

Committee of Experts condemns the murder of candidate Karina García in Colombia

The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the [Belém do Pará Convention \(MESECVI\)](#) strongly condemns the murder of Karina García, candidate for mayor of the Municipality of Suárez, Cauca, in Colombia, who, as a result of a criminal attack, was found dead with her mother and other people inside a vehicle on September 1st 2019. The concern of the Committee is exacerbated by the fact that the victim had already expressed her risk, through a [statement on YouTube](#) (available in Spanish) and other media.

This situation has shown once again the risks for the democratic exercise of political participation that has manifested itself in numerous cases of violence against women leaders and candidates. In the same way, this violence has also exposed the fragility of the security measures implemented by the Colombian State, through the National Protection Unit. Along these lines, this Committee [has already expressed](#) deep concern about the situation of risk and lack of protection faced by women leaders, candidates and human rights defenders in the country.

This serious situation was also described by the women who participated in the recent Course for Electoral Candidates in Colombia offered by the [CIM](#), the [School of Governance](#) and the [MAPP](#) of the [OAS](#), who through their stories testified to the violence, the threats and the risks they face permanently in the exercise of their right to political participation, which hinders the efforts to guarantee a process of democratic strengthening and lasting peace in which thousands of women actively participate in the country.

Article 4 of the Belém do Pará Convention establishes that every woman has the right to the recognition, enjoyment, exercise and protection of all human rights and that these rights include, among others, the right to have her life respected, as well as her physical, mental and moral integrity, the right to have equal access to public functions in her country and to participate in public affairs, including decision making. Likewise, article 5 establishes that every woman must freely and fully exercise her civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and have full protection of those rights enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments.

Through the [Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life](#), this Committee has indicated that acts of violence against women in political life correspond, inter alia, to those actions, behaviors or omissions against women who, based on their gender, cause, or may cause, the violent death of women because of their participation or political activity. In addition, it is pointed out that the violence that is exercised against women in political life is a violation of their

human rights and constitutes a threat to democracy.

For all the above, this Committee of Experts urges the Colombian authorities to take all necessary measures to protect the life and integrity of any woman who is at risk or under threat for exercising her civil and/or political rights, repair the harm caused to Karina García and her family, and intensify efforts to eradicate gender stereotypes that condemn women for exercising their right to citizen and political participation at national and local levels.

Likewise, as established in articles 7 and 8 of the Belém do Pará Convention, the State is urged to adopt policies aimed at preventing, punishing and eradicating violence against women, acting with due diligence to investigate this violence and adopting specific measures to offer women subject to violence access to effective rehabilitation and training programs that allow them to participate fully in public, private and social life.

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 among its nationals, who exercise their functions in a personal capacity.