and women and the concrete impacts on the lives of both.

A democratic and respectful system of international agreements requires respect for human rights and equality between men and women. For this reason, the concern of the Committee is sharpened by the fact that this initiative seeks to deepen machismo and misogyny, reinforces and perpetuates stereotypes and discriminatory gender roles that mainly affect women and girls. It also fosters a culture of intolerance that affects democratic coexistence and legitimizes violence against women.

For all the above, the Committee urges the State to evaluate the continuity of this initiative. This includes promoting the gender perspective in all plans, programs and bills, and taking all necessary measures, including legislative ones, to guarantee and protect the right to gender equality and the right of all women to live free of violence, as stated in the Belém do Pará Convention.

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