

**Annual Report
on the Implementation
of the
IACHR Strategic Plan
2017 - 2021**

2019

January 2020



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The Executive Secretariat is submitting a report on results achieved for the period from January to December 2019 in the implementation of the 2017-2021 IACHR Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Commission 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 summary is followed by six chapters, five of which refer to each of the strategic objectives contained in the Plan, with the sixth covering the Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations (Program 21). In a final section conclusions are drawn on plan implementation.

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

Main Achievements

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

- Victims of human rights violations, and especially the individuals and groups who have traditionally borne the brunt of discrimination, now have better and more effective access to the inter-American human rights system.
 - More expeditious management and decision-making was achieved in the individual cases system, resulting in a larger volume of petitions and cases reviewed, compared to 2017. At the initial review stage, 6,750 petitions were evaluated. 225 reports were produced (admissibility, 129; inadmissibility, 23; reports on the merits, 62).
 - The capacity of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR to handle precautionary measures expanded in response to the increased demand for them following deterioration in the human rights situation in several parts of the Hemisphere and more widespread familiarity with the mechanism.



- Victims of human rights violations now have alternative ways to obtain full reparation.
 - Use of the Friendly Settlements (FS) Mechanism expanded, thanks to the signing of 14 new agreements, surpassing the historical record of 12 signed in 2001. That was in addition to the approval of 14 friendly settlement agreements and corroboration of progress made with implementing 111 reparation measures. There were also 87 working meetings and 75 videoconferences on friendly settlement agreements, in addition to 5 working visits and 32 press releases.
 - In 2019, the FS mechanism portfolio expanded to include 15 new negotiation processes under way.

Timely prevention of risks and human rights violations; and stepped-up output of inter-American human rights standards (SO2)

- An analytical survey was conducted of the human rights situation in the Americas.
 - Reports published on the human rights situation in specific countries: [The Situation of Human Rights in Honduras](#) and the [Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia; Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region; Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica , Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia \[TR: duplicated!\]](#);
 - 5 public consultations conducted: one on the situation of indigenous peoples of the Pan-Amazon region; the second, on corruption and human rights; the third on updating the diagnostic assessment of challenges and current trends relating to [memory, truth, justice](#) and non-repetition guarantees in the Americas; the fourth, on inclusion of [LGBTI](#) persons in economic, social, and cultural spheres in the Caribbean; and the fifth, on citizen security-related issues.
- The IACHR has advanced human rights internationally by establishing inter-American standards.
 - Increased impact if IACHR rights mechanisms thanks to two resolutions on matters of paramount importance for the region: one on [principles of public policies on memory in the Americas](#) and the other on [inter-American principles on the human rights of all migrants](#), refugees, stateless persons, and victims of human trafficking.
 - Enhanced standards with respect to freedom of expression and the exercise of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, thanks to the development of standards in novel areas, such as business and human rights, [Protest and Human Rights](#) and the link between Rights of the Child and the Media in the Americas.
 - Consolidation and enhancement of standards and development of doctrine in a number of areas, including: [Violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents](#); [Corruption and](#)

[human rights; Compendium on Equality and Non-discrimination: Inter-American Standards”; Protest and Human Rights.](#)

- The IACHR was able to respond in a timely and coordinated manner to situations posing risks of human rights violations, especially as regards persons, groups and segments of populations in vulnerable situations.
 - Timely and immediate response to human rights crises in 2019, as in [Ecuador](#), [Chile](#), [Bolivia](#) and [Haiti](#).
 - The Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI) facilitated an immediate, structured, and coordinated response to the serious human rights crisis in Nicaragua and elsewhere.
- Expanded and more robust public presence of the IACHR in the countries of the region.
 - Six working visits to promote human rights were carried out to Caribbean countries (Barbados, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, and Haiti). The IACHR held one period of sessions in Jamaica; the [first joint public consultation](#) on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in social, economic, and cultural spheres was conducted in the Caribbean (Barbados); and an on-site visit was paid to Haiti.
 - Increased presence of the IACHR thanks to the use of digital and audiovisual media.
 - Increased coverage of monitoring activities in the region thanks to the use of virtual tools, for countless virtual meetings with civil society in a variety of countries, as well as for four rounds of virtual dialogue with civil society to discuss issues relating to children's rights.
 - Holding of the High-Level [Dialogue](#) on Transitional Justice and the Forum on Transitional Justice for the Justice Sector in El Salvador.

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

- Strengthening of member states' ability to espouse inter-American human rights standards with a human rights approach in State institutions and public policies.
 - Training was provided to 6,254 people (members of civil society and government officials) on the mechanisms and standards of the inter-American human rights system through workshops and promotional activities in 26 countries.
 - Documents published: Public Policy with a Human Rights Approach [<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/PublicPolicyHR.pdf>]; Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Public Policy Guidelines



[<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/InternalDisplacement.pdf>]; and Compendium on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Inter-American Standards [<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Compendium-EqualityNonDiscrimination.pdf>].

- Effective cooperation was forged with the countries of the Caribbean and Central America to strengthen human rights and democratic institutions. The IACHR provided training sessions and boosted its ties with CARICOM and Central American countries.
- The launching of the Academic Network helped establish and strengthen cooperation with civil society and academic. 64 cooperation projects were received and 7 agreements signed with academic institutions/centers in the region.
- Stepped-up technical assistance and cooperation with member states via technical cooperation agreements entered into with: i) the Government of Argentina (through the Human Rights Secretariat); ii) the Human Rights Secretariat for Buenos Aires Province; and iii) UNHCR and the Honduran Judiciary. The establishment of such mechanisms as the Special Technical Assistance Mechanism (MESAT) for implementing recommendations in Honduras.

Expanded coordination with the I/A Court H.R., international, regional, and sub-regional human rights organization for coordinated actions to defend and promote human rights in the Americas (SO4)

- The IACHR bolstered its relations with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, with United Nations and other agencies, and international, regional, and sub-regional organizations on human-rights related matters.
 - Stronger international presence of the IACHR, including active participation in a session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.
 - Meetings held with the I/A Court and joint participation in international forums.
 - Strengthening, with the OHCHR, of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

Modern, results-focused institutional management, leading to efficient, effective, and measurable improvement, accompanied by financial sustainability, transparency, accountability, and gender and diversity policies (SO5).

- Organizational structure and planning, management, and accountability processes have been strengthened and aligned with one another in 2019 to make the IACHR more efficient and effective.



- Implementation of the collectively drafted work environment improvement plan in progress.
- Public presence of the IACHR expanded in the countries of the region.
- Communication capacity boosted by the launching of the IACHR Channel.
- Continuation of the policy to enhance geographic representation among staff of the IACHR Executive Secretariat.
- Financial sustainability plan under way.
- Budget from the Regular Fund and specific funds increased.
- Technological innovation in progress
- User support services improved with the establishment of the User Assistance Center *Central de Atención a Usuarios*).

Modern, results-focused institutional management, leading to efficient, effective, and measurable improvement, accompanied by financial sustainability, transparency, accountability, and gender and diversity policies (SO5).

- Increased compliance by States with recommendations made by the IACHR in published reports on the merits, compared to 2017: full compliance cases increased from 6.8% to 8%; partial compliance cases increased from 64% to 75.2%; the percentage of cases in which compliance by State was still pending fell from 29.2% to 16.8%.
- Capacity was enhanced within the IACHR to monitor compliance with its recommendations and decisions, using established/improved monitoring and follow-up guidelines, strategies, and methodologies.
- The Inter-American Follow-Up and Monitoring System (SIMORE) is being implemented.
- Special Monitoring Mechanisms created and implemented:
 - The Technical Support Group (GAT) for the Ayotzinapa Affair installed in Mexico, in the new stage of the Monitoring Mechanism (MESA);
 - Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic, concluded in 2019, with the Dominican State undertaking the actions to which it had committed; Final Report prepared in connection with the IACHR 2019 Annual Report;



- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) up and running at IACHR headquarters, with outcomes reported and permanent activities in relation to Nicaragua;
 - The Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with the Commission's human rights recommendations was installed in November 2019 to provide technical advice to the State of Honduras on implementing the IACHR's recommendations, pursuant to Article 41.e of the American Convention on Human Rights;
 - Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE), installed in October 2019, with a view to bolstering IACHR monitoring in Venezuela and responding promptly to the new challenges being posed by the severe human rights crisis in that country.
- Impact Observatory of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, established through IACHR resolution No. 2/19;
- Enhanced capacity in the IACHR has led to ,and more vigorous, follow up on, and monitoring of, the implementation of recommendations:
- 40 follow-up press releases published; 9 official monitoring visits conducted in 2019¹; 21 activities promoting human rights and 15 training courses reaching out to 257 people; 22 working meetings and 8 portfolio review cases with States, in addition to numerous bilateral face-to-face or virtual (videoconference) meetings in 2019 with petitioners, victims, and State representatives of cases addressed in published reports on the merits;
 - Thematic follow-up report produced: "Impacts of cases of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents," completed, adopted, and launched in December 2019.

S01

To contribute to the development of more effective and accessible inter-American justice in order to overcome practices of impunity

¹ 2 MESA visits, 5 MESENI visits, and 2 MESAT visits.



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:

- More expeditious management and decision-making was achieved in the individual cases system, resulting in a larger volume of petitions and cases reviewed, compared to 2018. This achievement signifies better access to justice via the inter-American human rights system for victims of human rights violation who turn to the IACHR.
- At the initial review stage, 6,750 petitions were examined. In addition, 152 admissibility reports were drawn up, along with 62 reports on the merits. Thirty-two cases were referred to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
- Increased capacity in the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR for managing petitions and cases, following the hiring of new professionals, thanks to which progress with reducing the procedural backlog continued.
- The Friendly Settlements Mechanism was bolstered with the approval of 14 friendly settlement agreements (FSAs), the signing of 14 new FSAs, and corroboration of progress made with the implementation of 111 reparation measures.
- Strengthening of the precautionary measures mechanism, thanks to more expeditious procedures, which resulted in 59% of precautionary measures being granted or extended in fewer than 90 days. Of them, 48% were granted within the same month in which they were requested. The IACHR managed to complete its legal assessment of 99% of the 1,160 applications received in 2019, resulting in the granting of 64 precautionary measures (5.5%) and the extension of 10 existing measures.
- Two working visits were conducted (to Costa Rica and Argentina) to verify in situ implementation of the precautionary measures granted.
- The capacity of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR to handle precautionary measures expanded in response to the increased demand for them following a deterioration in the human rights situation in several parts of the Hemisphere and more widespread familiarity with the mechanism.
- Enhanced active transparency via accountability report to member states, observers, and donors and users in general. Progress was also made with formulating the Commission's Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data Policy, making it easier for IACHR users to access information.

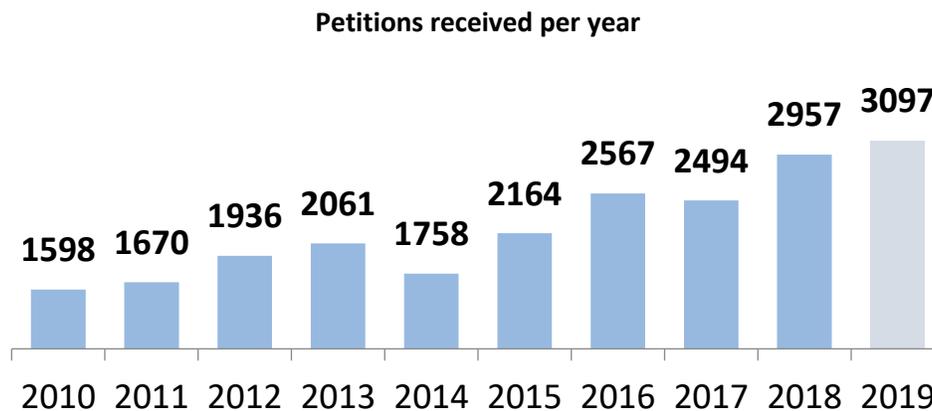


Since 2016, in addition to the establishment of the Executive Assistant Secretariat for the Petitions and Cases System and the Precautionary Measures Section, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR has managed to substantially increase the number of professionals working in the petitions, cases, and precautionary measures system and its supporting areas (the Processing Unit and User Assistance Center) from 33 to 58.

Based on the foregoing, it would be safe to say that in 2019 highly satisfactory outcomes were achieved under Strategic Objective 1.

P1: Special Procedural Delay Reduction Program

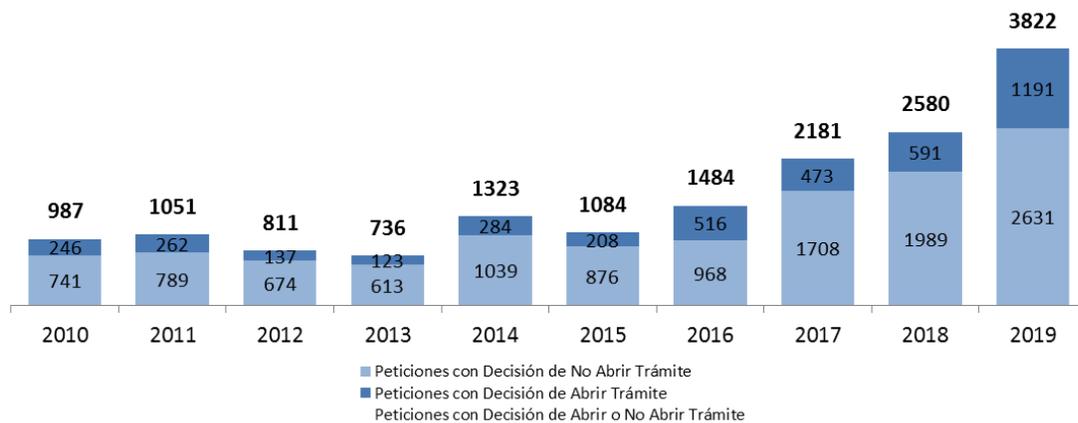
In 2019, a total of 3,097 petitions were received, an increase of approximately 5% compared to those received in the preceding year and a 24% increase over those received in 2017.



➤ Initial review

In 2019, a total of 6,750 petitions were reviewed. It was decided to start processing 1,191 of those petitions and to not process 2,631 of them. This means that the number of decisions to start processing increased by 101% compared to 2018 and 151% compared to 2017.

Decisions to process or to not process

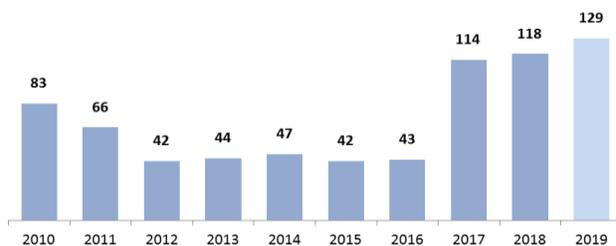


➤ **Admissibility, merits, and transition stages**

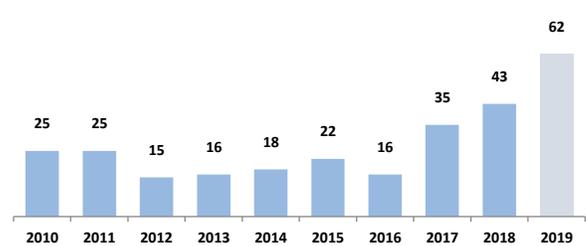
In 2019, the IACHR approved 152 reports on admissibility (129 admissible and 23 inadmissible): a 10% increase over the preceding year and a 224% increase over 2016.

Additionally, the IACHR approved 6 reports on the merits, a 46% increase over 2018 and an 80% increase over 2017.

Report on admissibility that were approved



Report on the merits that were approved



Through those decisions on the merits, the Commission not only responded to victims; it also developed its case law in respect of relatively new topics, such as military service and conscientious objection; maternal health-related rights; the rights of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation; equality and nondiscrimination of LGBTI persons; the rights of persons deprived of liberty; and the social rehabilitation functions of sentences. In addition, the Commission continued to issue pronouncements in cases involving very serious human rights violations, including cases of forced disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial executions. Worth mentioning, too, is that in 2019, pursuant to Article 64 of its Rules of Procedure, the IACHR held 4 hearings on cases being processed. Thanks to those hearings, the Commission was able to garner evidence from witnesses and experts and to listen directly to the arguments of the parties involved.

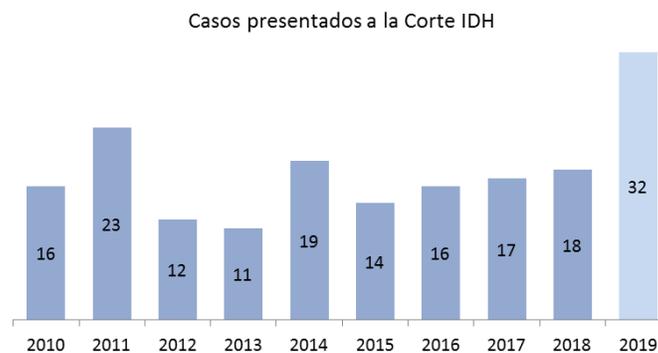
The larger volume of reports on the merits produced in 2019 also led to a larger number of cases being supervised by the Commission pursuant to Article 46 of its Rules of Procedure with a view to verifying the status of compliance with the Commission's recommendations and deciding whether or not to refer the

case to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court or to publish the case.. Once notification is made of all the reports adopted in 2019, the Commission will reach a total of over 50 reports at that stage. In 2019, the Commission held four working meetings to follow up on compliance with recommendations related to cases for which a report on the merits exists (transition) and in respect of which the Commission will adopt a decision on possible referral to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Holding working meeting of this type marks the start of a practice that the Commission intends to pursue more extensively as a way to enhance the effectiveness of its decisions at this stage.

➤ **Proceedings brought by the IACHR before the I/A Court of HR**

In 2019, the IACHR sent 32 cases to the Inter-American Court, a 77% increase over the preceding year (18 cases in 2018).

The larger number of reports on the merits likewise led to more cases being referred to the Inter-American Court (a record 32 cases in 2019, double the number of cases -- 16 -- referred to the Court in 2016, prior to the adoption of the Strategic Plan). Through those cases, the Court will have an opportunity to pronounce on the liability of States and to order corresponding reparation for the victims. In proceedings before the Inter-American Court, the Commission continues to participate in all the cases submitted as established by the American Convention and the Rules of Procedure of the Court. Among other activities, the Commission presents its observations with regard to possible preliminary objections, offers expert evidence when inter-American public order is significantly affected, and presents its oral and written observations regarding the arguments of the parties.



In addition to its work on cases being processed, pursuant to Article 64 of the American Convention the Commission submitted two requests for advisory opinions to the Inter-American Court in 2019. The first concerned the scope of States' obligations under the inter-American system with regard to trade union freedom, its relation to other rights, and its application from a gender perspective. The second had to do with differential approaches for the protection of persons deprived of liberty. The Commission hopes that, through those advisory opinions, the Court will be able to develop its case law in those area of utmost importance to the region.

➤ **Results in procedural delay reduction**



Sixty years after it was founded, the IACHR recalls the key part played by the petitions and cases system in its mandate and in promoting and protecting human rights in the Hemisphere, at both the individual and collective and structural level. The Commission's reports on cases and the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, apart from channeling concrete reparation to victims, have fostered constitutional amendments and changes in jurisprudence, while giving victims of human right violations hope that justice will be done and reparation made.

Ever since it was founded, States have promoted that central role and supported that mandate of the Commission, which began with requests to State to provide information and then became part of the processing of individual cases. The working tools devised by the IACHR were then recognized, first by the Statute of 1965, then by the Commission's Rules of Procedure of May 2, 1967, and finally with the adoption of the American Convention on Human Rights in 1969.

The protection and defense pillar, which includes the petitions, cases, and precautionary measures system, is a fundamental tool for the IACHR and for all inhabitants of the Hemisphere. It is a source of pride for the Americas and one that is internationally recognized for its objectivity, seriousness, and consistency, as well as its high legal standards.

Given the core part played by the system and the large procedural backlog that has accumulated since the 1990s, the Commission has made it a priority to systematically reduce that backlog. After a lengthy consultation process, involving more than 500 individuals and 300 entities, the IACHR adopted its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, with 5 strategic objectives. Bolstering the petitions, cases, friendly settlements, and precautionary measures system was chosen as the first of those objectives and the first program under the Plan is the Special Procedural Delay Reduction Program.

Over the past two years, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR has devoted substantial resources to implementing that program, significantly altering the way it organizes its work; making more efficient and strategic use of the human, managerial, and technological resources at its disposal; and developing, inter alia, model organizational pilot schemes that have been introduced in two stages:

Stage One:

1. Establishment of an Assistant Executive Secretariat devoted exclusively to petitions, cases, and friendly settlements;
2. Major reinforcement of staff;
3. Bolstering the job security of existing personnel;
4. Establishment of a Precautionary Measures Section;
5. Establishment of the Processing Unit;
6. Establishment of a working group to assist with the process of overcoming the procedural delay/backlog, comprising Commissioners Esmeralda Arosemena, Joel Hernández, Francisco Eguiguren,



and Luis Ernesto Vargas, and Executive Secretary Paulo Abrão, who spearheaded the consultations conducted in June 2018 for the launching of the second stage of measures.

Since May 2018, when he personally took on the task of heading this Assistant Secretariat for Petitions, Cases, and Friendly Settlement when the post became vacant, and pursuant to an IACHR mandate published in a [press release of May 5, 2018](#), Executive Secretary Paulo Abrão directed the transition and reorganization process of the Executive Secretariat with a view to further expediting reduction of the procedural backlog as an IACHR priority. A new Assistant Executive Secretary took over in October 2019.

Stage Two:

1. Reassignment of the more experienced professionals to the petitions and cases system, especially its admissibility and merits sections;
2. The IACHR has created a special team to act as a task force charged with resolving the procedural backlog at the initial review stage;
3. Implementation of an archiving policy reducing from 4 to 3 years the inactivity of the parties period after which the parties are warned of possible archiving of the case, and archiving cases at the merits phase when petitioners fail to submit observations, pursuant to Articles 42.1.a and 42.1.b of the American Convention. Archiving is thus applied to cases in which the IACHR lacks the information it need to reach a decision despite its efforts to elicit it;
4. Reduction of the number of requests for observations in the admissibility and merits phase;
5. Implementation of a pilot scheme for adopting serial decisions for cases at the admissibility phase dealing with the same subject matter, based on model reports on similar topics;
6. Maintenance of the practice of joining cases in which the parties are the same or the facts or patterns similar, while always taking care to respect the parties' right to defense and equal treatment.
7. Continuation of current clearance policy (*política de desactivación*);
8. Continuation of its *per saltum* (by-passing) policy (i.e. advance study of certain petitions) in cases in which the decision may provenly remedy grave structural situations impairing the enjoyment of human rights, or in other situations in which the passage of time may render a decision useless.
9. Updating of the I.T. system for procedural management, by adding new functions to facilitate internal working arrangements, transparency, and effectiveness.

It is with great satisfaction that the IACHR presents the results of these first two stages of its efforts to reduce procedural delay.

Establishment of a task force to overcome the procedural backlog at the initial review stage



The group was established in September 2018, made up of a group of specialists with the experience needed for them to constitute the task force that now examines all petitions. This group was confronted with the task of reviewing 8,295 petitions.

Resolution 1-19 and the Annex thereto: Of the aforementioned 8,295 petitions 2,753 referred to requests for re-evaluation, after notification had been issued of a decision not to process them. The task force reviewed all of them and reached a definitive position to reject 2,405 and to re-examine 348 in the first half of 2020. The resolution adopted by the IACHR at its 173rd period of session regulates and reinforces the transparency of the procedure for requesting re-assessment of a petition.

Notification of the decision to process: Another historical debt of the Inter-American Commission has been the time elapsed between adoption of a decision to start processing a petition and notification to both parties of the start of that processing. In 2019, notification was sent out of 726 decisions to start processing, the highest number ever in the history of the IACHR. The figures for previous years were: 259 notifications in 2018; 473 in 2017; 576 in 2016; and 208 in 2015.

Resolution 1/16 was examined very closely by the Commission and was found to constitute precisely the "reasoned resolution" required by the Rules of Procedure in order to defer a decision on admissibility until the debate and decision on the merits. It is only applicable to cases in a specific procedural situation consistent with the circumstances envisaged in the Rules of Procedure that would, exceptionally, warrant such deferral. In particular, the Resolution points out that those scenarios are underpinned by the need to implement decisive measures to reduce procedural backlog, thus ensuring that the passage of time does not prevent the useful effect of the decisions of the Commission, or else by the need to act with more agility in matters relating to a precautionary measure, where risk of imminent harm exists.

The Resolution was an effort to reduce the procedural backlog in a transparent manner. It meant that a large number of cases can be studied, thereby avoiding the need to draft, translate, consult, and discuss two separate reports in cases that require a prompt decision because they match the scenarios referred to in the resolution.

The Commission acknowledges that moving these cases forward in a single stage of the proceedings (*en una etapa procesal*) places a greater burden on States with respect to presentation of their observations on the merits. To address that situation, the Commission decided to implement this resolution gradually. Thus, the 2016 resolution has been applied as follows: in 2017, 116 matters; 2018, 326 matters (197 of which were included because they were prior to 2006 even under the terms cited in the resolution), and in 2019, 42 cases.

Decisions to archive cases The IACHR has been reducing the amount of time in which petitioners may remain inactive, from five years in 2015 to three in 2018. The Commission also interpreted failure by the petitioners to submit additional observations on the merits, a requirement under Article 37.1 of the Rules of Procedure or the IACHR, as a serious sign of disinterest in the processing of a case as envisaged in Article 42.1.b of the same instrument. Thus, having verified the absence of procedural activity and after notifying the parties of the possibility of a decision being taken to archive the case, as instructed in Article 42.2 of



the Rules of Procedure, the IACHR decided to archive 152 cases in 2018, as opposed to 109 in 2017, and 77 in 2016. In 2019, the IACHR decided to archive 308 petitions.

Simplification of procedures In keeping with the Rules of Procedure, the Commission will start implementing a single transfer of materials to the parties during the admissibility and merits stage. Arrangements for that are now being made in the I.T. systems.

Serial draft reports for petitions on similar topics The process was greatly expedited by using model report formats for matters requiring identical analysis. The Commission's topics in this case were dismissal of judges and human rights violations committed during military dictatorships. Priority was also attached to procedurally ready cases relating to violations of women's and girls' human rights. Another positive development in 2019 was the establishment of a "Common Law Group" to deal primarily with cases in member states with common law legal systems, that is to say, the English-speaking member states.

Results in comparison with previous years: in 2016, the year before Special Program (SP) 21 was implemented, the IACHR approved 45 admissibility reports (43 admissible, 2 inadmissible). That figure rose to 120 reports (114 admissible, 6 inadmissible) in 2017; 133 reports in 2018 (118 admissible, 15 inadmissible); and 152 in 2019 (129 admissible, 23 inadmissible).

Merits stage: the Commission has been identifying cases with similar subject matter with a view to adopting a more standardized approach in its reports, for example, with regard to cases concerning due criminal process or administrative sanctions. The IACHR has also been shortening its reports, by making them simpler, while safeguarding the parties' right to defense and the technical quality of the reports. Those developments, plus the technical team's increasing specialization based on work portfolios, have resulted in a marked increase in the Commission's output of reports on the merits since Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was adopted.

In 2016, prior to adoption of the Strategic Plan, the IACHR approved 16 reports on the merits; in 2017, that number rose to 35 (a 118% increase); in 2018, 43 reports (+168% over 2016); while in 2019 the IACHR approved a total of 62 reports on the merits (387.5% more than in 2016). This trend demonstrates the effectiveness of the measures adopted.

Number of cases brought before the Inter-American Court Prior to adoption of the Strategic Plan, the average annual number of cases referred was 16. In 2017, that figure increased by 6%; in 2018 by 12%; and, in 2019, the 32 cases referred were 69% more than those sent to the Inter-American Court in 2016. Once notification has been issued of all the reports on the merits adopted in 2019, the Commission will have more than 50 cases at the transition stage in which they are periodically reviewed for a decision to be taken in due course on whether to refer them to the Inter-American Court or to publish them. Throughout the year, the IACHR participated in all the (more than 30) hearings to which it was convoked by the Inter-American Court and submitted all the documents requested of it in both cases being processed and monitoring of compliance with judgment.



In short, over the past two years, the staff of the Assistant Executive Secretariat for the IACHR Cases, Petitions, and Friendly Settlements System has been boosted with the appointment of new people for all the stages it covers. This is the largest ever increase in human resources for the Cases System.

The IACHR is conscious that all the steps it is taking to overcome the procedural backlog must be interpreted and directed toward enhancing the efficacy and effectiveness of its response to victims of human rights violations. Accordingly, having implemented the first two phases, the IACHR has decided to keep regularly reviewing (and conducting a half-yearly evaluation) of the measures it has announced and implemented.

Part of the changes and improvements to the efficiency of the work done by the IACHR are due to the doubling of the IACHR's operating budget assigned by the OAS. As is public knowledge, doubling the Regular Fund budget does not necessarily mean a doubling of the IACHR overall financial budget, so that the IACHR still needs voluntary contributions for its operations.

P2: Program to Expand the Use of Friendly Settlements

In 2019, efforts to stimulate the use of friendly settlements and disseminate the mechanism produced significant advances, as the following results show:

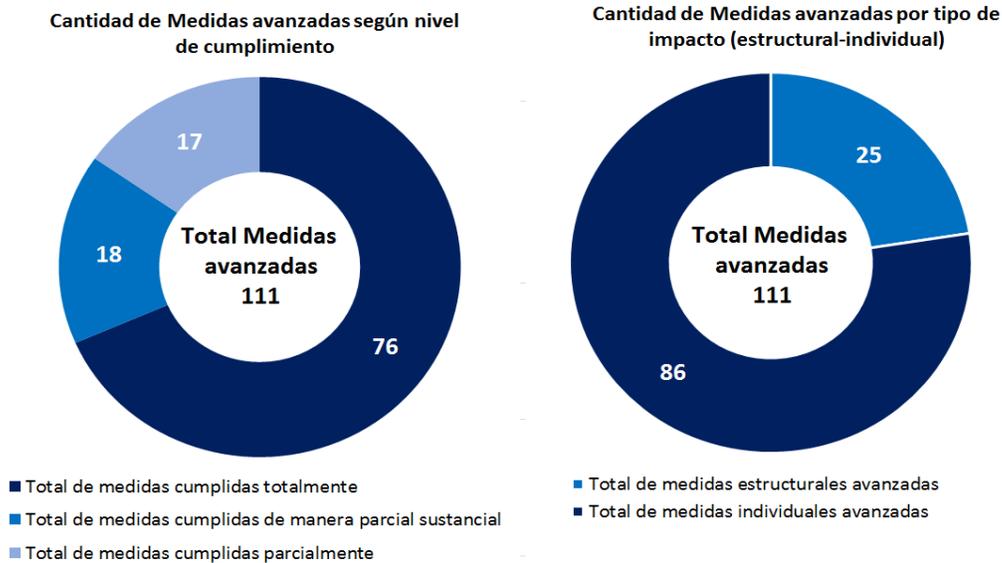
➤ Results achieved and progress with new friendly settlement follow-up methodologies

In 2019, 15 new cases were added to the friendly settlements negotiation portfolio. At the same time, 47 cases were screened out of that portfolio: 18 because the parties requested closure, 14 because they were archived; and 14 because they entered the approval process. As of the end of 2019 and in plans for 2020, there are 97 matters are being negotiated or at the phase just prior to the issuance of a Harmonization Report (*Informe de Homologación*)

The Commission notes with satisfaction that there was an increase in 2019 of the number of settlements in which total compliance was achieved compared to the previous year, when full compliance was reached in six cases. That figure almost doubled in 2019 thanks to the Commission's facilitation work, technical counseling, and monitoring, as well as good will on the part of States. The Commission attaches great importance to progress in this area and congratulates Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay on their moving toward total compliance with friendly settlement agreements. It urges them also to continue making use of this mechanism for the non-contentious settlement of matters still pending in the Individual Petitions and Cases System.

The Commission notes with satisfaction progress made with implementing measures in 21 friendly settlement agreements. As noted in the Commission's analysis above, in 2019, eleven petitions and cases achieved full compliance and 10 cases achieved partial compliance.

At the same time, progress was noted with the implementation of 111 measures, full compliance in 76 reparation measures; substantial partial compliance in 18 reparation measures, and partial compliance with 17 other reparation measures. Of the 111 measures in which progress was recorded in 2019, 25 are structural, while 86 were cases involving individual gains. Worth highlighting is the fact that in 2018 the Commission had declared full compliance with 69 measures, so that there was a 10% increase in full compliance with reparation measures.



➤ **Promotion and dissemination of friendly settlement agreement negotiation processes**

The IACHR facilitated 87 meetings and 75 videoconferences in 2019, encouraging negotiations and compliance with friendly settlement agreements. By comparison, in 2016, there were 36 working meetings on friendly settlements, 52 in 2017, and 40 in 2018. Also worth noting is the novel use -- since the entry into force of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2012 -- of videoconferences to facilitate remote, formal and informal, encounters: a best practice that familiarizes more users with the friendly settlement mechanism.

In 2019, 162 opportunities for dialogue were opened up in connection with friendly settlement negotiations or follow-up processes: another milestone in the history of the individual petitions and cases system. As part of its efforts to stimulate friendly settlement negotiations, the Commission provided technical counseling in 12 cases, expediting the determination of a number of courses of action with regard to petitions and cases subject to the friendly settlement mechanism.

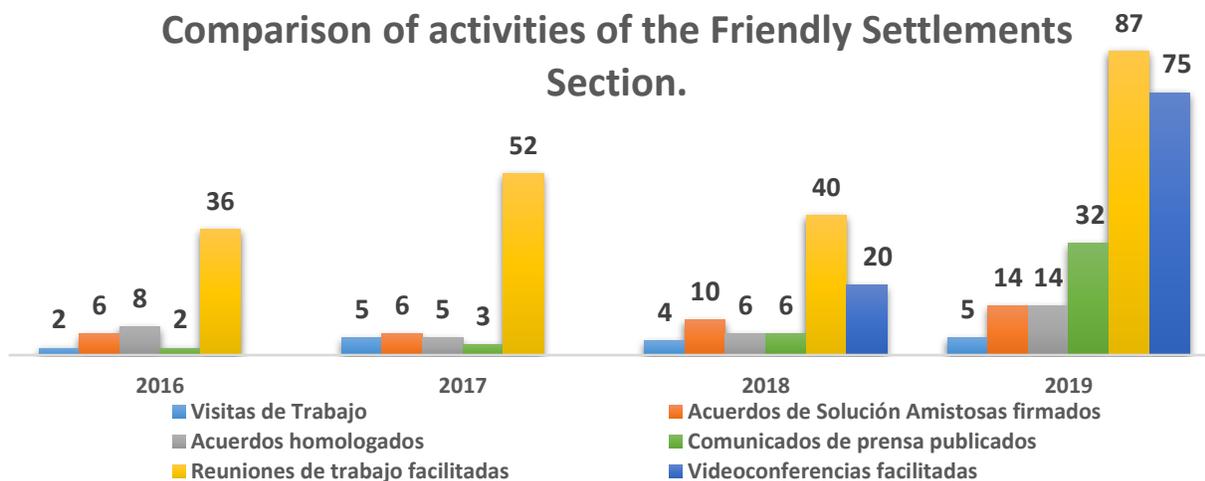
Likewise, between April and August 2019, the IACHR conducted five successful working visits in relation to friendly settlements: to Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, and Paraguay.

All in all, 14 new friendly settlement agreements were signed in 2019: 5 involving Honduras, 6 Colombia, and 3 Panama. The figures for FSAs signed in previous years are 10 in 2018, and 6 in 2017 and in 2016, respectively. One positive development worth highlighting is that in 2019 a record number of friendly

settlement agreements were approved by the Commission: 14 reports approving FSAs were issued pursuant to Article 49 of the American Convention: That output marked a record high in the history of the Commission. It came on top of the approval of 8 FSAs in 2016, 5 in 2017, and 6 in 2018. Of the 14 agreements published in 2019, 8 have been fully complied with.

In 2019, the Commission issued **32** press releases on friendly settlements, 5 times the number it issued in 2018; and it began highlighting the signing of friendly settlement agreements and progress made with compliance with them, subject to the consent of both parties, given the confidential nature of friendly settlement negotiations prior to issuance of the report approving the agreement. The Commission also continued its practice of publishing press releases to mark approval of the FSAs. Here, it is worth recalling that the Commission issued two press releases on friendly settlements in 2016, 3 in 2017, and 6 in 2018.

Comparison of activities of the Friendly Settlements Section.



P3: Program to Strengthen Precautionary Measures

In 2019, through its precautionary measure mechanism, the IACHR continued to protect the rights of individuals throughout the Hemisphere, who face a situation of grave and urgent risk of irreparable harm. To that end, it implemented measures to meet the challenge of increasing efficiency of the precautionary measure mechanism, in a context of increased demand for the mechanism, as described below.

➤ Strengthened institutional management

On May 10, 2018, the IACHR adopted [Resolution 3/2018](#) in order to ensure the efficiency of the precautionary measures mechanism and foster more-prompt decision making. The resolution enables efforts to center on reviewing the situations of individuals who are at risk and in need of precautionary measures to safeguard their rights. The resolution provides greater transparency for matters or claims that historically have consistently been considered not eligible for review under the precautionary measures mechanism because their analysis requires an in-depth examination of the allegations made in the light of the obligations set forth in the American Declaration or Convention, something that is the



purview of the system of individual cases and petitions. The foregoing strengthens the initial review methodology for requests received, ensuring greater predictability with respect to the scope of the mechanism while encouraging decisions to be adopted on such matters.

Furthermore, in order to have up-to-date information available from requesters and to expedite the analysis of requests received, the IACHR resolved to deactivate requests in which information has been sought from the requesters without a response from the latter within the time limit set in the Commission's communication. It was also resolved to deactivate requests in which information has not been sought from the State and no information updates have been received from the requesters for more than six months since the previous information was submitted. Since the resolution went into force, a periodic review is conducted of inactive matters with a view to their deactivation. Where additional information is presented for a deactivated matter, the information presented is processed as a new request for precautionary measures, taking into account the current situation of risk.

➤ Results of precautionary measures management

In 2019, a total of 1,160 requests for precautionary measures were received, surpassing those received in 2017 (1,037). In 2018, the IACHR received a record number of requests for precautionary measures (1,618), as a result of the Commission's work on the ground in Nicaragua.

Almost all (96%) of the requests received in 2019 were analyzed in that same year and classified in accordance with indications of degree of seriousness and urgency in accordance with the requirements established in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure. The largest numbers of request received had to do with situations in Colombia (267), Mexico (186), and Venezuela (92).

In 2019, the Commission granted 64 precautionary measures, increasing the portfolio of current measures to over 500. The beneficiaries include human rights defenders, children and adolescents, survivors of acts of violence, indigenous peoples, persons detained or whose whereabouts are unknown, along with other individuals or groups of persons in highly vulnerable situations. Of all the new measures granted or extended, 59% are granted in fewer than 90 days: 48% of them in the same month in which they are requested.

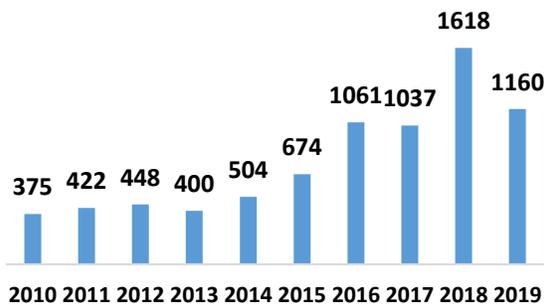
The Commission examined 1,441 cases in 2019, 30% more than in 2018, when a record number of requests for precautionary measures were received (1,618). Despite this unprecedented influx of new requests for precautionary measures, the total portfolio of requests being processed for which a final decision is pending has fallen as a share of the total portfolio of requests in 2018.

Pursuant to [Resolution 3/2018](#) adopted on May 10m 2018, the Commission proceeded to deactivate 2,600 requests because they lacked either updated information or a reply from the applicants to the Commission's requests for information/requirements. Should additional information be submitted on those matters, the Commission will analyze the current situation pursuant to Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure, as indicated in the aforementioned resolution.

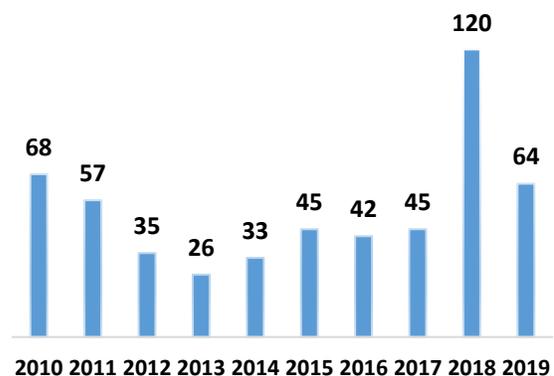
In an effort to strengthen the precautionary measures mechanism and facilitate the application process for users of the inter-American system, the Commission also developed a specific form for requesting precautionary measures, which is posted on the [IACHR Portal](#).

Thanks to the above, the Commission has managed to guarantee efficiency and timely responses in the precautionary measures mechanism, as well as expedite its decision-making processes. To that end, efforts and all available resources centered on reviewing the situations of individuals who are at risk and in need of precautionary measures to safeguard their rights.

Requests for Precautionary Measures Received in 2019



Precautionary Measures Granted in 2019



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

With a view to broadening the publicity surrounding measures currently in effect, the Commission published [an interactive map of the precautionary measures granted since 2013](#). In addition, during 2019, 850 follow-up letters were sent to State and representatives requesting specific information needed to monitor the implementation of such measures. The Commission also held 45 working meetings to receive information from the Parties on progress made and challenges encountered with implementing the measures and further developed its practice of holding public hearings as a way to facilitate more effective implementation. Five public hearings were held to oversee more than 13 current measures.

The Commission also paid a [working visit to Costa Rica](#) to verify in situ implementation of the precautionary measure granted on behalf of the Bibri y Teribe Indigenous People, and another [working visit to Argentina](#), where it held working meetings on the implementation of the precautionary measures granted on behalf of the Almafuerde and San Felipe penitentiary complexes. The Commission once again thanks both States for assenting to those visits and for the facilities provided.

➤ **Requests for provisional measures filed with the I/A Court HR**

With regard to Nicaragua, in the absence of information showing implementation of the precautionary measures granted and due to heightened risk, in 2019 the Commission [applied to the Inter-American](#)



[Court to use its jurisdiction](#) to adopt provisional measures to protect the rights of 17 persons deprived of liberty and at grave and urgent risk of irreparable harm in Nicaragua, given the acts of violence and precarious detention conditions. The President of the Court adopted those provisional measures [in a resolution of May 21, 2019](#).

In addition, the Commission also submitted to the Inter-American Court a [request for provisional measures](#) to protect human rights defenders of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH), who are at extreme risk of suffering irreparable harm in Nicaragua. The urgent measures were issued by the Court [through a resolution of July 12, 2019](#) and [ratified by the plenary of the Court](#) on October 14, 2019. The Commission also requested the Court for [an amplification of provisional measures](#) on behalf of certain Miskito indigenous communities in Nicaragua's northern Caribbean coastal region, in order for those measures to include as beneficiaries the inhabitants of the Miskito indigenous community of Santa Clara. That request is currently being processed before the Court.

Furthermore, the Commission presented 49 legal documents in 2019 related to the supervision of current provisional measures ordered by the Inter-American Court, thereby responding to 100% of the requests it received for said documents.

With a view to continuing to enhance familiarity with the precautionary measures mechanism and its predictability, and in line with its [Strategic Plan](#), in 2019 the Commission continued to prepare and draft a basic handbook for new users on how to use the precautionary measures mechanism. It is scheduled to be published in 2020.

P4: Transparency and Access to Information Program

In 2019, the IACHR continued to step up its efforts to boost transparency, accountability, and access to information, as described below.

➤ Annual Report

The Annual Report constitutes the principal instrument for IACHR accountability to States, civil society, users of the inter-American human rights system, and those who participate in or cooperate with the work of the IACHR. The Annual Report corresponding to 2018 was presented on March 21, 2019 to the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and on June 27 to the OAS General Assembly. This year's report was re-designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in the region, along with a description of activities and of achievements in terms of the objectives set forth in the Strategic Plan. ([Press Release](#) – [Speech by the President to the CAJP](#) – [2018 Annual Report](#))

➤ Reports containing overviews of results and accountability



- On February 7, 2019, the IACHR presented a report entitled "Overview of Results Achieved by the Precautionary Measures Mechanism, " containing figures and information on the work done by this IACHR mechanism ([Press Release](#))
 - On February 8, 2019, the IACHR presented its "Overview of the Results Achieved by the Special Follow-Up Mechanisms," containing information regarding the various Special Mechanisms for following up on implementation of its recommendations ([Press Release](#)).
 - On February 15, the EACHR presented its report on Unprecedented Outcomes of Its Work in 2018 and a Progress Report for the Second Year of implementation of the Strategic Plan in 2018. ([Press Release](#))
 - On March 13, 2019, the IACHR presented two reports to the OAS Permanent Council: the "Progress Report on the Second Year of Implementation of the Strategic Plan and its "Financial Statement for 2018 and its accountability report on how the funds it received were spent." [Presentation to the PC - Press Release on the Strategic Plan \(SP\) Report – SP Report - Press Release on the Financial Statement](#))
 - On June 25, 2019, the IACHR presented a report entitled "Overview of the Results Achieved by the Special Follow-Up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI)." ([Press Release](#))
 - On July 22, 2019, the IACHR presented a "Performance Report and Results Relating to Friendly Settlements for the First Half of 2019." ([Press Release](#))
 - On July 31, 2019, the IACHR presented its "Six-Month Performance Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2017–2021" and the results of its work in the first half of 2019. ([Press Release](#))
 - On October 25, 2019, the IACHR presented a report on outcomes of its "Monitoring of the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic." ([Press Release](#))
 - On October 29, 2019, the IACHR presented new progress report on the results achieved through its program for overcoming procedural backlog. ([Press Release](#))
 - On November 25, 2019, the IACHR launched a new online section to follow up on the Friendly Settlement Agreements that are published on its website. ([Press Release](#))
- **Annual reports on results of the Special Rapporteurships (on freedom of expression and ESCER)**

On February 27, 2019 the IACHR presented the report on results achieved by the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (REDESCA), containing detailed information on that Special Rapporteurship's work in 2018. ([Press Release](#))



On March 21, 2019, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression presented its 2018 Annual Report to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS and, on June 27, to the OAS General Assembly. ([Press Release – Report](#))

➤ **Access to Public Information at the IACHR**

- In 2019, the IACHR responded to 21 specific applications by academics, States, and family members of victims of human rights violations for access to information in petitions and cases files forming part of the IACHR's historical archives.
- A document entitled "Guidelines for Drafting an Access to IACHR Information Policy" was drafted, along with a theoretical framework and relevant aspects for drafting the policy, which will be discussed in 2020.
- Pursuant to an agreement between the IACHR and the "Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition Commission," in the second half of 2019, access was granted to the historical archives on the armed conflict in Colombia, kept at the Columbus Memorial Library at the OAS, to Georgetown University academics and researchers, with due observance of the confidentiality requirements established in the aforementioned agreement.
- Under an agreement with the Human Rights Secretariat of Buenos Aires Province, in Argentina, access was granted to files and historical documentation regarding the IACHR's visit to Argentina in 1979, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of that visit.



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

- Enhanced, integrated, and coordinated monitoring in order to achieve a greater impact.
 - Transformation of 3 thematic units into rapporteurships: on Memory, Truth, and Justice; Rights of Older Persons; and Persons with Disabilities.
 - Expansion of the mandate of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty and Combating Torture, as well as that of the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders, which now encompasses the situation of justice operators.
 - 5 public consultations conducted: one on the situation of indigenous peoples of the Pan-Amazon region; the second, on corruption and human rights; the third on updating the diagnostic assessment of challenges and current trends relating to [memory, truth, justice](#) and non-repetition guarantees in the Americas; the fourth, on inclusion of [LGBTI](#) persons in economic, social, and cultural spheres in the Caribbean; and the fifth, on citizen security-related issues.
 - Reports published on the human rights situation of specific groups or areas: [The Situation of Human Rights in Honduras](#) and the [Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia](#); [Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region](#); [Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica](#),
- Inter-American human rights standards produced and enriched.
 - Two resolutions issued: one on [principles for public memory policies in the Americas](#) and the second on [inter-American principles on the human rights of all migrants](#), refugees, stateless persons, and victims of trafficking in persons.



- New standards produced for freedom of expressions and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. Standards on business and human rights, [Protest and Human Rights](#), and the link between children's rights and the media in the Americas.
- Enrichment of standards and doctrine in respect of specific topics and groups: [Violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents](#); [Corruption and human rights](#); [Compendium on Equality and Non-discrimination](#); and others.
- Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit set up to address at risk situations and human rights violations.
 - A structured, coordinated response to the serious human rights crisis in Nicaragua implemented via the SACROI, MESENI, and dissemination of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) Report on Nicaragua.
 - Timely and immediate response to human rights crises in 2019, as in Ecuador, [Chile](#), [Bolivia](#) and [Haiti](#). That response comprised not just visits by the IACHR or its Executive Secretariat, but also integration of all the Commission's mechanisms (monitoring, follow-up, and protection) to address those crises.
- Expanded and more robust public presence of the IACHR in the countries of the region.
 - Six working visits to promote human rights were carried out to Caribbean countries (Barbados, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, and Haiti). The IACHR held one period of sessions in Jamaica; the [first joint public consultation](#) on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in social, economic, and cultural spheres was conducted in the Caribbean (Barbados); and an on-site visit was paid to Haiti.
 - Expansion of the topics addressed in public hearings, to include, for instance, forced disappearances.
 - Increased coverage of promotional and monitoring activities in the region thanks to the use of virtual tools, for numerous virtual meetings with civil society in a variety of countries, as well as for four rounds of virtual dialogue with civil society to discuss issues relating to children's rights.
 - Holding of the High-Level [Dialogue](#) on Transitional Justice and the Forum on Transitional Justice for the Justice Sector in El Salvador. Holding of the Third Meeting on Best Practices for National Human Rights Institutions.

All programs made progress during the period covered by this report, making it reasonable to say that the implementation of this strategic objective was satisfactory.



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

The institutional changes promoted in the monitoring continued to yield significant results in 2019, as presented below:

➤ Integration of the working methodology and processes for thematic and country-specific monitoring

Following integration of the monitoring sections in structural terms, work moved forward with standardization and harmonization of work flows, processes, and instruments, as well as the implementation of protocols for a series of activities/actions. Five protocols are currently in the process of being implemented: working visits, letters requesting information, thematic reports, the drafting of press releases, and promotional activities.

➤ Development of innovative human rights standards in the region

In 2019, substantial progress was made with defining standards broadening the scope of protection for individuals in the Americas and, at the same time, advancing interpretation of the human rights recognized in inter-American instruments. Those standards are set forth in the various reports adopted by the Commission in 2019:

With regard to the **rights of indigenous peoples**, in drafting its thematic report on the [“Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region”](#), the Commission addressed the problems of the peoples inhabiting that region in light of inter-American human rights standards. One of the novel issues addressed therein is the right to a decent life from indigenous world-view (leading a good life) standpoints; another is intergenerational solidarity. The report deals with typical situations and reflects the positions of indigenous leaders, highlighting the knowledge, visions, and languages of indigenous peoples, especially in connections with their right to be consulted about projects in advance and to give their prior informed consent to them; the expanding of extractive industry frontiers; and impairments to indigenous communities' rights to life and bodily integrity. In addition to those standards, the Commission referred explicitly to three approaches: an intercultural approach, in the sense of recognition of the coexistence of a variety of different cultures called upon to live together and converse with one another on a basis of respect for each culture's world views, human rights, and rights as a people; a gender approach, recognizing the special circumstances of indigenous women and adopting culturally sensitive measures guaranteeing the enjoyment of their fundamental rights and freedoms and a life free from discrimination and violence; and intergenerational solidarity, underscoring the importance that indigenous peoples attach to their forefathers and to future generations and, from that perspective, cherishing social cohesion, expressed as a robust commitment to values and experiences transmitted from one generation to another through oral memory, and as awareness of the need to replicate that knowledge. It is worth noting that this is a new approach for the IACHR.



With regard to **women's rights**, the Commission adopted the report entitled "Violence and discrimination against women, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges and best practices in the region."² In that report, the Commission pinpointed some of the most serious forms of violence and discrimination against girls, such as child marriages or common-law unions (*uniones de hecho*); teenage pregnancies and pregnancies as a result of sexual violence; child labor and the exploitation of girls in the workplace and for human trafficking; and violence against them using the latest technology. In that connection, the IACHR pointed out that, at the very least, States need to act on the assumption that any pregnancy of a girl under the legal age of consent is the result of rape. Along those same lines, the IACHR underscored that a marriage is forced, due to the absence of "free and full consent," when one of the parties involved is not mature enough to make an informed decision regarding the other. Likewise, the IACHR has pointed out that gender stereotypes negatively impact access to justice of women victims of violence inasmuch as they impair the objectivity of government officials responsible for investigating the complaints lodged with them, biasing their perception of whether or not an act of violence was committed, their assessment of the credibility of the witnesses and of the victim herself, and their appraisal of evidence.

The Commission likewise pointed out that the educational system itself and the curricula it propagates may reproduce socio-cultural patterns and perpetuate gender stereotypes. Especially in connection with the right to health, the Commission stressed that gender stereotypes about women's alleged inability to make autonomous decisions impair both access to information on the matter and the process and manner in which informed consent is obtained, especially with regard to access to contraceptives and legal interruption of pregnancy. At the same time, the IACHR has voiced its concern regarding the forced sterilization of women, especially indigenous women. Obtaining prior, free, and fully informed consent is a mandatory requirement before performing any medical procedure, including surgical sterilization. That obligation requires that qualified medical personnel provide appropriate, complete, reliable, comprehensible, and affordable information, without threats, coercion, or incentives of any kind. In that same context, the IACHR is continuing to analyze the information it has received regarding acts of obstetric violence during pregnancy and the post-partum period.

The girls in Latin America and the Caribbean also provided an overview of patterns of violence particularly directed against women and girls, such as widespread gender-based murders and blatant shortcomings in the regulatory and criminal code frameworks for addressing that issue specifically; the worrisome numbers of cases of disappearance of women and girls and the failure to investigate them properly; and the high incidence of sexual violence and failures to prevent and investigate it and provide appropriate care for victims.

In the report entitled "[Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Discrimination and gender-based violence faced by women journalists in the exercise of their profession](#)", drawn up by the IACHR and its

² It will be published in the first half of 2020.



Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression, the IACHR addresses the various types of discrimination in the media against women journalists, due to the still prevalent stereotype that journalism is not an "appropriate" profession for women, an attitude that restricts women's opportunities for professional development. It also deals with gender-based violence against women as manifested in murders, sexual violence, sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse of office or authority, and gender-based threats. The report upholds international standards on security for journalists from a gender perspective, and State obligations to prevent, protect, and seek justice vis-a-vis acts of gender-based violence against women journalists. The report likewise focuses on the role of the media for preventing gender-based violence and on online platforms given the very important role they play in prevention and protection of women journalist from gender-based violence.

With respect to the *rights of migrants*, as of its report on [“Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica”](#), the IACHR has been evaluating the human rights situation of Nicaraguan who have found themselves forced to migrate to Costa Rica and has been making recommendations to the Nicaraguan State, the Costa Rican State, and the other member states of the OAS to ensure that the rights of Nicaraguan displaced persons, migrants, and refugees.

In addition, through Resolution 4/19, the IACHR adopted the [“Inter-American Principles on the Human Rights of all Migrants, Refugees, Stateless Persons, and Victims of Human Trafficking”](#), which consolidate and further develop guidelines for crafting, drawing up, implementing, and evaluating public policies for protecting the rights of migrants, refugees, stateless persons, and persons who have been displaced and are in transit, in accordance with State obligations and inter-American standards in this field.

Regarding the rights of **Afro-descendants**, the Commission published its report entitled [“African Americans, Police Use of Force, and Human Rights in the United States”](#) on police violence, in which it appraises the current situation with respect to police work and criminal justice, taking into account the history of racism and discrimination in the United States and highlighting the structural nature of discrimination in that country. In its report, the Commission calls upon the State to examine and do away with all practices and policies that, explicitly or implicitly, give rise to racial profiling and discriminatory treatment by the authorities based on race. The Commission further underscores that policies involving excessive criminalization of minor offenses may disproportionately impact Afro-Americans. In the same vein, the Commission calls upon the State to take the necessary steps to halt and revert the militarization of police departments given the racially disproportionate impact of militarized police on Afro-American communities. Finally, in its report the IACHR stressed the corresponding need to undertake systemic reforms to fully address the abuses of the past and ensure that they are not repeated, given that impunity in those cases fosters an environment in which police violence and abuse is tolerated and is used to justify discriminatory treatment of ethnic-racial minorities.

Likewise, in its [“Compendium on Equality and Non-discrimination. Inter-American Standards”](#), the IACHR provides a technical cooperation tool on the subject for users of the system, as well as public policy operators and other State agents, civil society, social movements, academia and other relevant sectors. The compendium is the result of the Commission's review and systematization of inter-American standards based on a cross-cutting equality and non-discrimination perspective. The idea is to update core



notions in the context of the inter-American system as so facilitate a better grasp of their content. The report also systematizes topics relating to the various contexts in which said standards are applied.

Regarding the rights of **human rights defenders**, the Commission published a report entitled [Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia](#). In that document, it addresses the situation of human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia, emphasizing, in particular, the period since the negotiations and subsequent signing of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army [FARC-EP]. The Commission also makes a series of recommendations to the Colombian State on bolstering its efforts to protect and guarantee the rights of human rights defenders and social leaders. In particular, it advocates the establishment of a complete record, with the participation civil society organizations, of all the various kinds of attacks against human rights defenders and/or social or community leaders. The Commission likewise recommends more in-depth contextual analysis as a basis for risk assessment and for the adoption of protection measures with a differential approach mindful of the specific needs of the segments of the population needing protection and of the places where they work.

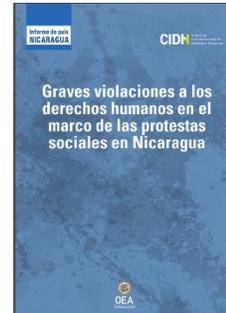
Concerning Memory, Truth, and Justice, with the adoption of [Resolution 3/19](#) on "Principles on Public Policies on Memory in the Americas," the IACHR established the guidelines for the design, development, and implementation of public policies on memory, in accordance with State obligations to furnish truth, justice, reparation and measures to ensure non-repetition of the very serious human rights violations. For the first time, the resolution also presents general principles for a public policy on the subject along with guidelines for memory initiatives of an educational, cultural, or other nature, as well as with respect to sites to preserve the memory of the violations that occurred and records of them.

In [its Report on Corruption and Human Rights](#), the IACHR analyzes corruption from a human rights perspective and in light of inter-American standards. The IACHR points out that corruption directly impairs States' compliance with their obligation to maximize their allocation of available resources to safeguard human rights, particularly in order to guarantee the enjoyment and exercise of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCR). Corruption hits the poorest hardest, given their particular vulnerability. Indeed, in general, the impact of corruption on the enjoyment and exercise of human rights is especially detrimental for groups in vulnerable situations or who have historically borne the brunt of discrimination. In its report, the IACHR highlights the need for States to bear in mind that full observance of human rights is also needed in the quest for effective investigation into corruption cases. Judicial guarantees and restrictions on the curtailment of rights are standards that also apply in full to efforts to combat corruption.

In 2019, the Commission drew up a country report (still to be approved) on [the situation of human rights in Cuba](#), in which the Commission reiterates that it is competent to monitor the human rights situation on the island, given that the State is still part of the inter-American system, even though its Government does not participate in the OAS and does not send information to the IACHR. To draft its report, the Commission interviewed persons who are living or lived in Cuba in the past three years and it included their testimony in its analysis of the principal human rights issues in that country. It also took into account official information in the public domain, press reports, reports by international organizations, and civil society

complaints relayed to the IACHR. The Commission underscores that with the adoption of a new Constitution in Cuba in 2019 and the recognition of several rights, the country has an opportunity to adopt recommendations issued by the IACHR to comply with its obligations under the American Declaration on Human Rights.

In its report entitled "[Situation of Human Rights in Honduras](#)", the IACHR addresses human rights in the country, with a particular focus on the post-election conflict, citizen security, administration of justice, freedom of expression, and the status of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. The IACHR's report points out that, in order for there to be full enjoyment of human rights in that country, it is essential that Honduras bolster democratic institutions, guarantee genuine separation of powers, and strengthen the rule of law. The report also provides recommendations aimed at assisting the Honduran State with strengthening its efforts to protect and guarantee human rights in the country.



➤ Coordinated strategy to address the serious human rights crisis in Nicaragua

Through its Special Monitoring Mechanism (MESENI),³ the IACHR is exercising its mandate above all by following up on the recommendations contained in the [Preliminary Observations](#) and in the [report on "Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua"](#). The MESENI also follow up on the recommendations contained in the [final report](#) of its Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE), which completed its work on December 21, 2018, That same month, the State of Nicaragua suspended the presence of the MESENI in that country, as well as visits by the Commission.

In February, the IACHR published a country report on Nicaragua describing the ongoing human rights crisis in the country. It was included in [Chapter IV. B of its 2018 Annual Report](#). In June, the IACHR published a [Performance Report and Results for the Special Follow-Up Mechanism for Nicaragua \(MESENI\)](#), one year after it was installed, and, in September, the Commission issued a [report on the Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica](#), based on work done by its Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants. The IACHR sent out 21 requests for information from States about victims of possible human rights violations in Nicaragua. To that end, the Commission also collected 209 testimonies and conducted six public and one private hearing, which were attended by Nicaraguan civil society organizations, without the presence of any Nicaraguan State representative. Visits to Costa Rica, Panama, and the United States were also conducted to hear about the plight of persons persecuted in Nicaragua and about persons who have found themselves forced to migrate from Nicaragua.

The MESENI organized 15 training sessions for 257 people, including students, human rights defenders, journalists and Nicaraguans in exile as a result of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua; 25 video-conferences were also held with civil society organizations. Since April 2019, the IACHR has been publishing a [monthly bulletin](#) /newsletter on the human rights situation in the country. The IACHR also

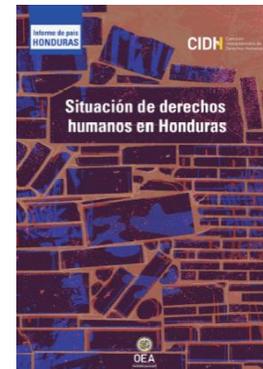
³ For further information on the context surrounding the establishment of the MESENI, go to the [link](#).

brought information on the human rights situation garnered by the MESENI to the attention of the OAS Permanent Council and of the Organization's Working Group on Nicaragua. It organized panel discussions on the human rights situation in Nicaragua, with the participation of civil society, international organizations, representatives of OAS member states, journalists, Nicaraguan social leaders living in exile, and others. In connection with the 40th and 42nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the IACHR drew the international community's attention to the situation in Nicaragua both by participating in the activities of the Council itself and at parallel events.

As regards protection mechanisms, the IACHR has started processing 24 petitions relating to Nicaragua and has requested additional information from possible victims in another 86 cases related to the crisis. In addition, the Commission is following up on 76 precautionary measures granted on behalf of persons at serious risk of suffering irreparable harm to their bodily integrity and life, as well as monitoring the [provisional members](#) granted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights at the behest of the Commission to protect human rights defenders at the Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH) and the Centro Permanente de Derechos Humanos (CPDH Nicaragua).

➤ Publication of the Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Honduras

On October 3, 2019, the IACHR published the report "[Situation of Human Rights in Honduras](#)". The report is based on the Commission's observations during its on-site visit from July 30 to August 3, 2018, other visits by the IACHR and its thematic rapporteurships, and the monitoring that the Commission performs as part of its mandate and using the various mechanisms available to it, such as hearings, the processing of precautionary measures, petitions, and cases.



In its report, the IACHR addresses human rights in the country, with a particular focus on the post-election conflict, citizen security, administration of justice, freedom of expression, and the status of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. The Commission focused in particular on the situation of groups and individuals of special concern, such as women; children and adolescents; LGBTI persons; human rights defenders and justice operators; persons deprived of liberty; indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, and Garifuna communities; and individuals in a human mobility (migration/displacement) context.

The IACHR's report points out that, in order for there to be full enjoyment of human rights in that country, it is essential that Honduras bolster democratic institutions, guarantee genuine separation of powers, and strengthen the rule of law. The IACHR also provides recommendations aimed at assisting the Honduran State with strengthening its efforts to protect and guarantee human rights in the country.

➤ Drafting of the Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Cuba

In 2019, the IACHR drew up a report based on its monitoring of the situation of [human rights in Cuba](#). This document will be adopted and published in 2020.

➤ Drawing up and adoption of 10 thematic reports and 1 country report



The following thematic reports drawn up by the rapporteurships and listed in the adjacent Table were adopted in 2019.

Table of thematic and country reports:

RAPPOURTEURSHIP	TITLE OF THE REPORT
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants	Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica
Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression	Protest and Human Rights
	Report on the Rights of Children and the Media in the Americas
	Final Report of the Special Follow-Up Team (ESE) appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights : Follow-up on the investigation into the facts that led to the kidnapping and murder of journalists working for the "El Comercio" daily newspaper [in Ecuador]
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women and Rapporteurship on the Rights of Children and Adolescents	Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents: Challenges and Best Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean
Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders	Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendants and against Racial Discrimination	Compendium on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Inter-American Standards
Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights	Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards
Country report	Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Honduras
Technical Cooperation and Public Policies	Report on Corruption and Human Rights in the Americas

➤ **22 working and on-site visits to 18 countries in the region**

In 2019, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights paid 22 visits to 18 countries in the region: ([Argentina](#), [Barbados](#), [Bolivia](#), [Bahamas](#), [Chile](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#), [El Salvador](#), [United States](#), Haiti, [Honduras](#), [Jamaica](#), [Mexico](#), [Panama](#), [Paraguay](#), Suriname, [Uruguay](#), and [Trinidad and Tobago](#)). Of those visits, 2 were on-site (El Salvador and Haiti); 2 were visits in preparation for an on-site visit (El Salvador and Chile); 8 were promotional visits; 3 were follow-up visits; 7 were visits to observe specific human rights issues.

Through its working visits to these countries, the IACHR was able to observe the human rights situation of vulnerable groups, such as women, children and adolescents, displaced persons and migrants, persons deprived of liberty, Afro-descendants, LGBTI persons, indigenous peoples, and the situation with respect to rights to memory, truth, and justice, freedom of expression, ESCER, and other matters. The following Table summarizes the working visits conducted in 2019.

Working Visits Table

State	Date/place	Issue(s)/rapporteurships
Barbados	Bridgetown, February 20	Rapporteurships on the Rights of Women and of Children
Trinidad and Tobago	Port-of-Spain, February 21-22	Rapporteurships on the Rights of Women and of Children
Jamaica	Kingston, February 25	Rapporteurships on the Rights of Women and of Children
Bahamas	Nassau, February 26-27	Rapporteurships on the Rights of Women and of Children
Costa Rica	May 19-24	Follow-up on recommendations, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Nicaraguan Migrants to Costa Rica
Honduras	May 22-24	Follow-up on recommendations, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants, Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights
Uruguay	May 27 and 29	Rights of persons deprived of liberty and of children and adolescents; memory, truth, and justice; and the rights of women and of LGBTI persons.
Haiti	June 3 and 4	The purpose of the visit was to promote dialogue with State authorities and civil society on the human rights situation in the country
United States	June 17 and 18, Miami, Florida	Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua, Country Rapporteurship
United States	August 19 to 23, San Diego and Laredo	Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants



Mexico	July 31 to August 1, Mexico City, Ayutla de los Libres	Follow-up on recommendations, Rapporteurship for Mexico
Chile	September 4	Visit to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the IACHR
Argentina	September 6	Visit to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the IACHR
El Salvador	September 18 and 20, San Salvador	The purpose of the visit was to prepare for an on-site visit
Panama	September 16 and 17	Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants
Paraguay	October 14 and 17	Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Freedom, Rapporteurship on Memory, Truth, and Justice.
Ecuador	October 28 and 30, Quito, Cuenca, Guayaquil, and Latacunga	Special Rapporteurship on Economic Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights, Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression
Suriname	October 31 to November 4, Paramaribo	Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination
Chile	November 18 and 21, Santiago and Valparaíso	The IACHR paid a preparatory visit geared to gathering first-hand information and documentation from as wide a range as possible of authorities, civil society entities, and international organizations on the human rights situation in connection with the social protests under way since October 18, 2019, following hikes in several public and private utility/services rates in recent months.
Bolivia	November 22 and 25, La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Sacaba	The IACHR assigned its Executive Secretariat the task of conducting an observation visit to Bolivia. The visit was conducted at the invitation of the Bolivian State and its purpose was to garner information in the context of the political and social crisis unleashed in connection with the elections in Bolivia on October 20, 2019.



Honduras	November 25 and 28, Tegucigalpa	Technical meetings of the MESAT and training for State representatives, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child, country Rapporteurship.
El Salvador	December 2 to 4, 2019	The human rights situation in the country and citizen security issues, in particular; situation of persons deprived of liberty; memory, truth, justice, and access to justice; the situation with respect to the rights of women and LGBTI persons; the situation of migrants and displaced persons; and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCER). In addition, cross-cutting topics examined included freedom of expression, the situation of human rights defenders and justice operators, and other particularly at-risk groups.
Haiti	December 17-20	Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI persons, country rapporteurship, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination, and Special Rapporteurship on Freedom of Expression.

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

By convening thematic hearings, the IACHR monitored and highlighted a significant number of human rights situations. Of the 109 hearings conducted in 2019, 100 addressed issues related to the Commission's monitoring of regional situations, situations in a number of subregions and/or 21 countries, as well as new trends in the area of human rights and follow-up on recommendations made by the IACHR. As part of its ongoing efforts to ensure the full accessibility of the inter-American system, the Commission arranged for sign-language interpretation services to be provided at two public hearings.

The hearings dealt with matters of particular importance in the region, such as the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in several countries in the region. In Mexico, for instance, there are reports that its indigenous peoples continue to suffer multiple violations of their rights.

The Commission likewise received worrying information regarding the situation in the Department of the Cauca in Colombia; concerning environmental pollution of land, territories, and ecosystems in numerous countries; acts of violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons; application of the death penalty in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; harassment of human rights defenders; and so on.

Number of hearings by priority theme

Temas Prioritarios/Priority topics	2016	2017	2018	2019
DESCA/ESCER	22	18	18	15
Libertad de Expresión/ Freedom of Expression	14	9	11	2
Privados de Libertad/ Persons Deprived of Liberty	9	5	10	5
Migrantes/ Migrants	6	6	8	12
Niñez/ Children	7	7	7	9
LGTBI/ LGBTI	5	6	8	4
Pueblos Indígenas/ Indigenous Peoples	10	8	14	13
Discriminación Racial/ Racial Discrimination	2	6	4	7
Personas con discapacidad/ Persons with Disabilities	1	1	4	2
Defensores de DDHH/ HR Defenders	11	14	11	6
Mujeres/ Women	10	3	12	6
Memoria, Verdad y Justicia/ Memory, Truth and Justice	4	10	10	9
Personas Mayores/Older Adults	0	1	3	1
Cobertura Temas Prioritarios/Theme Coverages	12	13	13	13

Number of hearings per country

Cantidad de Audiencias Temáticas por país			
Países	2017	2018	2019
Argentina	7	3	2
Bahamas		1	1
Bolivia	2	3	2
Brasil	11	7	9
Canadá	3	1	1
Chile	6	1	3
Colombia	8	9	8
Costa Rica	2	0	0
Cuba	2	2	2
Ecuador	3	6	2
El Salvador	3	6	4
Estados Unidos de América	9	7	5
Granada		0	0
Guatemala	4	5	5
Guyana	1	0	0
Haití	2	2	3
Honduras	3	5	2
Jamaica	1	0	0
Mexico	12	8	7
Nicaragua	2	5	6
Panamá	2	1	0
Paraguay	4	1	0
Perú	6	8	8
República Dominicana	1	2	1
Trinidad and Tobago		0	2
Uruguay	4	1	1
Venezuela	9	11	8
Cobertura por países	24	22	21
Regional	18	23	18
Total Audiencias	125	118	100

➤ **Impacts on preventive measures and factors that lead to human rights violations with the issuance of 68 requests for information made to member states**

In 2019, the Commission sent 68 letters requesting information to the States in the region: Fifty-eight of those letters were sent under Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights and 10 under Article 18 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. Fourteen letters were written by the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression and another 3 were written jointly by it and the Executive Secretariat. The Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights sent out 8 requests for information. The letters enabled the Commission to address multiple human rights situations in 18 countries in the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and United States.

It is noteworthy that 46 of the total number of requests for information in 2019 were answered by the States, and 22 went unanswered, a 67.65% response rate by States. Replies by States were therefore up compared to 2018, when the response rate was 63%.

Through this mechanism, the Commission was able to address such issues as the rights of indigenous peoples. Of particular note were 5 requests for information about the eviction of indigenous persons from their territories, the destruction of their homes, and the murder of an indigenous leader; the situation of violence against women and girls; gender-based murders and other forms of violence; suicides by women and adolescent victims of gender-based violence; acts of violence against transgender women; the situation of human rights defenders; the situation of Nicaraguan migrants; and the murders, spying on, and imprisonment of journalists; and so on.

Number of letters sent to State to request information

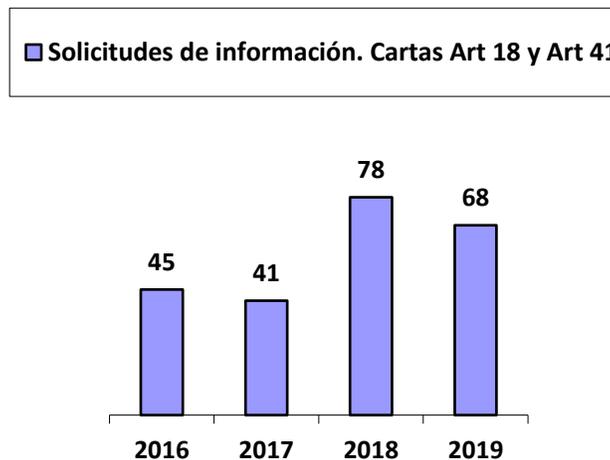


Table showing number of requests for information, by State

Countries	Requests for Information (Art. 18 & Art. 41 Letters)
Argentina	4
Brazil	11
Bolivia	1
Canada	5
Chile	4
Colombia	3
Cuba	1
Ecuador	10
El Salvador	4
United States	4
Guatemala	5
Honduras	5
Mexico	2
Nicaragua	4
Panama	2
Paraguay	1
Peru	1
Dominican Republic	1.
Total	68

- **221 press releases issued by the IACHR, monitoring the human rights situation in the region, individual countries, and priority issues for the IACHR**



Pursuant to its mandate to monitor the human rights situation in the Hemisphere, in 2019 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued 221 press releases on situations it found worrisome or acknowledging best practices in certain States. Through this mechanism, the Commission addressed the human rights situation in 26 countries of the region (Argentina, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

It also dealt with such human rights violations as forced sterilization of indigenous women, violence against women and girls; violence against migrants, their disappearance and murder; the adoption of migration policies that restrict migrants' mobility; death threats and murders of journalists; death of migrant children; the criminalization, harassment, imprisonment, and murder of social leaders in the countries of the region; violence and deaths in prisons; racial discrimination and violations of the rights of LGBTI persons; violations of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights; and so on.

➤ **Two resolutions issued by the IACHR linked to matters of great consequence in the region because of their impact on human rights**

On November 9, 2019, the IACHR adopted [Resolution 3/19](#) "Principles of Public Policies on Memory in the Americas" during the 174th period of sessions held in Quito, Ecuador. The Principles contain guidelines to design, build, and implement public policies on memory that reflect State obligations to ensure truth, justice, reparation, and non-recurrence measures in connection with serious human rights violations. It also presents general principles for a public policy on the subject along with guidelines for memory initiatives of an educational, cultural, or other nature, as well as for promoting respect for remembrance sites and archives.

In addition, the IACHR issued [Resolution 4/19](#) on inter-American principles on the human rights of all migrants, refugees, stateless persons, and victims of trafficking in persons. Through this resolution, the IACHR adopted guidelines for States, civil society organizations, and international organizations based on standards developed in the inter-American human rights system and best practices observed in countries of the region and other regional contexts. In the same vein, it presents general principles for public policies affecting migrants and refugees, along with guidelines for operating migrant and border control systems and for providing basic social services and local integration processes.

➤ **Public Consultation on Memory, Truth, and Justice**

The IACHR managed to move ahead with the establishment of priorities on the agenda of the Rapporteurship on Memory, Truth, and Justice, thanks to a public consultation held on February 14, 2019 in Sucre, Bolivia. That consultation identified synergies and opportunities for working together with the Latin American Transitional Justice Network (RLAJT) and the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Remembrance Sites (RESLAC) with a view to updating the diagnostic assessment of challenges and current trends with regard to memory, truth, justice, and non-repetition guarantees in the Americas, with broader participation of persons from the Andean region; and to receiving comments, corrections, criticism, and



additions to the working paper on Principles of Public Policies on Memory in the Americas. The consultation pursued two principal objectives: to update the diagnostic assessment of current challenges and trends with regard to memory, truth, justice, and non-repetition guarantees in the Americas, with broader participation of persons from the Andean region; and to receive comments, corrections, criticism, and additions to the working paper on Principles of Public Policies on Memory in the Americas. [TR: REPETITION?] Thirty people took part in the consultation; at least 20 of them came from the Andean Region. A distance (virtual) consultation was also conducted with regard to the second objective, with broader participation, aimed at forging a future regulatory framework for remembrance (Memory) policies.

➤ **Public consultation on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in economic, social, and cultural spheres in the Caribbean.**

On October 1 and 2, 2019, the Rapporteur on the Rights of LGBTI Persons of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the United Nations Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity conducted the [first Joint Consultation on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in economic, social, and cultural spheres](#), and on eradicating violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identify in the Caribbean. The Consultation was organized as part of a strategic partnership between the Secretariat of the Commonwealth and the United Nations Development Programme.

➤ **Consultation on Citizen Security**

On November 6 and 7, the IACHR and the OHCHR held a joint meeting of experts in Quito, Ecuador to gather information and ideas for restructuring and updating the contents of the IACHR report on Citizen Security and Human Rights of 2009.

➤ **Consultation on Corruption and Human Rights**

In order to draw up its report on "Human Rights and Corruption," the IACHR conducted a series of activities for garnering information from civil society and a number of key players. One such activity was the public hearing convened by the IACHR in February 2019, in connection with the 171st special period of sessions in Sucre, Bolivia. Subsequently, in March 2019 and with a view to eliciting information regarding the main advances made and challenges encountered by the countries of the Americas in dealing with corruption, the Commission sent out a questionnaire to OAS member states and published it in order to ensure ample access to it by civil society organizations and other interested parties. In addition, the IACHR held a series of meetings with civil society and State representatives, with the support of regional and national organizations (The Latin American Network for Research on Multinational Corporations - REDLAT, the Due Process of Law Foundation- DPLF, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Fundar analysis and research center, the University of San Martín, and Universidad de Chile). Participating in these meetings were some 150 organizations and institutions involved in key issues raised in this report. The meetings were held in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, and Peru.

➤ **Consultation on the Situation with regard to the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the pan-Amazon region**



In 2019, with the support of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM), the IACHR held a series of meetings and events related to the drafting and publication of the report on the Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region. The Commission received contributions from the following academic institutions: Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (AUSJAL); Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB); Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Bogotá (PUJ-Bogotá); Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali (PUJ-Cali); Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE); Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (UARM); and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Río de Janeiro (PUCRío). The IACHR also received contributions from the following entities associated with the aforementioned Network: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú (PUCP); Escola Superior Dom Helder Camara. Belo Horizonte; Consejo Indigenista Misionero de Brasil (CIMI); Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDIB); Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica (CAAAP) and Guyana Human Rights Association.

P6: Special Rapporteurs Program

Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression (RELE/RFOE)

➤ Plan of Action drawn up

Pursuant to its 2018-2021 Plan of Action, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression continued implementing projects focusing on democratic governance, defense of civic space, and the challenges involved in protecting freedom of expression online. Using inter-American human rights system mechanisms, in 2019 the Rapporteurship met its goals of enhancing the cases and petitions system, developing freedom of expression standards, and promoting and disseminating the inter-American legal framework vis-a-vis a series of actors. Noteworthy in that regard were the continuous technical cooperation with OAS member states, the Hemisphere-wide training provided to justice operators, and the rapporteurship's cooperation with civil society organizations in the region, the media, and academia.

➤ Inter-American standards disseminated and promoted

The Special Rapporteurship organized and participated in more than 30 events to disseminate Inter-American freedom of expression standards throughout the region. The venues in some cases were regional and international forums, such as the OAS General Assembly, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and the inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities. As in previous years, high-level national bodies, such as the Constitutional Court of Colombia and the Ecuadorian Legislature, also sought advice from the Special Rapporteurship, to discuss rulings involving guarantees for the exercise of freedom of expression. The Rapporteurship also participated in international gatherings, contributing its expertise at meetings in connection with the 2019 Global Conference for Media Freedom, the Latin-American Congress on Investigative Journalism (COLPIN), the RightsCon digital rights conference in Tunisia, and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Berlin, as well as other forums convened by digital platforms.

The areas in which the Rapporteurship contributed its expertise focused on: the Internet and freedom of expression; disinformation in electoral contexts; censorship and harassment of journalists; and the use of criminal law to criminalized expressions protected by the right to freedom of expression. The



Rapporteurship paid special heed to the situation of human rights in connection with protests and challenges to freedom of expression, from a regional perspective and bearing in mind, in particular the "civic space" situation in Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and Venezuela. The RELE/RFOE also responded to consultations from other areas of the OAS, such as the queries raised by CICTE's cybersecurity program and by OAS Electoral Observation Missions.

➤ Effective monitoring of freedom of expression

The RELE/RFOE also fulfilled important objectives in terms of monitoring the most serious situations in the Hemisphere. The Special Rapporteurship published the first special report on the situation of freedom of expression in Cuba and presented and disseminated it at scenarios that are emblematic for Cuban communicators. For instance, on March 13, the report was presented in Mexico City, with the participation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. It was also presented, with Mr. Kaye's participation, to the international community in Geneva, in connection with the 41st Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (24 June - 12 July 2019).

Likewise noteworthy is the publication of the report on the official mission of the [Special Rapporteur to Ecuador](#), which was also presented jointly with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye. It included a series of recommendations for undertaking the legal and institutional reforms needed to strengthen freedom of expression and the role of an independent press in that country, after 10 years in which it was weakened by government harassment and attacks.

The Special Rapporteur also accompanied representatives and experts at the 40th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, where he addressed the restrictions on freedom of expression in Venezuela.

Toward the end of 2019, the RELE/RFOE took part in IACHR working visits to Ecuador, where it assessed the human rights situation during the protests and state of emergency in that country; to Bolivia, where it monitored the situation of journalists and human rights during the protests; and to Haiti, where it managed to cull information from a variety of sources on the political polarization and violence against journalists and the media.

Earlier on in the year, in May 2019, the Special Rapporteur paid an academic visit to Guatemala, just weeks prior to the presidential elections in June, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). During that visit, the Special Rapporteur, Edison Lanza, met with journalists, human rights defenders, community radio representatives, and civil society organizations, as well as other social actors. He also took part in a public meeting on "Bots, netcenters, and online harassment" together with representatives of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)⁴ and met with the President of the Electoral Tribunal and the Human Rights

⁴ International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala



Ombudsman (*Procurador para los Derechos Humanos*). At the end of the visit, a [press release was published, jointly with OHCHR](#), commenting on the severe political polarization in the country and the risks to freedom of expression and democracy posed by constant denigration of the press by the presidential candidates.

➤ Thematic reports

As for the production of expert knowledge-based reports, the Special Rapporteurship published two thematic reports and one Guide including deliberate misinformation in Electoral Contexts. The first thematic report on [Women Journalists: Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence against Women Journalists because of the practice of their Profession](#), was presented to various legislative bodies in the region and represents a milestone in the process of establishing standards, with a gender perspective, to protect women journalists.

In December 2019, in a context in which political and social protests had become pivotal in the region, the Special Rapporteurship presented its thematic report entitled [Protest and Human Rights](#), in the hopes that it would help States comply with their obligation to guarantee, protect, and facilitate peaceful protests and demonstrations. According to the report adopted by the IACHR, dialogue should be espoused by State actors as the most appropriate way to address citizens' demands expressed in the form of protests, along with the adoption of clear standards and guidelines on the use of force as a last resort to deal with situations of violence in connection with demonstrations.

At the same time, the Rapporteurship presented to the OAS Permanent Council a ["Guide to recommendations for guaranteeing freedom of expression and access to information from a variety of Internet sources during electoral processes without improper interference"](#), thereby completing a drafting process headed by the Rapporteurship in coordination with the OAS Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO), pursuant to the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly in resolution AG/RES. 2928 (XLVIII-O/18). The Guide supplements efforts by the Rapporteurship to tackle this issue that began with the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and "Fake News," Disinformation and Propaganda issued with other rapporteurs on freedom of expression in 2017. Other actions forming part of this initiative included the advice provided by the RELE/RFOE to OAS electoral observation missions covering the presidential elections in Brazil, Bolivia, and Panama. The process used to produce the Guide managed to strike a balance in terms of the subject matter, geographical coverage, and the range of sectors involved. Participating in that process were multilateral organizations -such as UNESCO- civil society organizations, electoral organs in the region, representatives of the private sector, and academics.

Finally, the Rapporteurship moved ahead with its drafting of two new thematic reports: *Childhood, Freedom of Expression, and the Media* (approved by the IACHR in February 2019); and *Access to Public Information and National Security*, which is still being drafted. These reports will be published in the first half of 2020.

The Special Rapporteurship also participated in the drafting of a fourth report produced and approved by the IACHR, [Corruption and Human Rights](#), as it was mandated by the IACHR to write the chapters on



corruption and freedom of expression, investigative journalism, access to information and transparency, and protection of whistleblowers. The report reflects and is in line with the Lima Commitment, the document that was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAS member states at the Eighth Summit of the Americas held in Lima, Peru, in April 2018.

➤ Press releases and communications to States

Over the course of 2019, the Special Rapporteurship issued 22 press releases, which were replicated internationally in various media. Of those, five had to do with murders of journalists in Mexico, Haiti, and Honduras; another five commented on attacks, threats, and acts of intimidation directed against journalists and media, in settings in which freedom of the press is curtailed, especially on censorship in Venezuela. Other press releases drew attention to harassment cases in Guatemala and Brazil. The reports published by the IACHR, including the country report on Cuba, the 2019 Annual Report, the report on the situation of women journalists in the region, the report entitled "Protest and Human Rights," and the guide to dealing with disinformation, were also publicized through press releases and over social networks. Noteworthy, too, is the Special Rapporteurship's joint work with the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council on Nicaragua and Venezuela, which yielded 7 joint pronouncements in 2019.

Also publicized were a series of activities conducted by the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression and in connection with the 2019 Joint Declaration, such as the invitation to submit comments or studies on access to environmental information in extractive (mining, including oil and gas) industry contexts, the call for nominations for the 2019 RELE/RFOE Award and subsequent announcement of the winners, the celebration of World Press Freedom Day, and the panel discussion held in connection with it on protecting freedom of expression and the Internet.

In 2019, the Special Rapporteurship intensified its use of social media to disseminate press releases, promotion and training events, and advanced standards, along with the use of other media and strategies. By the end of 2019, both Facebook and Twitter were used to reach approximately 13,000 users with publications. The most widely read were notes on the publication of the Protest and Human Rights report, the 2019 Joint Declaration in London on "Challenges to Freedom of Expression in the Next Decade", the call for applications for the Orlando Sierra Fellowship offered by the Special Rapporteurship (RELE/RFOE), and the announcement of such activities as the Colloquium on Crimes against Reputation or Honor (*Crímenes contra el honor*) in Peru. Also worth highlighting are the Rapporteurship's announcements on social networks regarding the drafting and publication of the Guide on Disinformation in Electoral Contexts, the presentation in Geneva, Switzerland, of the country report on Cuba, and the presentation of the Report of the Special Follow-Up Team (ESE, from its Spanish language acronym, *Equipo de Seguimiento Especial*).

In addition, the Special Rapporteurship also requested information from States regarding situations that might affect freedom of expression, through 14 letters sent out under Article 18 of the IACHR Statute and Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights. Four of them were sent jointly with the United Nations Special Procedures Mechanism and especially the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the



promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye; its Rapporteur on the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Nyaletsossi; and its Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. The communications to States addressed structurally embedded violations of freedom of expression, as in the cases of Cuba and Nicaragua, the impunity surrounding violence against journalists in Mexico, curtailments of the right to freedom of peaceful associations, the use of criminal law and pre-trial detention against activist Ola Bini in Ecuador; and new challenges, such as State use of surveillance system in the case of Chile.

➤ Expert advisory services

In December, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression gave a public presentation of the Final Report of the Special Monitoring Team (ESE) which was established by the IACHR in connection with the precautionary measure ordering the States of Ecuador and Colombia to protect and investigate the kidnapping of journalists Javier Ortega Reyes, Paúl Rivas Bravo and media worker Efraín Segarra, of the daily newspaper “El Comercio” of Quito, who were ultimately murdered on the Ecuadorian/Colombian border in April 2018. At an event attended by representatives of the States and family members of the victims and their representatives, the President of the IACHR, Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, the Executive Secretary, Paulo Abrão, and Special Rapporteur Edison Lanza presented the principal conclusions and recommendations of the report and proposed a series of measures to ensure that the investigation encompasses all the perpetrators and instigators of the crime and reconstructs the truth of what happened. The final report was the product of several working visits to Ecuador and Colombia by the ESE technical team, and of the hearings and working meetings held in 2018 during IACHR periods of sessions. In March 2019, the IACHR also organized an exhibit of Paúl Rivas's work at its headquarters. The exhibit provided an opportunity to discuss the conditions for investigative journalism in Ecuador as well as the day-to-day lives of inhabitants along the Colombian-Ecuadorian border.

➤ Promoting strategic petitions and cases

In January 2019, the [I/A Court of HR examined the case of Tulio Álvarez v. Venezuela](#), which enabled the Court, in its already published judgment, to advance inter-American standards on the use of criminal law for cases of public interest involving information and opinions regarding matters to do with alleged corruption. The case is also highly illustrative of the pattern of criminalization of journalists and independent media in Venezuela.

In addition, the IACHR adopted reports on the merits with respect to the following cases: Emilio Palacio Urrutia v. Ecuador; Carlos Baraona v. Chile; Moya Chacon et al v. Costa Rica; and the Maya Kaqchikuel Indigenous Peoples v. Guatemala. The Commission also decided to refer the cases of Jineth Bedoya v. Colombia, and Palacio Urrutia v. Ecuador to the Inter-American Court. Finally, the Special Rapporteur took part in a working meeting on Case 13.007 -José Alfredo Jiménez Mota | MX – in connection with a friendly settlement process regarding the disappearance of the Mexican journalist.

In relation to the petitions system, the Special Rapporteurship presented two reports on admissibility that were adopted by the IACHR: P-403-08: Juan Carlos Tafur Rivera (Peru) and P-1500-12: Charles Eduardo Macedo (Brazil).

Regarding the precautionary measures mechanism, in 2019, the Special Rapporteurship participated in the examination of 14 requests for precautionary measures. Of those, the following were granted by the IACHR:

- Expansion of PM 873-18 Nicaragua, Lucía Pineda Ubau and her nuclear family, on February 11;
- PM 75-19 (Honduras) José David Ellner Romero, March 29;
- PM 250-19 (Venezuela) Luis Carlos Díaz and his nuclear family,⁵ April 4;
- PM 1025-18 (Cuba) Manuel Alejandro León Velázquez et al (Journalists for “Diario de Cuba”)⁶;
- PM 399-19 (Nicaragua) Sergio Warren León Correa and members of his family ((Director-General of “La Costeñísima” in the Autonomous Southern Caribbean Region), June 15.

In addition, in May, the IACHR filed a request with the Inter-American Court for provisional measures to protect 17 persons deprived of liberty and at extreme risk in Nicaragua. The beneficiaries included the Director and the Press Chief of *Canal 100%*, Miguel Mora and Lucía Pineda Ubau, respectively. That request was granted by the Inter-American Court on May 21, 2019. Furthermore, the Rapporteurship participated in the working meetings on PM 75-19 –José David Ellner Romero regarding Honduras during the IACHR period of sessions in Jamaica, as well the meetings on PM -688-18 - Pedro Patricio Jaimes Criollo regarding Venezuela, and PM-192-09 - Lydia Cacho regarding Mexico, held during the period of sessions held this year in Washington, D.C. Likewise, the Special Rapporteur took part in the public hearing on compliance with precautionary measures to protect independent journalists in Nicaragua.

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

In compliance with its projects for training judicial operators in inter-American freedom of expression standards, in 2018, the Special Rapporteurship, in partnership with UNESCO, provided training to 2,146 of the region’s judges in enforcing inter-American standards on freedom of expression through an online course based at the University of Texas (Austin), which benefits from the participation of Special Rapporteur Edison Lanza, former rapporteurs for freedom of expression of the IACHR and the United Nations, and tutorials by a team of experts.

This course was able to reach 9,000 judges of the Americas during the current mandate. With the exception of Cuba, all countries in Ibero-America have participated in at least one of the course offered thus far. This year (2019) was the first time that a person from Portugal participated. Mexico and Peru

⁵ IACHR. Resolution 17/2019. Precautionary Measure No. 250-19. [Luis Carlos Díaz and his nuclear family, Venezuela](#). March 29, 2019

⁶ IACHR. Resolution 19/2019. Precautionary Measure No. 1025-18.

[Manuel Alejandro León Velázquez y otros respecto de Cuba \(Periodistas del “Diario de Cuba”\)](#). [Spanish only. For English summary of Resolution 19/19, see <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/precautionary.asp>] April 4, 2019



continue to be the countries with the highest number of participants, followed by justice operators from Ecuador. The source content was revised for the latest edition to ensure that the materials reflect the latest decisions by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on freedom of expression, reports of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that are regarded by the course instructors as examples of best practices in the region, and UNESCO reports on the right to freedom of expression.

Special Rapporteurship on Economic Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights – SRESCER

➤ Progress in the installation, positioning, and sustainability of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for ESCER

One of the big challenges facing the Mandate is ensuring financing and sustainability, given that it is not assigned OAS Regular Fund resources to cover even its basic operational infrastructure. For that reason, the Special Rapporteurship on ESCER has focused on continuing the drafting and adoption of financing proposals and promoting them in numerous forums and meetings with donors, as that process has enabled the Special Rapporteurship to keep functioning and performing its tasks.

In 2019, the Special Rapporteurship did indeed manage to comply with several of its principal functions, such as assisting the IACHR with the promotion of international instruments related to the SRESCER and organizing and taking part in promotional activities directed at authorities, members of civil society organizations, trade union organizations, professionals, journalists, and human rights defenders. It also actively and consistently monitored the situation of Economic Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (ESCER) in the Americas with a view to providing advice and assistance to member states seeking to adopt legislative, judicial, administrative, or other measures to ensure the effective exercise of those rights.

In particular, 2019 saw the ongoing implementation and completion of a project to monitor the social rights situation in Nicaragua in the framework of the crisis triggered by repressive action against protests starting in April 2018. That project was sponsored by the Spanish Cooperation Fund. Towards the end of April, execution began of Phase II of the project financed by the Spanish Fund for the OAS, which decided to allocate another grant to the ESCERSR, based on its positive assessment of performance during Phase I.

Similarly, in December 2018, the Special Rapporteurship submitted a four-year financing proposal to the Norwegian Cooperation Fund to cover monitoring of ESCER in Central America and Mexico. That proposal was approved by the donor and arrangements for signing the respective agreement are well under way. Considering that the Special Rapporteurship's mandate is so recent and that its efforts to obtain funding are taking place in a context of scant resources and considerable competition for them, that approval is a major achievement. It is important to bear in mind that, while the project in question reinforces the sustainability of the Mandate for a significant period of time, it is still not enough to cover all the Special Rapporteurship's financial needs and ensure an adequate structural basis for its operations. For that



reason, the Special Rapporteurship continues to search for sources of financing and needs all the support it can get from the Executive Secretariat and the IACHR itself -- especially its senior officers -- in those endeavors.

At the same time, the SRESCER is continuing to publicize its Mandate and activities in the media and on social networks, through both the Special Rapporteurship's own Twitter account and that of the IACHR. It also continues to pursue a fruitful agenda of meetings and contacts with States, public and private institutions, the academic sector, rights holders, civil society, other OAS bodies, intergovernmental bodies, and donors.

➤ ESCE rights promoted and mandate disseminated

In the course of 2019, the IACHR/SRESCER engaged in 19 promotional and academic activities in 9 countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, United States, and Uruguay) regarding a variety of issues relating to its mandate. Topics addressed included: access to medicine and the right to health; water and sanitation in the region; the situation of ESCER in Nicaragua, asylum-seekers, and persons in displacement or human mobility contexts; public policies on business and human rights; poverty and human rights; the role of the judiciary with respect to the right to health; climate change in the Americas; defense of human rights and the environment and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in the inter-American system in general.

In addition, the SRESCER delivered two presentations to OAS political bodies. One (on March 7) was to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) regarding progress with the Report on Human Rights and Business drafted by the SRESCER, while the other (on March 19) was to a meeting of the OAS Permanent Council, marking World Water Day. The Special Rapporteurship also represented the IACHR at the Ninth Period of Sessions of the Protocol of San Salvador Working Group, in Uruguay (November 18-20, 2019).

The Special Rapporteurship took part in three international forums. One was in Geneva, Switzerland (on July 8), where the Rapporteur took part in one of the panel discussions at the parallel event entitled "*Keys to Understanding the Venezuelan situation: Analysis with a Human Rights Perspective on the Most Pressing Crisis in Latin America*", organized by Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. During that visit, the Rapporteur met with several heads of mandates related to the United Nations Human Rights Council, as well as with civil society and staff of OHCHR, ILO, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), and other organizations. The second occasion was on October 3 and 4, 2019, when SRESCER participated in the panel discussion on "Defining the scope of obligations in the area of social rights: the practice of the mechanisms" at the First Dialogue between the European Committee of Social Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in Madrid. The third international forum in which the SRESCER participated was the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, held in Madrid.

The Special Rapporteurship also took part in three events jointly with the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), UNESCO, and Fundación



Mujeres en igualdad. On July 28, it took part in the regional dialogue on the role of jurisdictional systems in the effective exercise of ESCER, organized by the JSCA and GIZ, in Santiago, Chile. On August 20 and 21, it took part in the Workshop on "The Human Right to Science: a Latin-American perspective," organized by the Observatory of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Buenos Aires, Argentina. On August 23, the Special Rapporteurship took part in the "199th Breakfast of the Fundación de Mujeres en Igualdad," organized by the Foundation and in the event entitled "*Doing business in Latin America and the Caribbean: Respecting human rights and tackling corruption,*" in Buenos Aires.

In the course of 2019m the Special Rapporteurship also met with a number of missions of OAS member states and observer countries and with members of civil society organizations working on topics germane to its mandate.

➤ **Monitoring the Situation of ESCE Rights in the region**

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

Noteworthy tasks completed include: ii) the drafting or co-drafting of 14 press releases; iii) the sending out of eight Article 41 letters and one Article 18 letter; (iii) technical support, inputs, and participation in 32 public hearings on ESCER issues in the periods of sessions held in Bolivia and Jamaica during the period under review; iv) participation in the visit to Honduras headed by Commissioner Joel Hernández, from May 22-24; v) participation in the work and period of sessions of the Protocol of San Salvador Working Group, from April 22-24; vi) participation in the working visit to Ecuador, from October 28-30; vii) participation in the on-site visit to El Salvador in December; and viii) participation in the work and period of sessions of the Protocol of San Salvador Working Group, from November 18-20.

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

The Rapporteurship also provided specialized assistance in the system of individual petitions and cases at all stages of proceedings before the IACHR. In addition, in 2019, the SRESCER wrote the sections dealing specifically with ESCER topics in 51 admissibility reports, 11 reports on the merits, and in the analysis of 18 requests for precautionary measures. With regard to PM 1548/18 (UR), it issued two technical opinions for direct appraisal by the IACHR.

In the course of 2019, the IACHR and the Special Rapporteurship also submitted a request to the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for an advisory opinion, based on Article 64.1 of the American Convention on Human Rights. That Advisory Opinion establishes States' obligations with respect to the exercise of trade union freedom (freedom of association) and collective bargaining to protect labor

rights and guarantee the effective participation of women as members and leaders of trade unions, in compliance with the principles of equality and nondiscrimination.⁷

➤ **Thematic and country reports**

- Report on Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards

The Report on "Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards," drafted in 2019 by the Special Rapporteurship for ESCER with support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) was adopted by the IACHR during its 173rd period of sessions, held in Ecuador, in November.

The analysis in the Report is based on States' international human rights obligations when businesses are in some way involved with the exercise -- or the violation -- of those rights. Accordingly, it not only systematizes and brings together a series of pronouncements made within the inter-American system on the subject, but also engages in a systematic and updated analysis aimed at clarifying, organizing, and developing those State obligations and the effects they may generate for businesses, in terms of their compliance with inter-American case law.

Within that framework, and being conscious of the high expectations and potential usefulness of this Report, the Special Rapporteurship on ESCER deems it important to re-draw attention to Resolution 2887, adopted by the OAS General Assembly in June 2016, in which it asked the IACHR to "to conduct a study on inter-American standards in relation to business and human rights based on an analysis of conventions, case law, and reports put forth by the inter-American system," with a view to it serving as input and setting a parameter for the member states' efforts in this area, in a number of national and international initiatives. It was in that context that the IACHR entrusted this Special Rapporteurship with that study and the formulation of standards for "Businesses and Human Rights" in an inter-American context by drafting a thematic report. It even included that task, moreover, in the mandate and scope of ESCERSR activities.

To fulfill that IACHR mandate, the Commission's Special Rapporteurship for ESCER conducted a series of activities conducive to the preparation of this Report, taking care to ensure extensive dialogue and cooperation. In order to gather information and foster the participation of multiple regional actors, the SRESCER organized or took part in workshops, events, working meetings, public hearings, open questionnaires, and consultations with experts. Participating in those activities were representatives of States and of autonomous public bodies, civil society organizations, academics, business sector representatives, and other interested parties.

The IACHR stresses that businesses can be positive actors for the guaranteeing and observance of human rights and can generate or encourage with their actions and behavior the key changes needed not only to

⁷ IACHR, Press Release N° 195/19 of Wednesday, July 31, 2019

[185/19 - IACHR and SRESCER seek Advisory Opinion from Inter-American Court on freedom of association from gender perspective.](#)



revert situations of impunity and abuse of human rights but also to contribute positively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Their public commitment and good faith is vital to reinforce any initiatives taken in that direction and to forge trust among businesses, the authorities, and the population, in such a way as to transcend traditional corporate responsibility and take it to a higher level of effective respect for, and due diligence with regard to, human rights. Political will on the part of authorities at every level will also be a powerful tool for advancing national, regional, and universal endeavors to enhance prevention of violations, ensure access to justice, and make reparation for any whose rights are impaired. Within that framework, the IACHR places itself at the disposal of OAS member states and stands ready to provide technical advice in support of any initiatives undertaken in this area.

- Compendium on labor rights

In June 2019, the SRESCER completed its first draft of its report on the compilation of labor-related standards. It is currently being reviewed in-house with the participation of the public policies and technical cooperation section of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR.

- Joint reports with other rapporteurships.

In coordination with the rapporteurships on persons of African descent and indigenous peoples, the SRESCER moved ahead with preparing questionnaires and tables of contents for two reports on protecting the ESCER of these vulnerable populations. It also provided input for the participation by the Executive Secretariat's delegation in the meeting with Swiss Cooperation personnel in Costa Rica and took part in the preparatory work for the report on ESCER and indigenous peoples in the Northern Triangle.

- ESCER Section for country reports

In 2019, the SRESCER completed drafting the sections that come under its remit for inclusion in the draft reports on the on-site visits conducted in 2018 to Honduras and Brazil. It also drew up a memo on Brazil, regarding the main government reforms and grounds for concern with respect to ESCER, to be included in the IACHR report to the Secretary General.

Likewise, the SRESCER prepared the corresponding section for the report on the visit to Ecuador conducted in November, and preliminary observations on ESCER from the on-site visit to El Salvador in December. The SRESCER also drafted the ESCER section to be included in the annual report on the situation of human rights in Cuba.

P7: Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI)

With a view to having a more effective impact on critical situations and broadening the scope of its protection measures, the IACHR bolstered its internal rapid and integrated response mechanisms for preventing possible rights violations and protecting at-risk persons by establishing Rapid and Integrated

Response Coordination Units (SACROI) for Haiti, Ecuador, Chile, and Bolivia, and maintaining those established in previous years for Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

In 2019, the IACHR installed a SACROI to address the situation in Haiti, one of whose actions was a visit to the country in June in order to foster dialogue with State authorities and civil society regarding the human rights situation in the country and, at the same time, to identify opportunities for cooperation with the IACHR. The IACHR also paid a visit to Haiti in December.

With respect to [Ecuador](#), in connection with the SACROI, the IACHR visited the country to observe first-hand the situation of human rights following the social protests of October 3-13 triggered by economic measures announced by the National Government on October 1; and to gather information regarding acts of violence, the State's response to them, and developments in the dialogue among the various parties involved. To that end, the IACHR set up four teams and visited four cities, government facilities, and detention centers, as well as a broad swathe of sectors and organizations in Ecuadorian society.

As regards [Chile](#), again as part of its SACROI work, the IACHR convened an ex officio hearing on the "Situation of human rights in the context of social protest in Chile" in connection with its 173rd period of sessions, held in Ecuador. The IACHR also paid a preparatory visit geared to gathering first-hand information and documentation from as wide a range as possible of authorities, civil society entities, and international organizations on the human rights situation in connection with the social protests under way since October 18, 2019, following hikes in several public and private utility/services rates in prior months. Another on-site visit to the country was scheduled for the last week in January 2020.

As for [Bolivia](#), as part of its SACROI work, the Executive Secretariat paid an observation visit in November. The visit was conducted at the invitation of the Bolivian State and its purpose was to garner information in the context of the political and social crisis unleashed in connection with the elections in Bolivia on October 20, 2019. In December, the IACHR announced the establishment of an Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) to assist investigations into recent acts of violence and human rights violations in the country, as well as an on-site visit planned for 2020.

Finally, as regards [Haití](#), in view of the protests and the exacerbation of violence and supply shortages in that country, the IACHR decided to set up a Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (SACROI) to monitor and address the human rights situation in Haiti. In addition, the IACHR paid one technical and one on-site visit to Haiti in 2019.

Results achieved thanks to the SACROI in 2019 confirmed its usefulness as a tool. Thanks to it, the IACHR managed to have a timely and effective impact on the region's most serious human rights crises, acting in a coordinated manner through its various mandates, as well as expanding its preparations for on-site visits and tailoring them to each country's needs.

P8: Integrated Information Analysis and Management Platform (IIAMP)



The idea behind setting up this platform is to consolidate a homogeneous method through which the IACHR can gather, record, analyze, manage, and produce information.

In order to enhance the performance of its functions in a context of limited resources, the Commission plans to forge strategic partnerships with observatories and other key actors. Accordingly, in 2019, the IACHR entered into partnerships for exchanging information with institutions of this kind.

Also in connection with the IIAMP, the IACHR organized three panel discussions on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua and Cuba. On March 22, the Rapporteur for Nicaragua, Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, organized the panel discussion in Washington to present the Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua published in the 2018 Annual Report. On June 17, in Miami, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, President of the IACHR, and Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, the Rapporteur for Nicaragua, presented the IACHR Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua at a panel discussion among Nicaraguans and representatives of Nicaraguan organizations, including organizations of campesino farmers, students, human rights defenders, and leaders released from prison. On June 18, also in Miami, they presented the report on the Situation of Human Rights in Cuba.

The IACHR has also identified software to facilitate integration of information, which is now being discussed with OAS I.T. experts.

The IACHR is also continuing to work on raising funds for the implementation with the Technology Unit of the various management and computer systems components of the IIAMP.



SO3

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

Results Achieved

- Capacities created and strengthened in the member states for the protection and defense of human rights and for enhancing public policies by delivering the following:
 - 321 promotional and training activities: 67 training courses, and 254 promotional activities, with 6,254 participants, almost half of them (3,052) women. Of the 2,581 persons who received appropriate IACHR training, 1,412 were women.
 - Activities conducted in 23 States, namely: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Uruguay.
 - Publishing of a Report on Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach.
 - Publishing of a Practical Guide and Report on Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies on Internal Displacement in the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America.
 - Publishing of a Compendium on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Inter-American Standards.
- Stepped-up assistance and technical cooperation with member states
 - Technical cooperation agreements signed with i) the Government of Argentina (through the Human Rights Secretariat); ii) the Human Rights Secretariat for Buenos Aires Province; and iii) UNHCR and the Honduran Judiciary.
 - Technical cooperation proposals crafted with various governmental institutions in the Argentina Republic, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.
 - Installation of the Special Technical Assistance Mechanism (MESAT) for Honduras.



- Increase in the number of national human rights institutions signing the declaration of commitment to technical cooperation.
 - Technical cooperation on transitional justice delivered to national authorities of El Salvador.
- Establishment of channels for cooperation with civil society and academia thanks to the launching of the Academic Network: 64 cooperation projects received.
- Seven agreements signed with academic institutions/centers in the region.
 - Expansion of opportunities for civil society participation in IACHR activities and consultations.
 - Publishing of a consultation questionnaire on ways to expand participation in IACHR activities.

P9: Expanded Program for Training and Promotion of Human Rights-based Thought and Culture

The IACHR's promotion and training activities focused on the mechanisms it uses to go about its work and the inter-American standards it has developed in the doctrine and case law of the inter-American system of human rights. The goal was to foster a more in-depth grasp of those standards in civil society, social actor networks, and among the member states, in general, along with a better sense of their scope and of how they can be applied and incorporated into decisions, regulatory frameworks, and public policies with a human rights approach.

In the course of 2019, through its Special and Thematic Rapporteurships and other in other areas of its work, the Commission managed to consolidate its promotional and training activities. In that period, the IACHR engaged in 321 activities, 67 of which were training courses, sessions, and workshops. Some 6,254 people (including 3,052 women) participated in these 321 activities. The breakdown was as follows: taking part in the promotional activities were 3,673 people. 1,640 of whom were women; of the 2,581 persons who received appropriate IACHR training, 1,412 were women. Those activities were conducted in 23 countries of the region: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Uruguay.

➤ Promotion and training on the IAHRs

The training activities were geared to developing and building capacity through familiarization with the various mechanisms used by the IACHR to go about its work, with inter-American standards, institution-building, and States' public policies with a human rights approach. The training also sought to enhance the ability of organizations and networks of social and academic actors -- and of State agents -- to defend human rights. Of the 68 training activities conducted in 2019, the following are particularly worth noting:



- International Course on Public Policies on Human Rights organized by the IACHR and the MERCOSUR Human Rights Public Policy Institute (IPPDH)

The courses offered in 2019 were the fourth version in the above series and the second organized and conducted jointly by the two institutions (IACHR/IPPDH).

The Course is geared to training key actors in the region in a human rights-based approach to public policies, especially government officials responsible for formulating, steering, implementing, and evaluating public policies, members of social organizations and movements, and academics, as well as society as a whole.

- Courses on strategic use of the inter-American human rights system for human rights defenders

As part of the Commission's activities to boost human rights in the region, a course was held in 2019, for human rights defenders, on Strategic Use of the Inter-American System. An open invitation to apply for a place in the Course resulted in 3,953 applications. 60 candidates were selected and 7 scholarships awarded to persons from countries regarding which the IACHR frequently receives information about a pattern of threats, harassment, violent attacks, and murders: Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. The course was delivered in two stages, in July and September 2019.

The second stage consisted of replications of the course by participants in their own organizations and/or communities. Thanks to that second state, 602 people received training in the following countries: Dominican Republic, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Chile.

For its part, the second version of the Course was conducted from December 9-13 at IACHR headquarters in Washington, D.C., with 60 participants, including 35 women. Once again, 7 scholarships were awarded to persons from countries regarding which the IACHR frequently receives information about a pattern of threats, harassment, violent attacks, and murders: Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. This second version was also scheduled to have its second stage: in February 2020.

- Capacity-building workshops in the Northern Triangle of Central America

In connection with a Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) project, the IACHR conducted a workshop on April 10 and 11, 2019, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for government officials in the judiciary on inter-American human rights standards in relation to migration and internal displacement. The purpose of the Workshop was to familiarize key local actors responsible for protecting and defending human rights in the States of the Northern Triangle of Central America and Nicaragua with the inter-American human rights system and inter-American standards. Of the 30 participants, 24 were women.



In connection with that same project, a workshop was held on inter-American human rights standards with regard to labor law matters for the technical team of the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on April 10 and 11. The purpose of the Workshop was to familiarize key local actors responsible for protecting and defending human rights in the States of the Northern Triangle of Central America and Nicaragua with the inter-American human rights system and inter-American standards. Of the 30 participants, 21 were women.

A workshop was also held for judiciary personnel in El Salvador on the subject of migration and ESCER in San Salvador on October 28 and 29. its purpose was to strengthen knowledge of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCER), with a special focus on labor law, and of rules and standards relating to migration and internal displacement in the inter-American human rights system among key local actors charged with protecting and defending human rights in the States of the Northern Triangle of Central America and Nicaragua. Of the 69 participants, 40 were women.

Finally, a workshop was also held, in San Salvador on October 28 and 29, for technical staff in the Ombudsperson's Office (*Procuraduría*) of El Salvador on the subject of migration and ESCER. its purpose was to strengthen knowledge of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (ESCER), with a special focus on labor law, and of rules and standards relating to migration and internal displacement in the inter-American human rights system among key local actors charged with protecting and defending human rights in the States of the Northern Triangle of Central America and Nicaragua. Of the 61 participants in this workshop, 35 were women.

➤ Events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

An event was staged in connection with the OAS General Assembly session on June 25, 2019, in Medellín, Colombia, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the IACHR. For its part, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) held a special meeting for the same purpose in the Simón Bolívar room at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C., on October 2.

The 60 years of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights were also promoted in Heidelberg, Germany on July 16 at an event entitled: A view from Latin America and Europe.

On September 4, in coordination with Chile, there was a "Ceremony to Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the IACHR and its work, impacts, and legacy in the Hemisphere." The IACHR also took part in an event in connection with the 60th anniversary of its founding entitled "Historical Impacts of the Work of the IACHR: new challenges posed by the current region context," which provided an opportunity for an exchange of views with representatives of civil society organizations and academia. It was coordinated with Universidad de Chile and conducted on its premises.

In connection with its 60th anniversary and the 40th anniversary of its historical on-site visit to Argentina in 1979, the IACHR took part in an official ceremony commemorating that visit. In coordination with the Argentine State, there was a "Ceremony to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the IACHR and its work, impacts, and legacy in the Hemisphere." Likewise, on September 6, the IACHR participated, along with a



number of other human rights bodies and civil society organizations, in activities at the emblematic Remembrance and Human Rights Site, where the Argentine Navy's former clandestine detention and torture center, the Escuela de Mecánica, used to operate. In one of those activities, the IACHR participated in the inauguration of the exhibit entitled "1979-2019. The IACHR visit."

In Washington, D.C., from September 30 to October 2, in connection with the 173rd period of sessions of the IACHR, one of the acts commemorating its 60th anniversary was the presentation of "academic studies on the impacts of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during its first 60 years." 157 titles were submitted from 18 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe, by persons involved in academic life, such as professors, students, and researchers.

Finally, in connection with its 174th period of sessions, the IACHR took part in the event commemorating its 60th anniversary, entitled "Hemispheric Challenges for Human Rights: The IACHR 60 years after it was founded," held at the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility of Ecuador, on November 12 and attended by high-level authorities, diplomats, civil society representatives, and academics.

➤ **Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum**

On November 6 and 7, organized and sponsored by the Public Prosecutions Department (*Procuraduría General del Estado*) of Ecuador, the Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum was held, at Ecuador's Catholic University, attended by some 400 people.

The theme of the Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum was about celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the 40th anniversary of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The idea was to reflect on the historical impact of their work and to trigger debate about present and future challenges given the current regional context, about how effective the system is, and about other key topics on the human rights agenda in America, through a constructive exchange of views among States, civil society, international organizations, universities, social and trade union movement, and the general public.

Of the 403 people attending, 268 were women. They came from at least 18 different countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Peru, United States, and Venezuela.

➤ **Promotional activities of the Rapporteurships**

In 2019, the IACHR conducted or was invited to participate in a high number of promotional activities and events in order to disseminate the standards of the Inter-American human rights system (IAHRS) and build the capacity of public officials and of organizations and networks of social actors to act in defense of the human rights, in at least 18 countries of the region, 3 OAS observer States and other States.

Many of these activities were carried out with other actors, and were made possible by the collaboration with civil society organizations, regional and international institutions and States. The activities took place in: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El



Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and the United States. Worth noting, too, are the activities carried out in CARICOM countries: Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

➤ Campaigns for disseminating standards

Information and awareness campaigns were designed and formulated on the basis of the reports drawn up by the different areas of the Commission. Each one has a graphic design of its own and contains messages with strategic information relating to the rights addressed in the reports.

Nine information and awareness campaigns were implemented and 4 new microsites developed to relay the more important information contained in the reports. The campaigns were in Spanish, English, and Portuguese.

1. Report on Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression:
 - [Campaign for social networks](#)
 - [Microsite multimedia](#)
2. Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Venezuela
 - [Campaign for social networks](#)
 - [Microsite multimedia](#)
3. Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons
 - [Campaign for social networks](#)
 - [Microsite multimedia](#)
4. Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America
 - [Campaign](#)
 - [Microsite multimedia](#)
5. Freedom of Expression in Cuba
 - [Campaign](#)
6. Police Violence against Afro-descendants in the United States
 - [Campaign](#)
7. Report on [Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach](#)
 - [Campaign](#)
8. Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica
 - [Campaign](#)
9. Report on Protest and Human Rights
 - [Campaign](#)

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

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



➤ Project on Democracy and Human Rights in the Northern Triangle

Jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), since 2016 the IACHR has been implementing the Regional Project of “Democracy and Human Rights,” in which a promotional activity plan has been drawn up based on three pillars: i) training human rights ombudspersons and public officials, ii) training for civil society organizations, that engage in litigating activities, iii) promotion of Inter-American standards for human mobility and ESCER.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the public institutional framework with a human rights approach in the countries of the Northern Triangle: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. As mentioned earlier under Program 9, throughout 2019, training was provided for government officials in the Northern Triangle countries.

In connection with that project the Commission also published the [report](#) on “**Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Public policy guidelines.**” The purpose of that report is to provide a practical tool for government officials in charge of compliance with human rights obligations as well as for representatives of civil society organizations that work in promotion and protection of the rights of internally displaced people and that demand that the State adopt measures and policies to respond to this troubling situation. As part of that same technical assistance strategy, the IACHR posted a specialized [microsite](#) and a “[Practical Guide](#) on Guidelines for the formulation of public policies on internal displacement.” This Guide is an attempt to present the principal recommendations for the formulation of public policies to address this human rights issue.

Another tool drawn up and published by the Commission in connection with the project in 2019 is the “[Compendium on equality and nondiscrimination](#). Inter-American Standards.” The purpose of the document is to provide an updated technical cooperation tool derived from a review and systematization of inter-American standards developed by the Commission, based on a crosscutting equality and nondiscrimination approach that makes it easier to grasp the concepts involved.

The “Third Gathering of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) for the Exchange of Best Practices” was held in November. It was attended by the Human Rights Ombudspersons of Guatemala and El Salvador, and the National Human Rights Commissioner of Honduras, along with representatives of other NHRIs in the region. The purpose of the gathering was to build groups for exchanging experiences, challenges and best practices and establishing institutional cooperation ties between the IACHR and national human rights protection systems.

➤ Governance and Human Rights Project in the Northern Triangle of Central America and Nicaragua

In 2019, the IACHR also implemented the Strengthening Governance and Protection of Human Rights Program with Emphasis on Vulnerable Populations in the Countries of the Northern Triangle and Nicaragua, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (COSUDE). Its purpose is to help improve the observance and protection of human rights and good governance with respect to natural resources, with a particular focus on the territories of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples. In various



IACHR mechanisms, a number of activities were conducted in 2019 in connection with this program, as mentioned in other sections of this report. They included: the visits to Honduras to study the ESCER of persons of African descent and indigenous populations; joint activities with the regional OHCHR on protection for human rights defenders; activities related to monitoring of compliance with recommendations in the Northern Triangle countries; and activities related to the MESENI (Nicaragua-monitoring) mechanism.

➤ **Transitional Justice Capacity-Building**

In connection with the above-mentioned Democracy and Human Rights project, and through the Executive Technical Unit of the Justice Sector, the State of El Salvador requested technical support from the IACHR for boosting capacity in the Justice Sector in El Salvador with a view to developing transitional justice mechanisms in that country.

Worth noting is that said request derived from the Amnesty Law being declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Division of the Supreme Court in 2016. As part of that technical cooperation effort, a series of activities were carried out, involving some 350 people. They included specialized training for justice sector officers, high-level talks and cooperation, and forums with the participation of both the justice sector and civil society. In 2019, in particular, one High-Level Dialogue and two Forums were held on the subject, one exclusively for the justice sector and the other for the general public.

➤ **Advisory Services for Caribbean Affairs**

In this section, it is important to note that there has been significant progress in the implementation of the Collaboration Plan with the Caribbean.

One of the objectives of the work plan is to develop and maintain a database of civil society organizations, human rights defenders and relevant persons in the CARICOM subregion. An initial version of this database has already been set up and is being used to take in information about how to optimize cooperation between civil society and the IACHR. Another objective of the work plan, with which some progress has been made, is to establish an inventory of State and/or quasi-state institutions in the CARICOM sub-region, which handle human rights. In particular, a list has been drawn up of the countries that have an Ombudsperson's Office.

In addition, in connection with the 172nd period of sessions held in Kingston, Jamaica, the IACHR held a meeting with high-level authorities of CARICOM, to exchange proposals as to how to deepen ties of cooperation between the IACHR and the countries of that region and about other actions to promote and protect human rights in the Caribbean. Participating in that meeting were delegations from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname. Those delegations included representatives of Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Attorney Generals' Offices, and Permanent Representatives to the OAS.

Six working visits to promote human rights were carried out to Caribbean countries (Barbados, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, and Haiti). The [first joint public consultation](#) was held



(in Barbados) on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in social, economic, and cultural spheres in the Caribbean; and an on-site visit was paid to Haiti.

Another noteworthy initiative to develop assistance and cooperation with the Caribbean involves drawing up a technical assistance plan for Haiti. Progress was made with installing the Technical Cooperation Working Group and a working visit to the country was conducted. The cooperation mechanism includes a series of collaborative initiatives focusing on the crafting and implementation of the human rights approach and inter-American human rights standards in public policies.

A videoconference with CARICOM civil society on IACHR mechanisms was organized in September 2019, while the Annual Seminar on Human Rights for State agents in CARICOM took place on October 2 and 3, 2019.

Finally, it should be mentioned that there is word of requests by Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago for cooperation and advisory services for public bodies and academia.

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

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

In the framework of this Program, throughout the year, the IACHR moved ahead both with the publication of instruments and crafting of inputs to support those responsible for formulating public policies and with the consolidation of the ties needed to provide technical assistance and backing for the States' institutional strengthening strategies, while at the same time developing cooperation with other institutions.

In that connection, a notable achievement was the publication and launching of the thematic report [Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach](#)". The core objective of the report is to provide a conceptual framework for public policies with a human rights approach so as to help States organize the facilities and administrative skills needed to have a structural (i.e. lasting) impact on prevention and non-repetition of human rights violations. The report constitutes an effective tool for those whose job it is to plan, formulate, implement, and monitor or evaluate public policies. With it, the IACHR highlights inter-American principles and standards in that area and provides a series of practical guidelines for States to follow at the various stages involved in pursuing a public policy with a human rights approach.



In 2019, the Commission also published the aforementioned report on “ [Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Guidelines for the formulation of public policies.](#)” The purpose of that report is to provide a practical tool for government officials in charge of compliance with human rights obligations as well as for representatives of civil society organizations that work in promotion and protection of the rights of internally displaced people and that demand that the State adopt measures and policies to respond to this troubling situation. As part of that same technical assistance strategy, the IACHR produced a “Practical Guide: Guidelines for the formulation of public policies on internal displacement”. This Guide is an attempt to provide a didactic presentation of the principal recommendations for the formulation of public policies to address this human rights issue.

Another tool drawn up and published by the Commission in 2019 is the “[Compendium on equality and nondiscrimination: Inter-American Standards.](#)” The purpose of the document is to provide an updated technical cooperation tool derived from a review and systematization of inter-American standards developed by the Commission, based on a crosscutting equality and nondiscrimination approach that makes it easier to grasp the concepts involved.

Among the initiatives for institutional strengthening and training in public policies with a human rights approach, the production of content and support for holding another International Course on Human Rights Policies in partnership with the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH) of MERCOSUR. The course targeted 100 State officials responsible for public policy design, direction, implementation, and evaluation; members of civil society organizations and movements, academics, and society at large. Within the framework of this training program, participants could also opt for one week of face-to-face training at IACHR headquarters.

2019 also saw the First Inter-American Conference on Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach. That important event for dialogue and the sharing and comparing of experiences took place in connection with the Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum and was attended by representatives of States in the region, academics, civil society, and international organizations.

As for technical assistance, attention should be drawn to the work carried out by the IACHR in El Salvador pursuant to a request for technical cooperation to broaden knowledge, reflection, and dialogue in the judiciary on the transitional justice process in that country. With the above, the IACHR completed the first year of technical cooperation activities it had embarked on in 2018. The mechanism engaged in a series of activities, reaching some 350 people, including specialized training opportunities for justice sector personnel, opportunities for dialogue, discussion forums, and high-level cooperation.

With respect to assistance and cooperation activities with the Caribbean, a technical assistance plan was drawn up and further steps take with a view to installing a Technical Cooperation Working Group in Haiti. The cooperation mechanism includes a series of collaborative initiatives focusing on the crafting and implementation of the human rights approach and inter-American human rights standards in public policies.

Another noteworthy technical cooperation initiative is the installation and implementation of the Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for Honduras. This special cooperation mechanism includes a set of activities and technical tools for strengthening institutions in respect of issues and groups identified as priorities with regard to the human rights situation in the country.

Along similar lines, progress was made with the design of technical cooperation proposals with a variety of government institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. The objective pursued with the technical cooperation mechanism consolidated in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is to support national efforts to promote human rights and formulate public policies with a human rights approach with respect to a number of human rights issues. Particularly noteworthy in 2019 was the technical support provided with regard to memory, truth, and justice; the rights of LGBTI persons; protection mechanisms for human rights defenders; support with the implementation of National Human Rights Plans; and mechanisms for social participation and access to rights of vulnerable groups that have historically been victims of discrimination.

For its part, the IACHR has further strengthened its ties with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the region. In that area, in 2019, five more National Institutions signed on to the Declaration of Commitment on technical cooperation, taking the number of mechanisms adhering to that mechanism to 10. Its goal is to generate coordinated processes for sharing information; expand the channels through which NHRIs can participate independently in the IACHR's mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights; and carry on technical cooperation activities.

With respect to bolstering technical cooperation ties, in 2019 the IACHR signed cooperation agreements. They included 7 with universities in the region: the Law Faculty at Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina; Colombia's Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina; Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico; Ibero-American Institute of The Hague for Peace, Human Rights and International Justice; the Law Faculty of Rutgers University, in the United States; Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Cali and Universidad del Magdalena, in Colombia.

Worth highlighting, too, is the signing of a technical cooperation agreement with OXFAM, to promote the inter-American human rights system and its standards and to advance institutional capacity building. Another agreement signed was a Letter of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Honduran Judiciary with a view to implementing projects and conducting joint activities in areas relating to the promotion of national frameworks and policies to prevent forced displacement and to protect persons displaced by violence, refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons. A Cooperation Framework Agreement was also signed with the Human Rights Secretariat of Buenos Aires Province, Argentina to facilitate technical cooperation and exchanges of professionals by arranging for personnel of the Human Rights Secretariat to provide supporting services for the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. Noteworthy, too, was the signing of a special cooperation agreement with Argentina on joint execution of a set of triangular cooperation programs with other OAS member states to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics and to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI persons.



The IACHR wishes to express its will and readiness to provide technical assistance for the purposes of institution building and formulation, implementation, and assessment of public policies to guarantee and promote the exercise of human rights in the Americas, based on inter-American standards.

It also reiterates its readiness to continue supporting actions and initiatives by civil society and academia, and by other key players for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Hemisphere through strategic partnerships.

➤ **Advisory services to member states on the subject of human rights**

One of the functions of the IACHR is to provide advisory services in human rights to states; these services are offered, among 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). In this regard, bilateral meetings were set up with heads of delegation during the General Assembly, in Medellín. Presentations to the Permanent Council were delivered on the work done on behalf of countries and on certain issues, including, notably, the issue of religious freedom, which is being worked on and developed in the Permanent Council with technical support from the IACHR. Meetings were also held to review the petitions and cases portfolio with States requesting them, along with other meetings with representatives of the member states and observer countries.

In that regard, it is important to underscore the significant level of IACHR participation in Permanent Council meetings on Nicaragua and about the situation in Venezuela. The IACHR regained a more has maintained its key role in providing technical input to the decision-making process of the member States before the political organs, and lent support to the Permanent Council's efforts to develop the religious freedom agenda in the region. In 2019, 27 presentations were delivered to the political organs of the OAS: 4 more than in the previous year. Of those, 4 were about Nicaragua, 2 about religious freedom, and 2 to celebrate the anniversaries of the American Convention on Human Rights and the inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

In addition, States have shown keen interest in holding meetings to review their respective portfolio of petitions, cases, precautionary measures, friendly settlements and recommendation follow-up. In 2018 a total of 16 meetings were held (33% more than in 2018) with the following States: Uruguay (April 1); Canada (April 17; Ecuador (May 16 and 17)); Colombia (June 4 and 5 and November 21); Nicaragua (July 30); Argentina (August 13 and 14, October 31 to November 1 and December 11); Bolivia (September 3 and 4); Costa Rica (September 19 and 20); Chile (October 3 and 4); Panama (November 21); Guatemala (December 9 to 11), and Brazil (December 16 to 18).



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

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

Throughout 2019, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expanded and deepened the participation of civil society in all activities it carried out, including public hearings, consultations, training workshops, bilateral meetings, and other activities.

During its periods of sessions, held in Bolivia, Jamaica, and Ecuador, and at headquarters, the Commission met with inter-American civil society organizations to gather information on the human rights situation in the region and to hear their concerns. In particular, holding sessions away from headquarters increased access to the IACHR for civil society organizations from different parts of the region, expanding the role of actors involved in the inter-American human rights system.

Thus, some 330 civil society organizations took part in the public hearings held in connections with the IACHR periods of sessions. Additionally, open meetings were held with civil society during the periods of sessions, in which organizations provided important information regarding the human rights situation in the countries of the Americas. Another 143 working meetings were conducted with States and civil society organizations to advance the petitions and cases system, addressing matters to do with precautionary measures, friendly settlements, cases, and follow-up on recommendations. In addition, more than 60 bilateral meetings were held with civil society organizations to address human rights issues of interest to them. During 2019, the Commissioners also took part in parallel events staged by civil society in connections with the periods of sessions.

In 2019, the IACHR also organized meetings with civil society during visits to countries, including Argentina, Barbados, Bahamas, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, United States, and Uruguay. Civil society support also proved invaluable in preparations for the on-site visits to El Salvador and Haiti.

In addition, the Commission met with civil society organizations during the 49th regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held in Medellín, Colombia, and during activities carried out within the framework of the United Nations Human Rights Council, in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2019, the IACHR also conducted a large number of virtual meetings with civil society in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, regarding the work being done by its various mechanisms.

In its work with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the IACHR continued to step up its support to victims and representatives. It also kept in contact with organizations, academia, and experts on various matters, with a view to promoting support for them in cases submitted to the Court, especially those involving new developments in case law.



As regards precautionary measures, the IACHR kept in contact with civil society so as to garner the information needed to identify at-risk situations and to make this mechanism more effective, in coordination with the persons protected under this mechanism, The IACHR also continued its dialogue with civil society organizations regarding steps taken to expedite decision-making and the processing of requests for precautionary measures.

Notable results achieved in 2019 include the holding of 3 public consultations on citizen security; the inclusion of LGBTI persons in economic, social, and cultural spheres in the Caribbean; and on memory, truth, and justice and non-repetition guarantees in the Americas, as part of ongoing efforts to increase participation in the work of the IACHR Rapporteurship.

As regards thematic reports, the IACHR continued to prioritize and honor its commitment to hold public consultations as a way to elicit inputs from all relevant actors, including civil society organizations, whose contributions are vital for drawing up these reports. During 2019, the IACHR drew up civil society consultation questionnaires to be used in the drafting of reports on the "Status of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of Afro-descendants in the Americas"; "Privatization of security: impact of private security on human rights"; "Inter-American principles on the human rights of migrants, refugees, and other persons in the context of mixed migratory movements"; "National systems for protecting the rights of older persons in America"; "Consultation questionnaire for drafting the thematic report on domestic systems for implementing IACHR decisions"; and "Consultation questionnaire on consolidating and expanding the policy of civil society participation in IACHR activities."

For the 2019 IACHR Annual Report, the IACHR again invited civil society organizations and other actors in the 35 OAS member states to send information regarding the human rights situation in the region as input for Chapters IV.A. , IV.B, and V.

As regards follow-up on recommendations, the IACHR engaged in promotional activities with academics and civil society organizations and organized training for government officials, ombudspersons, and members of civil society organizations in the region. On those occasions, the IACHR received valuable suggestions for improving its follow-up and monitoring mechanisms and for new projects.

Using its special monitoring mechanisms, the IACHR continued promoting ongoing dialogue with civil society organizations and with victims and family members of victims of human rights violations. Notable in that connection is the Commission's ongoing presence in Mexico and its periodic meetings with family members in the Ayotzinapa case, within the framework of the Special Monitoring Mechanism (MESA), Also worth underscoring are the videoconferences, meetings and the civil society consultation questionnaire regarding the Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic: a strategy deployed in response to demand from civil society. With regard to the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), the IACHR underscores its collaboration and steady exchange of information with civil society organizations, as well as its strategy of providing technical assistance and capacity-building for Nicaraguan civil society organizations, through tailored training courses for them in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Miami, and Washington, D.C. Finally, the Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with human rights recommendations installed



in Honduras and the Special Monitoring Mechanisms for Venezuela (MESEVE) aim to work in coordination with various key players, including civil society organizations.

During 2019, the IACHR continued its effort to strengthen civil society capacity through promotional and training activities in several countries in the region, within the framework of the Strategic Plan's Program 9. Notable, here, was the participation of 100 people from OAS member states and their civil society organizations in another International Course on Human Rights Policies delivered jointly with the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH) of MERCOSUR. In addition, 90 human rights defenders in the region took part in the Course on Strategic Use of the Inter-American System, which was delivered twice: in July and December 2019. Numerous other members of civil society took part in the training activities conducted by the IACHR during 2019.

➤ **Academic network specializing in the inter-American System: Agreements with academic research centers on the IAHRs**

In line with its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, and in connection with the 60th anniversary of its founding, the IACHR decided to strengthen its ties and cooperation partnerships with academic institutions throughout the region. So, a public call was issued for applications from universities and think tanks specializing in human rights to join the Specialized Academic Network for Cooperation with the IACHR, with a view to providing technical support for the Commission's work, particularly the work of the 13 thematic and special rapporteurships and that of the Section for Follow-up on Recommendations.

In response to that invitation, 64 projects were received for participation in the Academic Network Specializing in Technical Cooperation and for providing technical support for the work performed by the Commission via its rapporteurships. Worth noting is that a large number of academic institutions showed interest in participating in projects involving more than one rapporteurship, so that, if considered individually, there were in fact 92 proposals received from academic institutions, judiciaries, civil society, and international organizations. The IACHR will formally institute the Academic Network in 2020.

With respect to the strengthening of technical cooperation ties in 2019, the IACHR signed agreements with academic centers in the region: the Law Faculty at Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina; Colombia's Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina; Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico; Ibero-American Institute of The Hague for Peace, Human Rights and International Justice; the Law Faculty of Rutgers University, in the United States; Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Cali and Universidad del Magdalena, in Colombia.

➤ **New strategies and ways of expanding opportunities for civil society participation**

In 2019, the IACHR embarked on novel methodological strategies for drafting the thematic reports on the human rights situation of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region and on Corruption and Human Rights. Those strategies included consulting civil society. For the first of those reports, meetings and gatherings were organized to elicit inputs from the academic institutions in the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM). A consultation questionnaire was also published to elicit information from indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and anyone else



interesting in providing information. For the second report, and in line with the methodology initiated in 2017, the IACHR held a public hearing on "Human Rights and Corruption" during the 171st special period of sessions. It also sent a consultation questionnaire to the OAS member states and published it so as to ensure ample access to it by civil society organizations and other interested parties. Apart from the above, the IACHR held a series of meetings with civil society and State representatives with a view to familiarizing itself with a variety of experiences throughout the region.

➤ **Associate Staff Program in the IACHR**

The Secretariat has negotiated institutional agreements to enable the IACHR to host fellows or associate personnel from institutions, universities, or other academic entities. This exchange helps to raise awareness about the mechanisms of the IAHRs and at the same time lends support to the work of the Executive Secretariat. In 2019, 3 professionals joined the Executive Secretariat under the Associated Personnel Program. They included, thanks to bilateral cooperation agreements, two professionals from Brazil and one from Chile.

Other fellows also joined the IACHR under cooperation agreements with academic institutions. They included 13 people from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, the United States, and Venezuela.

➤ **Strengthening of technical cooperation ties**

Worth highlighting is the signing of a technical cooperation agreement with OXFAM, to promote use of the inter-American human rights system and its standards and build institutional capacity.



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

- More robust and extensive coordination, cooperation, and complementarity with United Nations bodies and other agencies.
 - Stepped-up cooperation with the Human Rights Public Policy Institute (IPPDH) of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).
 - Strengthening with the OHCHR of the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.
- Closer and broader coordination with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- Implementation of a pro-active strategy for achieving the universalization of inter-American instruments. More extensive cooperation with United Nations bodies via exchange programs, the signing of a Road Map for United Nations Special Procedures, and IACHR participation, for the first time ever, in the high-level segment of the United Nation Human Rights Council.

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

➤ **Cooperation agreements and projects**

On January 7, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Honduran Judiciary signed a Letter of Understanding with a view to implementing projects and conducting joint activities in areas relating to the promotion of national frameworks and policies to prevent forced displacement and to protect persons displaced by violence, refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons; and with a view to strengthening existing national and regional protection mechanisms and with implementing additional mechanisms needed to guarantee protection for the population. The signed



Letter of Understanding envisages focusing in particular on the judiciary and on each of its organs responsible for safeguarding rights.

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

The IACHR further developed its collaboration with the United Nations human rights system on several fronts. On the one hand, it continued various previous practices, such as delivering inputs for the Universal Periodic Review of Bolivia, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, and the United States and it welcomed United Nations special rapporteurs. representatives of field offices of the Offices of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), and a UNICEF representative to take part in hearings during its 171st, 172nd, and 173rd periods of sessions. In particular, an ex officio public hearing took place at the 172nd PS in collaboration with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Clément Voule, on the subject of "Human rights, development, and freedom of association." In addition, also in 2019, 17 press releases were published, along with 8 joint letters with OHCHR or special procedures of the United Nations system.

Since 2018, the IACHR has been participating on a more regular basis in sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In 2019, it stepped up that form of collaboration. For the first time, the IACHR took part in the high-level segments of the sessions, on February 27; on that occasion, Commissioner Joel Hernández gave a presentation focusing principally on the situation in Nicaragua. The IACHR also participated in the inter-active discussion of the Human Rights Council on March 7, with a speech on the situation in Nicaragua. Furthermore, on March 19, the IACHR held a parallel meeting on the situation in Nicaragua and the work of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), in which 18 delegations from the Americas, Asia, and Europe took part.

On May 3, UNESCO, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights staged an event to commemorate World Press Freedom Day in Latin America. The celebration included a series of panel discussions, open to the public, at the headquarters of the Inter-American Court, with the participation of well-known journalists, jurist, and international activists, to talk first about the way the Internet operates and its impact on the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information.

➤ **Stronger and more extensive coordination with the United Nations Human Rights Council.**

During 2019, the IACHR engaged in a series of activities with the United Nations human rights system. During the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, in particular, it took part in debates and parallel events, focusing on the very serious human rights situations in Nicaragua and Venezuela.

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Commissioner Hernández was also one of the speakers at two other parallel meetings, both about Nicaragua. One of those meetings took place on March 5 and was entitled: "The human rights crisis in Nicaragua: an analysis based on the findings of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts for Nicaragua (IGIE-NI)." It was organized jointly by Amnesty International and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). The other, organized by Human Rights Watch, took place on March 7 and was entitled "The role of the Human Rights Council in putting an end to the human rights crisis in Nicaragua."

On March 21, 2019, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 40/2 on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nicaragua, which expresses grave concern regarding serious human rights violations and abuses since 2018; calls upon the Government to release all those arbitrarily or illegally detained; deeply regrets the decision by the Government of Nicaragua to suspend the mission of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Nicaragua (GIEI-Ni) and the Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), and calls upon the Government to resume its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Also in 2019, talks began between the technical areas responsible for following up on recommendations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, with a view to sharing information, methodologies, and best practices. Inputs were also provided for the Universal Periodic Review of El Salvador and Bolivia. Talks were conducted with the Americas Department of the OHCHR on a review of the UPR of Nicaragua, which starts in May, so as to devise joint impact strategies to ensure that any recommendations made by States take into consideration the monitoring work and recommendations of the IACHR in connection with its Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and MESENI mechanisms.

During the 41st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the IACHR was represented by the Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression and on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights, Edison Lanza and Soledad García Muñoz.

During the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council, the IACHR took part as a guest in the high-level panel discussion of the report by the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in Nicaragua. The Commission also took part in the inter-active dialogue on the situation of migrants in the region; presented comments on the report of the Special Rapporteur on Memory, Truth, and Reparation; participated in parallel meetings on Nicaragua and Brazil; and met with civil society and OHCHR representatives.

Also in 2019, talks began between the technical areas responsible for following up on recommendations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, with a view to sharing information, methodologies, and best practices. Inputs were also provided for the Universal Periodic Review of El Salvador and Bolivia. Talks were conducted with the Americas Department of the OHCHR on a review of the UPR of Nicaragua, which starts in May, so as to devise joint impact strategies to ensure that any recommendations made by States take into consideration the

monitoring work and recommendations of the IACHR in connection with its Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and MESENI mechanisms.

Worth underscoring is that in 2018 the IACHR had signed a Roadmap with the United Nations Special Procedures for broadening and boosting cooperation. In the course of the 2019, there were 23 joint initiatives, including communiques, letters, and public activities. In addition, a methodology was developed and applied for monitoring implementation of the actions envisaged in the Roadmap.

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

➤ Stepped-up cooperation with the Human Rights Public Policy Institute (IPPDH) of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

The IACHR continued the collaboration begun in 2017 with the IPPDH in the area of older persons' human rights by holding a panel discussion on best practices, releasing a report, and organizing a photographic exhibition (see Program 9). The collaboration has been invaluable for advancing the work of the Unit on the Rights of Older Persons that was established in 2017 and for building relations with civil society and states on the subject.

In addition, the two institutions increased their collaboration in the area of training by jointly holding the **International Course on Public Policy on Human Rights**. The course reached out to 100 participants, with quotas targeting state officials responsible for public policy design, direction, implementation, and evaluation; members of civil society organizations and social movements, academics, and society at large.

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

➤ Progress with the Mechanism's implementation

In the year covered by this report, the IACHR proceeded with its second year of implementing the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, with OHCHR, following the progress made in 2017 with crafting its draft agenda and conducting public consultations and the first year of implementation in 2018, when the joint action mechanism was consolidated with specific proposals for actions to be undertaken in five priority areas: (1) Joint studies, (2) Monitoring and protection, (3) Advocacy, (4) Promotion, and (5) Technical assistance.

To ensure that those measures are carried out, it was agreed that the two organs would periodically exchange information for jointly analyzing issues and situations of special concern, as well as steps to ensure effective and timely protection for any defenders who might be at risk. In addition, progress was made with the drawing up of three biannual action plans with OHCHR national offices in Honduras,



Guatemala, and Mexico. In particular, information was shared regarding the increased number of murders in Mexico and used to compile statistics on the number of attacks thus far. In addition, the IACHR's Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders proceeded to develop inputs for the document produced by the OHCHR branch in Mexico, entitled "A diagnostic assessment of the modus operandi of the National Protection Mechanism." That document points to weaknesses in the way the National Mechanism functions and presents a series of recommendations and guidelines on how to improve it. In connection with the Mechanism, information was shared about the situation of leaders and activists in connection with the protests in Honduras associated with the national strikes in the health and education sectors. In the same vein, on May 6, the IACHR and the South America branch of OHCHR sent a joint communique to the Peruvian State declaring their support for the adoption by the Ministry of Justice of the protocol on protection for human rights defenders.

In 2019, the two bodies took a series of joint steps, including joint national and regional pronouncements on situations of mutual concern; joint participation in monitoring, promotion, and training activities; and increased sharing of information and assessments of the human rights situation of defenders in the region, including important information in relation to precautionary measures.

Within the framework of the Mechanism, and through the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders, the IACHR spearheaded the production of press releases and four-monthly reports on the situation of human rights defenders in the region. On May 30, a press release was published, entitled "IACHR and Regional Branches of the OHCHR Concerned about the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas in the First Four Months of 2019," adopted by the OHCHR offices in Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Chile, and Honduras. On November 7, a second press release/report was published, entitled "IACHR and UN Human Rights Presences Once Again Call for the Creation of a Safe, Favorable Environment for Human Rights Defenders in the Americas" and signed by the OHCHR in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Haiti, Chile, and Honduras.

As regards promotion, in January 2019, the IACHR and the Mexican branch of OHCHR conducted a joint training course in Chihuahua, Mexico. As for joint studies, the first joint diagnostic assessment study of the situation of human rights defenders in the Americas is nearing completion. Likewise, progress has been made with gathering preparatory material for a best practices manual.

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

➤ Universalization of the IAHRs and Institutional Cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

This program is designed to enhance the Commission's coordination with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by strengthening a joint working group that was established in August 2016 to achieve



greater harmonization and closer ties between the two organs. The joint working group agreed on an agenda and joint annual work plan and at least one annual meeting of both plenaries.

On July 27, 2019, the Board of Officers of the IACHR and the President of the Inter-American Court met in connection with the 49th session of the OAS General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia. During that meeting, the two organs continued their dialogue about cooperation and held preparatory talks regarding the Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum, which then took place on November 6 and 7, in Quito, Ecuador.

That Forum was co-organized and sponsored by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ecuador (PGE) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The theme of the Third Inter-American Human Rights System Forum was about celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the 40th anniversary of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The idea was to reflect on the historical impact of their work and to trigger debate about present and future challenges given the current regional context, about how effective the system is, and about other key topics on the human rights agenda in America, through a constructive exchange of views among States, civil society, international organizations, universities, social and trade union movement, and the general public.



SO5

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

Results Achieved

- Public presence of the IACHR expanded in the countries of the region.
- Communication capacity boosted by the launching of the IACHR Channel.
- Implementation of the collectively drafted work environment improvement plan in progress.
- Continuation of the policy to enhance geographic representation among staff of the IACHR Executive Secretariat.
- Financial sustainability plan under way.
- Budget from the Regular Fund and specific funds increased.
- Technological innovation in progress.
- User support services improved with the establishment of the User Assistance Center (*Central de Atención a Usuarios*).

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

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

P17: Institutional Management and Development Program



➤ Reinforcement of the organizational structure

In 2019, the competitive application process continued, in order to fill 11 new positions approved in the IACHR budget for 2018, as well as 5 of the 6 new P-02 level positions approved in the 2019 budget. The sixth appointment was scheduled to be made on January 1, 2020. A new P04-level position was filled by transferring an GS/OAS staff member to the ES/IACHR, where she joined the Office of Specialized Counsel as an Advisor on Transparency and Access to Information. Via the two Internship Sessions coordinated in the GS/OAS Department of Human Resources, 76 interns joined the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR.

In the course of 2019, invitations to apply for IACHR fellowships were issued and 8 were granted to young professionals from OAS member states to enable them to get to know and apply the protection mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system. The fellowship-holders are assigned to the various rapporteurships in the IACHR (Rights of LGBTI Persons; Rights of Afrodescendants and against Racial Discrimination; Human Rights Defenders (2); and the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression, as well as to specific topics or geographical areas, as in the case of the fellowship from students from CARICOM countries; internal displacement; and follow-up on IACHR recommendations. In addition, thanks to the support of various universities, the ES/IACHR also received another 7 new fellowship-holders during the year.

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

In first-half 2019, activities continued as per the work plan drawn up by the Workplace Environment Committee, a group made up of personnel and consultants of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR. New members joined that Committee in 2019 to work on new initiatives. The "Open Doors Policy" was implemented, giving personnel an opportunity to meet with the Executive Secretary and raise matters of interest to them. A Suggestions Box was also installed and meetings with the Ombudsperson were held to work jointly with this office on improving the workplace environment within the Executive Secretariat.

In October an Active Listening session was inaugurated in which all personnel in the ES/IACHR had an opportunity to express their views and put forward proposals regarding job satisfaction in the Executive Secretariat. The results were shown to personnel in December. Work is currently under way on drawing up a 2020 program for responding to and implementing the proposals put forward.

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

During 2019, the IACHR held four periods of sessions, three of which took place away from headquarters. Holding sessions away from headquarters enables the IACHR to bring the mechanisms for defending, protecting, and promoting human rights closer to victims and peoples within its sphere of competence. It also expands the Commission's public presence in the region and fosters democratization of access to the inter-American human rights system.

During those periods of sessions, in which 108 hearings were held, the IACHR monitored and highlighted a significant number of human rights situations. The hearings dealt with issues related to the monitoring

of regional and some subregional situations, and of 22 countries in particular: Argentina, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. They also addressed new trends in human rights and follow up on recommendations issued by the IACHR. Some 330 civil society organizations took part in the hearings.

Details regarding each period of sessions and a summary of each hearing can be found at the links provided in the following Table:

Period of sessions	Place	Date	Number of Public Hearings	Work meetings
171st	Sucre, Bolivia	February 7-16, 2019	24	30
172nd	Kingston, Jamaica	May 3 to 10	26	25
173rd	Washington, D.C., United States	September 23 to October 2, 2019	33	60
174th	Quito, Ecuador	November 6 to 14	25	26



Two years into implementation of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the IACHR has managed to expand its public presence throughout the region, holding IACHR sessions in 10 different countries.

➤ **Accountability to donors**

In the first half of 2019, the IACHR Executive Secretariat prepared and submitted 36 midterm or final narrative reports, relating to 24 projects funded by the following 14 donors: UNHCR (2), Germany (1), Arcus (1), Canada (2), United States (7), Spanish Fund (6, ESCER (2), Afrodescendants, MESENI, IGIE, Defenders), Freedom House (1); Netherlands (1), Italy (1), Ireland (1), Balearic Islands (1), Luxembourg (1), PADF (4 quarterly), and Switzerland (8: 4 bi-monthly reports and 1 midterm report on the Regional Program in Central America, Visit to Honduras (1) and IGIE (1).

➤ **Communicational capacity of the IACHR strengthened**

The IACHR continued to build its communications capacity with a multi-platform strategy. On the one hand, the IACHR kept on updating and improving its [website](#). A new website section was created on the



[Follow-up on the Recommendations](#) made by the IACHR to OAS member states, as one way to foster due respect for human rights. Another new section was created, called [Monitoring of Friendly Settlement Agreements](#). In 2019, an interactive multimedia [microsite](#) on **Recognition of the Rights of LGBTI Persons** was designed and launched together with an awareness [poster campaign \(campaña gráfica\)](#) posted on Twitter and Facebook. Also launched in 2019 was a [microsite](#) on the “Situation of Human Rights in **Venezuela**”, which was widely disseminated in social media via an awareness campaign in Spanish, [English](#), and Portuguese. The IACHR website maintained the high level of views achieved in 2018 (3.4 million views in 2019). Among the most-viewed sections on the website were [What is the IACHR?](#), with 144,014 views, and the [Report on the Human Rights Situation in Guatemala](#), with 101,707 views.

The IACHR took full advantage of the period of sessions held in Jamaica to involve Caribbean media in its work. To that end, the IACHR organized a videoconference with members of the media fraternity in the Caribbean to encourage local media to cover the 172nd period of sessions in Jamaica.

In over 330 press releases, the IACHR reported its principal activities and observations regarding the protection and promotion of human rights in the Americas. The most widely read press releases were:

Press release	Publication date:	# Visits
IACHR Invites Human Rights Defenders to Take Part in a Course on the Strategic Use of the Inter-American System of Human Rights. Link	April 16	16,419
IACHR condemns excessive use of force and rejects all forms of violence in connection with the social protests in Chile. Link	October 23	12,128
OHCHR, IACHR Condemn Murders of Indigenous Leaders in Maranhão, Brazil. Link	December 9	8,820

The IACHR continues to use social media to disseminate information on its work and raise awareness about inter-American standards. On Twitter, the IACHR has 550,000 followers. As for Facebook, the number of followers of the page increased to 571,000.

In 2019, the [@CIDH](#) account had coverage on Twitter of 69.5 million impressions, in more than 4.9 thousand tweets. The most viewed tweets in 2019 were:

Tweet	Publication date:	# Interactions
“CIDH condena uso desproporcionado de la fuerza policial y militar en Cochabamba #Bolivia que ya resultaron en 5 personas fallecidas e múltiples heridas. Las armas de fuego deben estar excluidas de los dispositivos utilizados para el control de las protestas sociales (1/6) Link ”	November 16	2,172,382



La @cidh llama a un urgente y efectivo esfuerzo de diálogo y respeto a los derechos humanos en #Ecuador. Hoy se han registrado situaciones de violencia y de represión alarmantes. Hilo (1/7) Link .	October 12	616,000
“CIDH reúne Sala de Situación y da seguimiento a los acontecimientos que se están registrando hoy en #Venezuela. Ante presencia de colectivos armados en las calles, hace un llamado a la protección prioritaria a la vida, a libre manifestación y condena todas las formas de violencia” Link	April 30	358,792

The FAN PAGE has 551, 133 followers and altogether reached 24,791, 127 people. That Page contains the press releases, awareness campaigns, and videos of the IACHR Channel, some of whose posts have more than 200,000 views, while interactions have 27,000 .

Message posted	Date	Persons reached	# Interactions
IACHR Publishes Report on Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach. Link	September 16	118,287	9,064
The States of the Americas have an international obligation to legally recognize same-sex marriages and to accord them the same rights as those accorded to heterosexual couples. Link	June 9	178,640	20,751
The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) invites applications from young professionals interested in a professional fellowship in 2019. Through the program they will be able to familiarize themselves with the protection mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system. Link	March 5	202,174	27,007

In May 2019, in connection with the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Commission's new multimedia team inaugurated the [IACHR Channel](#). The Channel is a multimedia platform for showing high-quality videos -from both an informational and aesthetic standpoint - about the activities of the Commission all over the Americas.

The IACHR Channel webpage is organized around sessions and key issues issued addressed in the Commission's work. The [We Have Rights](#) video series tells the stories told by victims of human right violations in the region. From time to time, In the Interviews section, the Channel publishes articles about inspiring individuals or events in the region, such as, for example, the [interview with the President of the IACHR](#), Esmeralda Arosemena, or an [article on the Bolivian girls](#) who organized themselves to combat sexual exploitation in their country and conquered the hearts of those who attended the 171st period of sessions held in Sucre, in February. The Channel publishes informative videos on all the [periods of sessions](#) conducted by the Commission from the 169th period of sessions, held in Boulder, through to the 172nd, held in May 2019, in Jamaica.



Another major contribution made by the Channel to dissemination of information about the IACHR is the [Interactive Map of Precautionary Measures](#), which provides access to the precautionary measures in effect since 2013 and information regarding their geographical location. The precautionary measures and Channel teams are currently working together on compiling information regarding precautionary measures granted prior to 2013 and on updating the Map with information on recently granted measures.

Also, in 2019 a series of videos were launched on the monitoring of precautionary measures already granted by the Commission. The IACHR visited Costa Rica to supervise implementation of the Precautionary Measure granted on behalf of the Bribri and Terraba people and the Channel launched a [video on that activity](#). The Channel team also visited La Guajira, Colombia, and filmed a video on implementation of the precautionary measures issued on behalf of the Wayuu indigenous people.

In addition, the Channel has pages devoted to the [special monitoring mechanisms](#): MESA with regard to Ayotzinapa; and MESENI, on Nicaragua. Those pages contain videos on the activities conducted by the mechanisms, as well as the report and other pertinent documentation.

The publications found on the IACHR Channel are interfaced with the following tools: [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#) and [Instagram](#) with a view to expanding their dissemination.

On [YouTube](#), which has 10,600 subscribers, one of the most-viewed videos, [IACHR Visit to Chile](#), was viewed **69,400** times, with a total reproduction time of 2,385 hours. The Channel made more than 40 videos in 2019, which were viewed 230,100 times.

[Flickr](#), a tool used to post photos of all the work done by the IACHR, such as periods of sessions and country visits, was viewed **6,478,712** times in 2019.

The above figures point to a significant increase in IACHR outreach via social networks and the website, which goes to show that more and more users of those tools are interested in the work performed by the Commission in a variety of spheres. In that way it is boosting its strategic communications contribution to the dissemination of inter-American human rights standards.

P18: Program of Technological Innovation Applied to Human Rights

➤ Systems requirements defined

With a view to making better use of information and communication technologies and the opportunities they provide for increasing productivity, manual labor costs and the number of hour spent by personnel performing manual tasks, as well as to providing sustainability and support in areas of interest to the Commission, the IACHR is working on implementing the Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (SIMORE) in the Organization. The IACHR has worked closely with the Department of Information and Technology Services of the OAS (DOITS) to ensure that this system meets IACHR needs and requirements, with respect to information content and processes for monitoring recommendations on behalf of our IAHRs users. The system is still being tested to ensure that it can perform the requisite functions and comply with technical and data/information security safeguards before being set in motion.



Following up on the work done to design an electronic voting system to make it easier for the Commission and the Executive Secretariat to optimize debate and decision-making with respect to consultation queries received by the IACHR, the system is currently being tested prior to being launched definitively. This system will enable the IACHR to centralize its in-house consultations, expedite access, and provide faster answers, given that the information will be centralized and systematized. There will be strict security to safeguard the information discussed, combined with simple instructions on how to use the system.

Three automated on-line data-gathering systems were also put in place, which enables the IACHR to receive requests for hearings for 4 periods of session, applications for 5 fellowships and to take part in the public consultation on corruption and human rights in preparation for the thematic report on the subject, in addition to receiving applications to take part in the training course for human rights defenders on strategic use of the inter-American system.

➤ Technological innovation implemented

Another smart multimedia meeting room was installed with videoconferencing facilities. It is equipped with state of the art technology and facilities for projecting PowerPoint presentations, audio conferences, a smart board, and collaborative tools. This has made closer on-line contact with IACHR colleagues possible, as well as a rapprochement to users of the inter-American human rights system.

In 2019, the ES/IACHR went to great lengths to modernize its technological equipment and increased by 17% (to 184) the number of computers with up-to-date operating systems and other features designed to expedite its work and increase its effectiveness. Fifty-eight computers were installed in 2019. This modernization of equipment and technology is open-ended given ongoing advances in technology. It is therefore necessary to stay abreast of the ES/IACHR's efforts to keep introducing new equipment and technological trends in the day-to-day work of its personnel

➤ Updating and upgrading of existing tools

The technical team in the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR and the OAS Department of Information and Technology Services (DOITS) are currently analyzing data, functions, and processes as the initial phase of the project to redefine the core systems used in the IACHR that are vital for the work of the Executive Secretariat. One they have been upgraded, those systems will expedite the processing of information and responses to users, while stabilizing and improving automated aspects of the Commission's work.

Based on feedback from users of the Individual Petitions System Portal, member states, and civil society, functions are being implemented that will allow them to check the status of proceedings and processing of cases in chronological order. In addition, upon access to the Portal, the most recent procedure will automatically display the correspondence related to it and, only in the case of the most recent procedure, the annexes. Also displayed next to each letter will be an indication of whether the letter is addressed to the petitioner or the State. Finally, a help message will provide guidance to those accessing the system regarding the above-mentioned new functions.



Another new development was the launching on line of the special electronic form, the four official languages of the Organization, for filing requests for precautionary measure via the Individual Petitions System Portal. The form will help users of the system provide needed for the Commission to be able to evaluate the requests more expeditiously and to respond to them in a timelier manner. The launch of this electronic form is part of the efforts of the IACHR to create mechanisms that enhance access to information for persons who opt for recourse to the inter-American human rights system. It marks an important step forward in those efforts to help users of the IAHRs. In general, the use of technology and systems to defend human rights continues to be a priority in the Commission's Strategic Plan.

Moreover, in 2019, 2,624 new accounts were opened in the Individual Petitions System Portal. Of those new accounts, 1,448 are currently active. Likewise, the ES/IACHR attended to 3,634 user consultations remitted via the Individual Petitions System Portal in 2019.

In the Commission's centralized information management systems, four new procedures were created for precautionary measures with an option to apply Resolution 3/18 on deactivating precautionary measures.

P19: Financial Sustainability Plan

➤ Increase in Regular Fund financing approved

The second third of the increase in the Regular Fund budget approved for the ES/IACHR was delivered in 2019, taking it to US\$ 9,367,400. The increases in 2018 and 2019 made it possible to continue consolidating the administrative structure and building IACHR capacity.

During first-half 2019, the Executive Secretariat worked with the member states and the OAS General Secretariat on presentation of the proposed program-budget for 2020. The 2020 budget approved for the ES/IACHR, which includes the last of the installments needed to double the previous budget, was set at US\$ 10,627,900. The Program-Budget of the Organization for 2020 was adopted by the General Assembly at its 49th regular session in Medellín, Colombia, on June 26-28, 2019.

➤ Installation of the Fund-raising Committee

Although the Committee as such did not meet in 2019, on June 20, 2019, pursuant to a methodological recommendation made at its last meeting, there was a session to account to the donors who financed the MESENI, in which the Board of the IACHR and the Executive Secretary participated. It was attended by 13 representatives of the various donors, which included: the European Commission, Spain (2), the United States (4), Switzerland, Luxembourg (2), the Netherlands, and Freedom House (2). Participants thanked the Commission for the information provided, underscored the progress made and reaffirmed their support. Some expressed interest in learning about the next stages in the MESENI.

A donors' round table was also held on October 29, 2019 to raise funds for the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela - MESEVE. It was attended by 11 member states (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Panama, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela) and 14 Permanent Observers (Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Germany, the Holy See, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine).

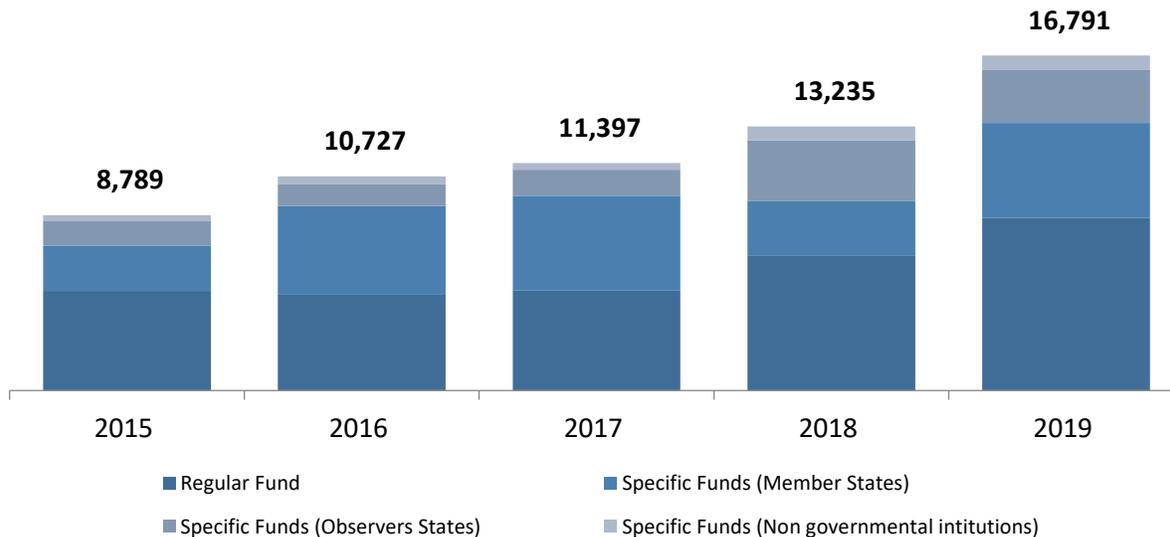
➤ **Financial Sustainability Plan and exploration of prospects for diversifying sources**

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

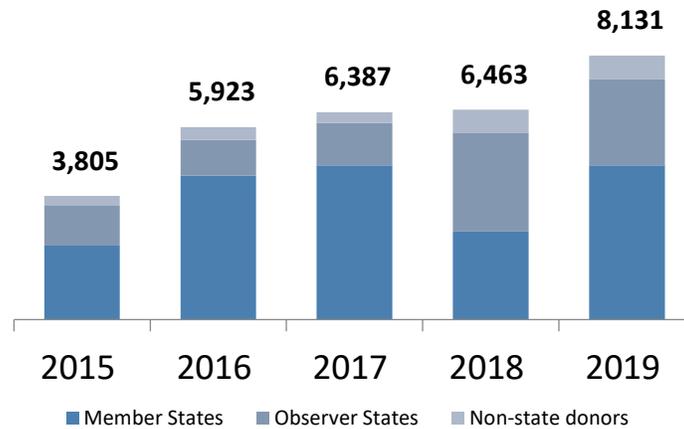
In addition, the ES/IACHR pressed on with its efforts to raise funds for a diversification of sources of financing strategy to be implemented in 2019-2020. Thus, in 2019, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR wrote 6 concept papers (2 on the rights of indigenous peoples; Switzerland-Central America; United Kingdom-Defenders, and 2 for the 2019-2020 Spanish Fund) and 18 funding project proposals to submit to donors (USA Proposal to add US\$5 million 2018-2021; Canada Proposal to add CAN \$ 1 million for 2020; Switzerland Phase II of the regional project in Central America in the amount of US\$2.6 million for 2019-2022); Spanish Fund-Defenders, Spanish Fund ESCER-II; ARCUS, Belgium-MESENI; Balearic Islands phase (2 proposals), Ireland, PADF-Nicaragua (2), Freedom House-Venezuela, Ford Foundation (2019-2020). Most of these proposals were approved. The approved projects total approximately US\$9 million. Some are multi-year projects. The amount of specific funds received in 2019 was US\$8.131 million. In addition, for some proposals fund-raising is still under way, such as the MESEVE, the IGIE Bolivia project; Technical Assistance to Haiti; and the pilot project for expanding friendly settlements.

In 2019, the IACHR also regained the support of member States such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic, who were open to hosting periods of sessions. Total contributions from member states in 2019 amounted to US\$ 4,748,688, while observer countries contributed US\$2,640,254. Funds received from non-state institutions were \$741,881. Total specific contributions as of December 2019 were \$8,131,000. Specific contributions represented 48%. Total funds received including the regular fund is \$16,791,000.

Funds received by the IACHR by source of funding USD Thousands



Specific Funds received (USD thousands)



(*) 2019 figure at December 2019

Table of Specific Funds received by Donor in 2019

Member States	Amount (USD)	Project/Intended Use
Argentina	30,000	"Support for the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021"
Bolivia	238,902	"171st period of sessions of the IACHR, held in Bolivia, February 7-16, 2019"
Canada	306,201	• "Promoting compliance with recommendations and decisions on the rights of women and girls issued by the IACHR in the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean."
	6,300	• Support for the Office of the Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression
Costa Rica	6,727	• "Support for the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021"
	3,011	• Support for the Office of the Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression
Ecuador	135,421	"174th period of sessions of the IACHR, held in Ecuador, November 8-14, 2019"
United States	US\$ 2,549,951	• "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2018-2021"
	97,430	• Implementation of the MESENI
	6,932	• Transitional Justice in Cuba
Mexico	600,000	"Implementation of the MESA"
	650,000	GIEI Mexico
Panama	99,985	"Support for the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021"
Peru	8,828	"Support for the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021"
Uruguay	9,000	"Support for the RFOE and SRESCER"



Sub-total: member states	4,748,688	
Permanent Observers		
Spain	84,711	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combating structural racial discrimination • "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in the Inter-American Human Rights System — Phase I (Emphasis on human rights and business)" (Spanish Fund for the OAS -FEPO)
	92,173	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Promoting and protecting economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights in the inter-American human rights system" (FEPO)
	34,848	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Implementation of the MESENI-Nicaragua" (FEPO)
	20,523	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the IGIE - Nicaragua
	92,173	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Enhancing the tools available to help protect the rights to life and personal safety of human rights defenders in Latin America" (FEPO)
	109,510	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Course for Human Rights Defenders, First and Second. (Balearic Islands) (109,510)
France	26,015	"Support for the Activities of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR and the SRESCER"
Ireland	54,825	"Backlog reduction on admissibility stage"
Netherlands	279,980	"Support for the IACHR's implementation of its Strategic Plan 2017-2020."
Norway	378,748	Promoting and protecting economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights in the inter-American human rights system
Sweden	227,471	"Support for the IACHR's implementation of its Strategic Plan 2017-2020."
Switzerland	819,003	"Strengthening Governance and Human Rights in Central America"
European Union	356,492	"Protecting and Defending Human Rights in Nicaragua"
United Kingdom	49,457	"Support for the IACHR's implementation of its Strategic Plan 2017-2020."
Sub-total: Permanent Observers	2,640,254	
Institutions and others		
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner	134,994	"Fellowship on International Protection and internal displacement and support for institution building"
Freedom House	46,747	"Implementation of the IGIE"
ARCUS Foundation	50,000	"Protecting and Promoting the Rights of LGBTI Persons"
Google	20,000	"Strengthening Freedom of Expression the Americas"
Ford Foundation	39,340	"Strengthening Freedom of Expression the Americas"
	175,000	GESP
Pan American Development Foundation	262,676	"Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in the Northern Triangle of Central America"
Oxfam	13,124	Support for the SRESCER
Sub-total: Institutions and others	741,881	
Total: Specific Funds	8,130,823	

(*) Preliminary information not yet revised/certified by the OAS Financial Department.



P20: User Assistance Center

In first half 2019, the User Assistance Center (known by its Spanish acronym CAU) continued its effort to consolidate its services, that began in 2018 when it was founded. The CAU reported making the following progress in first half 2019:

➤ Mapping and standardization of flows, procedures, and processes

The mapping and diagnostic assessment of attention to users began with services provided over the phone. That made it possible to identify the questions most frequently asked by users, the stages/areas in which demand for information was focused, and the IACHR's capacity to respond to the demand. Based on the information gathered, a proposal was drawn up for strengthening assistance to users over the phone.

Simultaneously, the IACHR re-engineered its internal flows and procedures for receiving, classifying, inputting, or distributing the information it receives. At the same time, implementation of the various forms and fact sheets mentioned in the previous report continued.

➤ Increased attention/responses to users

The gradual strengthening of the CAU in 2019 triggered almost immediate concrete results, such as: reduction of the time taken to register new petitions and requests for precautionary measures, which were kept to at most 4 and 2 days, respectively; professional attention to more than 800 users in person, at headquarters or away from headquarters in connection with on-site observation visits or periods of sessions; over 40,000 files created in the Document Management System (DMS) registering the reception and distribution of information regarding petitions, cases, and precautionary measures., as well as other achievements.

To accomplish that, it was necessary to focus on training personnel and drawing up manuals and protocols to standardize attention to users, as well as designing new flows and strategies to address the most pressing obstacles to high-quality user services. Documents such as the User Attention Manual, the Guide to Digitization of Documents, the Protocol for Digitization of IACHR Documents, and the Manual for Registering Petitions and Precautionary Measures are just some examples of the efforts the CAU went to in 2019.

Another CAU initiative was the launching of the new online special form for filing requests for precautionary measures via the Individual Petitions System Portal (IPSP). That form aims to facilitate access to information for people who turn to the IAHRs because they find themselves in a situation of serious and urgent risk of irreparable harm to their rights. The form is designed to help users of the system provide the minimum information needed for the Commission to be able to evaluate the requests more expeditiously and to respond to them in a timelier manner in order to safeguard their rights.



➤ **Training provided to CAU personnel**

The CAU has been key to increasing the number of new registered users and increasing use of the User Portal (IPSP), thanks to pro-active dissemination of the functions it performs among users of the IAHRs, thereby facilitating more people's access to information about their cases before the Commission.

Over the course of 2019, multiple training sessions were provided for CAU personnel. Topics covered in those session included: Use of the Individual Petitions System Portal; Use of the IACHR's operating systems (Document Management System and Petition and Case Management System); and the Procedures used at the Initial Review, Admissibility, and Merits stages.



P21

Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations IACHR Recommendations

Results Achieved

- Increased compliance by States with recommendations made by the IACHR in published reports on the merits, compared to 2017: full compliance cases increased from 6.8% to 8%; partial compliance cases increased from 64% to 75.2%; the percentage of cases in which compliance by State was still pending fell from 29.2% to 16.8%.
- Capacities created in the IACHR to monitor compliance with its recommendations and decisions;
 - General Guidelines on the Follow-up of Recommendations and Decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, adopted and published;
 - Implementation of a pro-active strategy of following up on published cases, along with publication of a performance report for 2018, and increases in 2019 in the volume of replies by the parties and compliance with the recommendations.
 - Follow-up methodologies defined or refined in 2019;
- The Inter-American Follow-Up and Monitoring System (SIMORE) is being implemented.
 - Progress made with the prototype for the IACHR's Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE) and dialogues conducted with the office in charge of national monitoring systems;

Resolution of the OAS General Assembly on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights paid tribute to the IACHR's efforts to start operating the Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE) in connection with its Strategic Plan 2017-2021;
- Special Monitoring Mechanisms created and implemented:
 - The Technical Support Group (GAT) for the Ayotzinapa Affair installed in Mexico, in the new stage of the Monitoring Mechanism (MESA);
 - Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic, concluded in 2019, with the Dominican State undertaking the actions to which it had committed; Final Report prepared in connection with the IACHR 2019 Annual Report;



- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) up and running at IACHR headquarters, with outcomes reported and permanent activities in relation to Nicaragua;
- The Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with the Commission's human rights recommendations was installed in November 2019 to provide technical advice to the State of Honduras on implementing the IACHR's recommendations, pursuant to Article 41.e of the American Convention on Human Rights;
- Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela (MESEVE), installed in October 2019, with a view to bolstering IACHR monitoring in Venezuela and responding promptly to the new challenges being posed by the severe human rights crisis in that country.
- Publication of report on the outcomes of the special mechanisms for monitoring recommendations in 2018;
- Impact Observatory of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, established through IACHR resolution No. 2/19;
- Enhanced capacity in the IACHR has led to ,and more vigorous, follow up on, and monitoring of, the implementation of recommendations:
 - Follow-up report entitled "Impacts of cases of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents," completed, adopted, and launched in December 2019.
 - 40 follow-up press releases published⁸; 9 official monitoring visits conducted in 2019; 21 promotional activities and 15 training sessions conducted, reaching 257 people.
 - Supervision of compliance accomplished for all (100%) cases for which a report on merits has been published since the year 2000. Mapping conducted of cases being supervised in respect of compliance for which reports on merits were published prior to 2000.
 - 22 working meetings, 8 meetings to examine portfolios with States, and a significant number of face-to- face (or via videoconference) bilateral meetings with petitioners, victims, and State representatives on cases for which reports on the merits were published in 2019.
 - IACHR Website Section to Monitor/Follow up on Recommendations posted.

⁸ 5 press releases on published reports on the merits, 30 press releases about MESENI, 2 about MESA, 2 about the mechanism in the Dominican Republic, 1 press release about MESEVE. Tap the following link to access [Press Releases 2019](#).

⁹ 2 MESA visits, 5 MESENI visits, and 2 MESAT visits.



Introduction

The IACHR made significant progress in 2019 with developing and perfecting methodologies for following up on its recommendations and for verifying the degree of compliance and identification with States' commitments to human rights. Accordingly, the 2019 Annual Report incorporated the methodological innovations reformulated since 2018 and encompassed: the new criteria for classifying the degree of compliance with each recommendation, underscoring the progress made and challenges encountered during the year, and the drawing up of individual follow-up fact sheets for each case; the methodology for analyzing degrees of compliance with the recommendations made in the country reports in connection with Chapter V of the Annual Report, with clearly defined and transparent analytical criteria. There was an increase in the number of activities dedicated to following up on recommendations, with a view to forging consensual paths toward compliance with the recommendations. Progress was also made as regards the levels of State compliance with recommendations in published "follow-up on recommendations" cases.

In addition, the IACHR adopted and published its General Guidelines on the Follow-up of Recommendations and Decisions with a view to providing access to, and transparency regarding, the mandates, methodologies, criteria, and procedures applied in the follow-up to the recommendations of its various mechanisms. In the same vein, *the Commission established the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Impact Observatory as a collaborative platform with the objective of reflecting, systematizing, and making visible the impact of its actions in the defense and protection of human rights in the Hemisphere.*

Along the same lines, the IACHR completed and adopted the Follow-up report entitled "Impacts of cases of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents," which comprises one part of the Thematic Report on "Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents: Standards, Recommendations, Challenges, and Best Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean" and examines the structural effects triggered by the recommendations made in published reports on the merits regarding situations of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents in the region.

Furthermore, with a view to coordinating actions and exchanging best practices, the IACHR boosted coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, academic networks, and civil society. As a result, there were 21 promotional activities and 15 training sessions for human rights defenders, social leaders, members of civil society, and students in the region.

In addition, the IACHR has fully committed to consolidating and creating Special Mechanisms for Monitoring Recommendations, [with the dissemination of their findings](#) such as the establishment of the Technical Support Group (GAT) for the Ayotzinapa Affair installed in Mexico City, in the new stage of the Monitoring Mechanism (MESA); the conclusion of the new national stage of the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic; the new phase of the Special) operating out of IACHR headquarters; the installation of the Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with the human rights recommendations of the IACHR (MESAT) in connection with the report on the Situation of Human Rights in Honduras, in November 2019; the installation of the



Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela ([MESEVE](#)), in October 2019; as well as the talks geared to establishing new round tables and cooperation mechanisms with States to follow up on and implement the recommendations of the IACHR, as in the case of Haiti.. Through its Special Monitoring Mechanisms, the IACHR is offering the countries of the region a novel and promising way of helping them to comply with their international obligations and to implement recommendations based on inter-American norms and standards with respect to human rights.

In addition, the IACHR is developing the Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations of the IACHR (Inter-American SIMORE), which is currently at the prototype testing stage and will have at its disposal the database of all the recommendations issued by the various mechanisms of the IACHR. The importance of that system was acknowledged by the Organization itself in the framework of its General Assembly session in 2019.

➤ **Progress with the Follow-up of recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**

The Executive Secretariat of the IACHR has been developing new methodologies and products for monitoring recommendations since January 2019. Examples worth mentioning include:

- Adoption and execution of the 2019 Plan of Action for Program 21;
- Memos and thematic studies currently under way:
 - Memos compiling recommendations made to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the United States and Uruguay, in preparation for visits to those countries.
 - The working paper on compliance with recommendations contained in reports on the merits published in 2018.
 - The study on domestic systems for implementing IACHR decisions: Guide to Best Practices, currently being drawn up. Questionnaire, published
- Posting of the IACHR **website section on follow-up of recommendations**. [Link](#).
- Adoption of the [General Guidelines on the Follow-up of Recommendations and Decisions](#) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
- [Impact Observatory of the IACHR](#), established by Resolution 2/19.
- Report entitled Impacts of cases of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and adolescents, which comprises one part of the Thematic Report on "Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents: Standards, Recommendations, Challenges, and Best Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted by the IACHR.
- Work is currently under way on the in-house protocol for follow-up of recommendations for IACHR analysis of individual cases, pursuant to Article 48 of the Rules of Procedure. As part of its cooperation with academia, the Commission has also been collaborating with a project to prepare



IACHR case law data sheets in relation to reports on merits and friendly settlements, in which it is working with the **Democracy and Human Rights Institute of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (IDEHPUCP)**. In addition, as part of its cooperation with the **Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law**, based in Heidelberg, Germany, the IACHR is conducting two research studies on the impact of the inter-American human rights system. The IACHR has also called on the Academic Network to participate in the **IACHR Impact Observatory Project**.

- The IACHR has also been strengthening its ties in this field to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and with the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas with a view to coordinating actions and exchanging best practices with regard to the monitoring of recommendations.
- Promotional and training activities relating to follow-up of recommendations

In 2019, **21 promotional activities** and training sessions were organized for government officials, ombudspersons, civil society, social leaders, and academic networks in the region.

- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández during the High-level Segment of the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, in Geneva, on February 27, 2019.
- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández during the side event entitled "*The human rights crisis in Nicaragua: an analysis from the findings of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts*," organized by the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and Amnesty International on March 5, in Geneva.
- Remarks by Commissioner Joel Hernández during the Interactive Dialogue following the speech by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in connection with the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, on March 7, 2019.
- Presentation by Commissioner Joel Hernández during the side event entitled "*Human Rights Crisis in Nicaragua: The Suppression of the Rule of Law*", organized by the International Human Rights Network in Geneva, on March 13, 2019.
- Panel discussion on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua, organized at IACHR headquarters in Washington, D.C., on March 22, 2019. Participants included Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão, the Assistant Executive Secretary, Maria Claudia Pulido, and the Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Edison Lanza.
- Participation by Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão, in the side event "*Rights, Retaliation, and Repression in Nicaragua – Political prisoners, human rights abuses and accountability*" on the situation of human rights violations in the context of the crisis, April 4, 2019, in Geneva.



- Presentation of the ad hoc and monitoring mechanisms of the IACHR (IGIEs and Special Mechanisms) at the "Workshop: International Mechanisms to Back and Support National Law Enforcement and Justice Institutions: Against Power Crime in Latin America," held on May 5 and 6, 2019, at the headquarters of the *Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law*, in Freiburg, Germany.
- Panel discussion on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua, conducted in Miami, Florida, on June 17, 2019. Participants included: IACHR President Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, and the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão.
- Presentation on the work of the IACHR on follow-up of recommendations, delivered on June 20, 2019 at the Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Chairs of United Nations Working Groups.
- Presentation of the "Home Truth" documentary on the story of Jessica Lenahan and her struggle for justice, which resulted in an emblematic case of domestic violence, at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, on June 25, 2019, in Washington, D.C.
- Participation of Commissioner Antonia Urrejola in the side event: "¿Hacia dónde va Nicaragua? [Where is Nicaragua heading?] Challenges posed by the severe human rights crisis," organized by CEJIL, on June 26, in Medellín, Colombia.
- Participation by IACHR specialists at the Ibero-American Colloquium No. 196, "Toward an Inter-American Impacts Observatory?" held on July 15, in Heidelberg, Germany.
- Participation by Commissioners Esmeralda Arosemena and Flavia Piovesan, and of Commissioner-elect Julissa Mantilla at the Ibero-American Colloquium No.197: "60 Years of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: A view from Latin America and Europe," organized by the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, held on July 16, 2019 in Heidelberg, Germany;
- Sixth International Seminar: The Transformational Impact of the IAHRs in Latin America, co-organized by the IACHR and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Konrad Adenauer foundation, and the German Research Foundation (DFG), held on July 16 and 17, in Heidelberg, Germany.
- Research presentation on 60 years of IACHR country reports, delivered on July 30, 2019 in Washington, D.C., United States.
- Colloquium on domestic systems for implementing decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, held on November 7, in Quito, Ecuador;



- Meeting of Experts on instruments for follow-up of recommendation and assessment of the impact of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, held on November 7, in Quito, Ecuador.
- Participation by the Assistant Executive Secretary for Monitoring, Promotion, and Technical Cooperation, Maria Claudia Pulido, at the side event: The Ongoing Human Rights Crisis in Nicaragua, organized by Amnesty International and CEJIL, on November 13, in Quito, Ecuador.
- Presentation by Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas of the "Report on Forced Migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica," on December 13, 2019 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship in San José, Costa Rica.

➤ **Monitoring of cases for which reports on the merits have been published (Article 51)**

In the period under review, the IACHR analyzed the information provided by parties regarding compliance with the recommendations made in cases for which reports on the merits have been issued (Article 51), in respect of the 103 open cases at the recommendation monitoring/follow-up stage. **Chapter II.G.3** was produced on: **State of compliance with published reports on the merits, that form part of the 2019 Annual Report**, including the preparation of individual monitoring fact sheets for each case, in which the IACHR, pursuant to the follow-up methodology adopted since the 2018 Annual Report, classified the level of compliance with each individual recommendation and underscored the individual and structural outcomes reported by the parties.

Regarding the [2019 Annual Report](#), it is important to highlight the following results:

- 2 cases moved from "compliance still pending" to "partial compliance" status.
- Progress was made with implementing 23 recommendations and 8 clauses in compliance agreements entered into by the parties, resulting in:
 - Full compliance with 4 reparation measures;
 - Substantial partial compliance with 6 reparation measures;
 - Partial compliance with 13 reparation measures.
- Of the 23 recommendations in respect of which progress was registered in 2019, 18 are structural, while 5 were cases involving individual gains.
- A ratio of responses by representatives of victims and victims of nearly 57% in the cases monitored.
- A 44% response ratio by one of the parties (a 30% increase over the response ratio for 2018).
- A 5% improvement in the State response ratio, compared to the previous year.

- Noteworthy was the active participation of the Caribbean States in 2019. Some produced valuable information on compliance with the Commission's recommendations, after a long period during which such information was not forthcoming.

In addition, in 2019, the IACHR held:

- **22 working meetings** (7 of them ex officio) to follow-up on published reports on the merits during the 171st, 172nd, 173rd, and 174th periods of sessions of the IACHR.
- **8 portfolio meetings** with the following States: Belize, Brazil, Canada Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay, during which 39 published report on the merits were reviewed.
- A large number of bilateral (face-to-face or via videoconference) meetings were held with petitioners and States to go over published reports on the merits.
- 206 letters requesting information were sent to the parties in preparation for the 2019 Annual Report, continuing the methodology used to handle information sent by the parties since 2018.
- 5 press releases on monitoring.
- 8 memos analyzing monitoring of cases sent to the IACHR.
- Production of case indicators.

A few relevant statistics and indicators:

- **103 cases** monitored (out of 113 reports published)
- **22 countries** have reports on the merits that are being monitored
- On average, monitoring continues for **12.5 years**.
- Of the 113 cases with published reports on the merits, 8% show full compliance; 75.2% partial compliance, and in 16.8% of the cases compliance is still pending.

Categories	Number of cases			Compliance percentage		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Fully compliance	7	9	9	6.8%	8.26%	8%
Partial compliance	66	82	85	64%	75.23%	75.2%
Compliance pending	30	18	19	29.2%	16.51%	16.8%
Total	103	109	113	100%	100%	100%

- Regarding level of compliance with recommendations:



Level of compliance with recommendations contained in published reports on the merits - 2019		
Annual Report		
Categories	Number of recommendations	Level of compliance
Full compliance	88	19.6%
Substantial partial compliance	24	5.3%
Partial compliance	115	25.7%
Compliance pending	209	46.7%
Non-compliance	12	2.7%
TOTAL	448	100%

➤ **Inter-American SIMORE**

The Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations of the IACHR (Inter-American SIMORE) is based on a tool developed by Paraguay for systematizing international recommendations on human rights made to the country and allows public access to information on measures taken by the State to comply with and implement them. The purpose of this online I.T. tool is to systematize the recommendations made by the Commission through its various mechanisms: approved friendly settlement agreements, annual reports (Chapter IV.B), published reports on the merits, country reports, thematic reports, and precautionary measures granted.

SIMORE lets users of the inter-American human rights system remit information regarding measures adopted by States to comply with those recommendations. In addition, SIMORE is an accountability, transparency, participation, and access to information mechanism that facilitates follow-up on recommendations, boosts ability to oversee them, and compliance with international obligations. The system contains a civil society participation mechanism. During 2019, the IACHR worked on the SIMORE prototype and methodological documents.

It is worth pointing out that in 2019 the **OAS General Assembly adopted the Resolution on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**, which paid tribute to the IACHR's efforts to start operating the Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE) in connection with its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (AG/CG/doc.2/19 rev. 1/2019). It also urged member states to strengthen their institutional capacity to follow up on and implement the decisions and recommendations of the inter-American human rights system and to consider using and developing monitoring systems, such as SIMORE, along with any other mechanisms the States may be part of, while, at the same time fostering the sharing of experiences and already existing best practices.

In addition, the IACHR held talks and meetings to familiarize itself with **other States' national recommendations systems** and best practices in the region, to exchange experiences with regard to recommendations systems, and to explore the possibility of their incorporating the recommendations of the IACHR, as is the case with the **SIMORE of Guatemala and the SIMOREH of Honduras**.

SIMORE is still at the testing stage, which includes consultations with various kinds of users (government officials, members of society, academics, and so on). It is expected to be launched in first quarter 2020.



➤ Database of IACHR recommendations

Along the same lines, as one stage in the development of the System under the Plan of Action of the Strategic Plan, the IACHR worked on systematizing its database of recommendations by establishing common categories and the method used to cull and classify information **based on search criteria and a recommendation classification system**. Recommendations made by the various mechanisms and tools of the IACHR were compiled. That yielded:

- A total of 4,758 recommendations compiled, broken down into:
 - 448 recommendations taken from reports on the merits published since 2001;
 - 2,158 recommendations taken from thematic reports published since 1998;
 - 1,469 recommendations taken from country reports published since 1998; and
 - 683 recommendations taken from Chapter IV.B reports in Annual Reports since 1998.

In addition, the Follow-up of Recommendations Section (SSR) updated the portfolio of cases for which a report on the merits has been published since 2001 under Article 51 of the American Convention, so as to include 4 reports on the merits published in 2018. The SSR also made an inventory of cases with reports on the merits published since 2001 in which the IACHR has received information from the parties in the past 10 years. They totaled 110 cases relating to 15 countries.

- **Special Monitoring Mechanisms**

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

In 2019, the Special Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA) began implementing the 2019 Work Plan, which aims to continue implementing the Mechanism and strengthening cooperation and technical assistance. The Plan was adopted following an agreement reached with representatives of the victims and the new Government in Mexico and one of its novel features was the establishment of a Technical Support Group (**Grupo de Acompañamiento Técnico -GAT**), made up of the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR permanently stationed in Mexico, and international experts. As regards international experts, the Group included former members of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), Ángela Buitrago and Francisco Cox, who took part as consultants providing technical advice on criminal investigation matters. The Mechanism and, above all, the Technical Support Group, carried out the Work Plan activities in coordination with the Truth and Access to Justice Commission for the Ayotzinapa Case established by the Mexican State to provide family members and their advisors with the material and human resources needed for them to assist as co-plaintiffs with the investigations. In going about its work, MESA personnel, from headquarters or in situ, attended all regular and special meetings of the Truth Commission to which MESA was convened. In addition, they requested that special meetings be convened. The Group also held meetings with that Commission's technical team and presented the recommendations that were included in the Final Report of the MRSA published in November 2018. The Group likewise met with the representatives of the beneficiaries, with family members of the disappeared



youths, civil society organizations, and authorities involved in complying with the recommendations made by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) and the MESA.

The ongoing presence of the IACHR team in Mexico has made it possible to stay in close contact with the parents of the disappeared youths and has facilitated more frequent talks with authorities, representatives, and civil society organizations involved with the precautionary measure, so as to keep more detailed, first-hand track of recommendations relating to efforts to search and care for the victims, investigate what happened, and adopt structural and non-repetition measures.

The Mechanism was also present at the relaunching of the National System to Search for Missing Persons. In addition, it took part in panels convened by the National Search Commission. The Mechanism likewise continues to keep track of the criminal investigation file so as to monitor compliance with the recommendations on this subject.

A few of the outcomes:

Search

- The Technical Support Group (GAT) kept track of the search activities and plans reported by the Presidential Commission and of the use of Lidar technology for those searches.
- The GAT participated in the reports on the activities of the National Search Commission with respect to this case.

Investigation

- The GAT continued its reading of the criminal investigation file.
- The Group attended actions or proceedings prompted by the Presidential Commission.
- The Mechanism wrote a letter to the State about the Special Public Prosecutor's Office for Ayotzinapa.
- The Mechanism monitored the then still pending appointment of the Public Prosecutor Specializing in the case, until he was appointed.
- The Special Investigation and Litigation Unit for the Ayotzinapa case was installed in the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (FGR) and the Technical Support Group worked with that Unit on a number of specific topics in the inquiries.

Assistance to Victims

- The GAT was present at meetings with the Executive Commission for Assistance to Victims and the organizations involved in the victims assistance plan in order to ascertain how it would be implemented.

- The MESA followed up on the plans for implementing the Protocol for dealing with the nine urgent cases described at meetings of the Presidential Commission, in coordination with the representatives and the health authorities.
- The Mechanism traveled to Ayutla de los Libres to visit the youth named Aldo Gutiérrez and to verify the health care he was receiving.
- The Mechanism held meetings with the Executive Commission for Assisting Victims (CEAV) to ascertain how the Protocol was being implemented and, in particular, to check out progress made with treatment for Aldo Gutiérrez achieved in the implementation Andrés Vargas, both students injured on the night of September 26-27.

Structural Measures

- The GAT took part in roundtable discussions convened by the National Search Commission in order to come up with a Standardized Search Protocol.
- The Group took part in meetings regarding the Special Forensic Identification Mechanism, along with OHCHR and FUNDAR personnel. The team at headquarters and on the ground in Mexico constantly supported the talks between groups of family members of the disappeared persons and State authorities on establishing the Special Forensic Identification Mechanism, which began on May 9, 2019, at the period of sessions held in Jamaica, in connection with the public hearing on Enforced Disappearances and the Proposed Special Forensic Identification Mechanism for Mexico that was later adopted on December 5, 2019.
- On April 8, 2019, the GAT attended the public ceremony at which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights signed an agreement with the Mexican State on the provision of technical assistance with the Ayotzinapa case.

Press Releases

- The IACHR issued a [press release](#) on its official visit and presentation of the 2018 Final Report and 2019 Work Plan.
- On September 25, 2019m the IACHR issued a [press release](#), marking the fifth anniversary of the events that had occurred and voicing its concern at the absence of results in terms of justice and the truth and deploring the lack of answers to questions about what happened and about who had been involved.

Official Visits

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



- Commissioners Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño and Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva conducted the Mechanism's second visit to Mexico from July 31 to August 1. The delegation traveled to Ayutla de los Libres, in the state of Guerrero, to visit Aldo Gutiérrez, a youth wounded on the night of September 26, 2014, and his family, and verified the medical care he is receiving and the home that was built for him. The Commissioners also attended the meeting of the Presidential Truth Commission and met with authorities and relatives of the students. The IACHR issued [Press release No. 197/19](#) on that visit.

Other visits by the Commissioners

- On January 15, 2019, Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño and Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva both attended the launching of the Ayotzinapa Case Truth Commission.
- On March 24, 2019, Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva was present at the relaunching of the National System to Search for Missing Persons.

➤ Working Group on the implementation of human rights policies in the Dominican Republic

In keeping with its work plan, the IACHR installed the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic, which met in 2018 and 2019.¹⁰

In 2018, the IACHR installed (and celebrated with the Dominican State and civil society) a Working Group, which held two sessions, on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic in order to follow up on recommendations and commitments made in relation to the acquisition of nationality, migration, policies to combat all forms of discrimination, and policies on women's rights and gender equality. The Working Group [TR: CLARIFY THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH IN SPANISH?] constitutes a tool supplementing follow-up of the recommendations regarding the situation of human rights in the Dominican Republic.

Initially, the Working Group held two meetings, with the participation of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, representatives of the State, Dominican civil society, and national and regional observers. The first meeting of the Group took place at the headquarters of the Organization of American States, in Washington, D.C., while the second was held in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic.

In 2019, the IACHR presented a follow-up report on the topics discussed at the Working Group session on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic ([Chapter V of the IACHR's 2018 Annual Report](#)) and on the recommendations made in its country reports on the acquisition of nationality, migration, policies to combat all forms of discrimination, and women's rights. The Working Group's progress and still pending challenges were analyzed in connection with the aforementioned report and appreciation was expressed for the fact that, throughout 2018, the Dominican State had made a series of

¹⁰IACHR, Press Release 273/19 - [IACHR presents the results of its efforts to monitor the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic](#), Washington, D.C., October 25, 2019.

moves to enter into a dialogue with the IACHR in the quest for a solution to the critical situations described at length in that chapter. One such move highlighted by the IACHR was the installation of the "Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic." However, the IACHR also pointed out that, with respect to its recommendations, tasks were still pending and hurdles still to be overcome to achieve full compliance.

The second phase in the implementation of the Working Group took place in 2019. During that second phase, on January 25, 2019, the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the Organization of American States sent the IACHR a note outlining the Dominican State's commitments derived from the Working Group, which included the following steps to be taken in 2019: 1. A working meeting with civil society in April 2019. Following up on that commitment, the State informed the IACHR that the working meeting with civil society had taken place on May 23, 2019.¹¹ 2. To reply by mid-year to a questionnaire regarding human rights provided by the IACHR. In this case, the IACHR received a Note dated November 6, 2019 from the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the OAS, containing the State's reply to the questionnaire.¹² 3. A human rights training session for government officials, delivered by the IACHR, which took place in the Dominican Republic on August 13 and 14, 2019.¹³ 4. The presentation of a report at the end of the year in Washington, describing the country's progress with regard to human rights. That presentation took place on November 25, 2019 at the Commission's headquarters, with the participation of representatives of the State and Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas.

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

On June 24, 2018, the IACHR installed the MESENI to monitor compliance with the recommendations made by the IACHR following its visit to the country, such as the [Preliminary Observations](#) and the [Report](#) entitled "Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua." MESENI is, among other actions, monitoring compliance with precautionary measures granted in this context, in favor of people whose life or physical integrity is in serious danger, and is continuing to monitor the human rights situation in Nicaragua in keeping with the IACHR's mandate.

Even though the Nicaraguan State announced on December 19, 2018 its decision to suspend the presence of MESENI and IACHR visits to the country, the Special Mechanism continues to monitor the human rights situation in Nicaragua from the Commission's headquarters in Washington D.C. and via working visits to other countries in the region, where there are Nicaraguans who have fled persecution in search of international protection.

Since its installation, the MESENI has been rigorously performing its technical task of monitoring and consolidating the data gathered, analyzed, and published by the IACHR on Nicaragua. To that end, the IACHR taps and compares diverse sources of information, including, in particular, figures and reports

¹¹ ICHR, Press Release 273/19 - [IACHR presents the results of its efforts to monitor the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic](#), Washington, D.C., October 25, 2019.

¹² Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the Organization of American States (OAS). Note MP-RD-OEA 0785-19, November 6, 2019.

¹³ ICHR, Press Release 273/19 - [IACHR presents the results of its efforts to monitor the Working Group on the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic](#), Washington, D.C., October 25, 2019.



garnered by civil society organizations devoted to defending human rights, data reported in the media, and, when it is made available, information documented by the State.

On June 24, 2019, one year after MESENI began operating, the Inter-American Commission presented a [Progress Report](#) on outcomes and impacts. In that report, the IACHR came up with a positive assessment of the actions taken to protect the rights of the Nicaraguan population, preserve historical memory of what had happened in Nicaragua, and influence the path pursued by victims and their family members to elicit truth, justice, and reparation.

A few of the outcomes:

Monitoring of the human rights situation

- Via the MESENI, the IACHR is putting together a strategy for providing a sustained and timely response to the human rights crisis in Nicaragua. During the period under review, the IACHR remitted **seven requests** to the Nicaraguan State for **information** regarding the specific situation of victims of State oppression and **one Article 41 letter** regarding the situation of persons deprived of liberty. In addition, the IACHR convened **six public and one private hearing** to garner specific information on human rights violations in the country.
- In 2019, the IACHR paid **five working visits** within the MESENI framework to monitor the situation of Nicaraguans who have found themselves forced to flee their country. Between May 19 and 24, Commissioner Joel Hernández visited Costa Rica and Honduras. Subsequently, on June 17 and 18, Commissioners Esmeralda Arosemena, the President of the IACHR, and Commissioner Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur for Nicaragua, visited Miami, United States. On September 16 and 17, Commissioner Flávia Piovesan, Rapporteur for Panama, paid a working visit to that country. Finally, on December 12 and 13, Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas, Rapporteur for the Rights of Migrants, paid a visit to Costa Rica.
- Thanks to its visits and work done at headquarters, the MESENI collected **209 testimonies** in 2019. Those testimonies and the information gathered via monitoring were vital for drawing up reports and publicizing the very serious situation in the country. During 2019, the Commission organized more than **25 video-conferences** with civil society organizations and human rights defenders still in Nicaragua, with a view to obtaining first-hand information on the situation. Based on the above, the IACHR published **30 press releases** on developments in the human rights crisis in Nicaragua in order to alert the international community to that situation.

Cooperation and assistance with training

- In 2019, the MESENI continued its work of boosting Nicaraguan civil society's capacities with respect to international human rights standards. Thus, the IACHR conducts a face-to-face and virtual training program on the mechanisms and standards of the inter-American human rights system. It also provides training courses on truth, justice, and reparation with organizations such as the Asociación de las Madres de Abril, the Unidad de Presas y Presos Políticos (Political

Prisoners' Unit), and Acción Universitaria. In connection with the adoption of the amnesty law in Nicaragua, the training courses have contributed to the work done by those organizations by helping them to espouse international human rights standards and the Commission's recommendations.

- In the course of 2019, the MESENI conducted **15 training sessions for 257 beneficiaries**, including students, human rights defenders, journalists, and persons in exile due to the crisis in Nicaragua.
- **Training courses delivered by the MESENI – 2019:**

Name of the activity:	Place and date	Number of persons	Groups trained
Training workshop on international migrations and asylum standards (Rapporteurship for the Rights of Migrants/MESENI)	Washington, D.C. February 25,	20	Representatives of the Nicaraguan diaspora in the United States
Virtual training in transitional justice for the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners - Sessions 1, 2, and 3 (Promotion and Training/MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua. March 29, April 6, April 12.	15	Mothers and family members of political prisoners, legal counsel, voluntary advisors
Virtual training in transitional justice for the Unidad Nacional Azul y Blanco (UNAB)- Sessions 1, 2, and 3 (Promotion and Training/MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua. April 10.	18	Representatives of the Justice Commission, Security Commission, and attorneys
Virtual training on the Petitions and Cases System of the IACHR for Asociación Madres de Abril (AMA)- Session 1 (Promotion and Training/MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua/Mexico. April 29.	7	Mothers and families members of victims who have died as a result of the crisis
In-person training on transitional justice and precautionary measures for the Asociación Madres de Abril (AMA)- Sessions 2 and 3 (MESENI)	San José, Costa Rica, May 20 and 21	19	Mothers and families members of victims who have died as a result of the crisis
In-person training: Introduction to the Inter-American Human Rights System and its protection tools (MESENI)	Miami, Florida June 18	33	Nicaraguan diaspora in the United States and other countries in the region
In-person training: Introduction to the Inter-American Human Rights System and its documentation systematization tools (MESENI)	Washington, D.C. October 17.	23	Nicaraguan students and young leaders
In-person training: Introduction to the Inter-American Human Rights System and Transitional Justice (MESENI)	Zaragoza, El Salvador. October 22 to 25	48	Human rights defenders in Matagalpa and Managua
Virtual training on Transitional Justice and Inter-American Standards for the Political Prisoners' Union (UPPN) - Sessions 1, 2, and 3 (MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua. October 31, November 1, and November 8	38	Political Prisoners' Union (UPPN), group of persons released from prison
Virtual training on transitional justice (Coordination of Social Movements) - Sessions 1 and 2 (MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua. November 8, December 16	31	Civil society organizations, mainly human rights defenders and victims



Virtual training on Transitional Justice ad Inter-American Standards (Acción Universitaria) - Session 1 (MESENI)	Washington, D.C./Managua, Nicaragua. November 13	5	University students and representatives of student movements
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Monitoring of compliance with precautionary measures granted

- In 2019, the MESENI continued to monitor the precautionary measures granted to individuals in connection with the crisis. It also received update information on cases of persons at severe risk. In connection with that work, in 2019, the IACHR presented two requests for provisional measures to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: on [May 15](#), on behalf of 17 persons deprived of liberty and at extreme risk, and on [June 27](#), on behalf of human rights defenders of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH), who are at extreme risk of suffering irreparable harm in Nicaragua.

The IACHR's database of victims of State oppression

- The Commission's databases on victims of State oppression are constantly updated by the MESENI via a collaborative work plan with human rights organizations, ombudspersons, and legal representatives of persons detained or on trial in Nicaragua. In first half 2019, those databases were used by civil society and by the OAS General Secretariat in connection with conversations at the Negotiation Table.

Keeping the International Community Informed

- The Inter-American Commission's response to the human rights situation in Nicaragua has been vital for keeping the international community abreast of the very serious situation in the country. In 2019, based on information culled by the MESENI, the IACHR reported to the OAS Permanent Council on **four occasions** regarding the human rights situation in Nicaragua and held **three meetings** with the OAS Working Group on Nicaragua.
- In 2019, the IACHR held **two events entitled "Panel discussion on the human rights situation in Nicaragua"**, one on March 22 in Washington, D.C. and the other on June 17, in Miami, Florida. Participating in those events were representatives of civil society, international organizations, representatives of the member states of the OAS, journalists, social leaders, and exiled Nicaraguans, among others.
- In connection with sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the IACHR also arranged activities highlighting the situation in Nicaragua for the international community. Specifically, during the 40th Session, on February 27, 2019, the IACHR spoke during the High-level Segment, delivering a presentation focusing primarily on the situation in Nicaragua; on March 7, it took part in the interactive debate of the Human Rights Council; and on March 19, 2019, the IACHR staged a side event on the human rights situation in Nicaragua.



- Later on, during the 42nd session, the IACHR took part in a side event on human rights violations in Nicaragua, on September 9, 2019, and it spoke again during the interactive dialogue on the presentation of the OHCHR Report on Nicaragua, on September 10, 2019.

➤ **Communication Strategy and strategic dissemination**

In 2019, the IACHR continued to pursue an active communications strategy with regard to the human rights situation in Nicaragua, inter alia via daily publications on the Commission's own social networks, reporting on the human rights situation. Steps taken include: the launching of the monthly bulletin on MESENI activities in April; awareness campaigns in social networks to commemorate the beginning of social protests in the country; three videos on the work of the MESENI and on the anniversary of the protests, which can be accessed via the IACHR TV Channel

Presentation of the Annual Report of the IACHR, which includes, in Chapter IV.B, a Special Report on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua. Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, President of the IACHR, presented the Commission's 2018 Annual Report to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the OAS. In her speech, she mentioned the special section on Nicaragua.

➤ **Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with the human rights recommendations of the IACHR**

The IACHR held talks with the State of Honduras regarding the establishment of a Special Technical Counseling Committee on compliance with the human rights recommendations of the IACHR. During the [visit to Tegucigalpa on May 22-24, 2019](#) to follow up on compliance with the recommendations made by the IACHR in the Preliminary Observations on the 2018 visit, the Rapporteur for Honduras, Commissioner Joel Hernández, held high-level talks with State authorities, including the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Human Rights Secretariat, on moving toward the establishment of MESAT.

The Special Technical Counseling Committee (MESAT) for compliance with the Commission's human rights recommendations was installed in November 2019 to provide technical advice to the State of Honduras on implementing the IACHR's recommendations, pursuant to Article 41.e of the American Convention on Human Rights and in accordance with the Commission's mandate and the powers vested in it. The idea behind the installation of this Committee is to: provide technical assistance on human rights-related matters previously agreed upon between the parties; to offer technical assistance to Honduras with implementing IACHR recommendations; to follow up on compliance with the recommendations made by the IACHR in its Preliminary Observations and country reports; and to provide technical assistance with legislative initiatives and public policies on human rights.

The MESAT will conduct working visits to Honduras by the Rapporteur for that country and technical staff of the IACHR Executive Secretariat. Its work will be coordinated with the Honduran institutions involved in the areas prioritized by the State within the MESAT framework, under the umbrella of the Human Rights Secretariat of Honduras. The MESAT will also engage in dialogue with Honduran civil society, as required



by the products and activities envisaged in the Work Plan. Those products and activities will be developed and carried on with the help of thematic specialists in the IACHR Executive Secretariat.

The first working visit took place in November 2019, when the IACHR presented its report on "The Human Rights Situation in Honduras." Other activities carried out in connection with the MESAT included the launching of the report on "Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents: Challenges and Best Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean"; a training workshop on "Inter-American Standards: Violence and Discrimination against Women, Girls, and Adolescents"; and a training workshop on "Monitoring of IACHR Recommendations and Sharing Best Practices on SIMOREH and the Inter-American SIMORE."

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

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

To strengthen its monitoring in Venezuela and to respond promptly to the new challenges posed by the very serious human rights crisis in that country, in October the Commission installed the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Venezuela ([MESEVE](#)).

The MESEVI will constantly monitor the human rights situation in the country and evaluate the political context and alleged violations with a view, as necessary, to prioritizing applications for precautionary measures, petitions received, admissibility reports, and reports on the merits. In addition, the MESEVE will follow up on the precautionary measures granted and the recommendations it makes to the State, and will encourage and support activities designed to strengthen Venezuelan civil society. The MESEVE will, further, work with other OAS and United Nations mechanisms to document the systematic violations of human rights in Venezuela.

It is important to point out that the IACHR has made a major effort to keep track of the human rights crisis in Venezuela. In 2019, the Commission issued 30 press releases on that country. Moreover, during IACHR periods of sessions in 2019, there were 13 thematic hearings on the human rights situation in Venezuela and the situation of Venezuelan migrants in the region. Likewise, the Commission began processing 90 petitions; sent 4 contentious cases to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; granted 21 precautionary measures; and extended one precautionary measure granted in 2018.



Conclusions

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

Under SO1 it was confirmed that the structural measures implemented in 2017 and 2018 are having a sustained impact. The significantly stepped-up pace of analysis and evaluation of petitions resulted from implementation of the measures proposed and contributed greatly to the reduction of the procedural backlog. The figures for evaluations and reports surpass the achievements of previous years. At the initial review stage, 6,750 petitions were evaluated. Over 200 reports were produced (including admissibility, 129; inadmissibility, 23; reports on the merits, 62), demonstrating the enhanced capacity and speed of the system. The number of requests for precautionary measures in the region stayed at the levels reached in 2017. The fact that the Commission is up-to-date in terms of reviewing requests for precautionary measures is a major achievement and ensures that the IACHR can guarantee a timely response in the context of that mechanism for addressing urgent cases. The significant progress made with the signing of friendly settlement agreements confirms the importance of that mechanism for protecting human rights. All these achievements translate into better and more expeditious assistance to victims, better access to the IAHRs, and -- for victims - more hope that justice will be served.

Under SO2, especially noteworthy are the lasting results of the methodological integration of monitoring work in geographic and thematic terms, which has led to an enrichment of standards and reporting output. The IACHR has advanced human rights internationally by establishing inter-American standards in new areas. In particular, the Commission continues to identify the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights as essential for establishing and consolidating a democratic State governed by the rule of law. Also notable is the strengthening of the thematic rapporteurships. Finally, the use of the Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Units (SACROIs) as immediate and appropriate mechanisms for responding to human rights violations made it possible to promptly address crises, especially with the visit to Ecuador, Chile, and Bolivia. With these achievements, the IACHR is demonstrating that it has enhanced its capacity to act in strategic areas and, with that, its ability to have a greater impact on preventive measures to address the underlying factors triggering rights violations.

With respect to SO3, it is worth drawing attention to the continued activities targeting Central America and the Caribbean that advanced training and technical cooperation efforts as well as closer relations with relevant actors in the area of human rights. Another important achievement is the progress made with respect to training in and dissemination of inter-American standards, as well as the continuity of consultation activities and dialogue with civil society. At the same time, this report has underscored the increased support lent to States in the form of technical cooperation via the political organs of the OAS. Through training and technical assistance to States, the IACHR promotes democracy, respect for human dignity, justice, and fundamental freedoms, and it builds the capacity of States to take steps to reinforce public institutions for protecting and guaranteeing human rights.



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

In SO5, the important structural strides made in previous years continued. Thanks to the implementation of the second stage of the staggered increase in the Regular Fund budget, the IACHR has set in motion employment competitions aimed at covering core functions and has been able to broaden the range of its core staff and operating expenses. With its new, more-integrated and horizontal administrative structure, the IACHR has managed to grow the outputs of all its teams and their response capacity.

The financial stability plan continues to produce the positive results it has posted ever since it was implemented, while increasing the number and diversity of its donors. Finally, the practice holding roaming sessions in the region continues, fostering a closer rapport between the Commission and multiple actors in the Hemisphere and more democratic access to the inter-American human rights system.

With Special Program 21, the IACHR made major progress in 2019, in terms of developing and perfecting methodologies for follow-up of its recommendations, devising tools for that purpose, and drawing up reports on compliance with recommendations, containing appraisals of progress made based on revised criteria for quantitative assessment of the level of compliance. The increased capacity acquired in this area is reflected in the increased number of actions taken to keep track of recommendations, with a view to forging road maps for complying with recommendations based on consensus. Thanks to the follow-up process, the IACHR has registered progress in the levels of States' compliance with recommendations in the published reports on cases.

It is fair to conclude that, in 2019, the IACHR obtained positive results from the structural measures implemented in the two previous years, expanding its response capacity and relevance for addressing the major human rights challenges in the region. In 2019, all Strategic Plan programs achieved substantially broader and better results, generating an IACHR that makes more effective use of the tools at its disposal and strikes a better balance between its three core mandates: the petitions and cases system; the monitoring of the human rights situation, and technical cooperation on behalf of the users of the inter-American human rights system.