

The Portrait of Elena Caffarena Joins the Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas at the OAS

- *Caffarena is the twelfth woman to be recognized in this hemispheric space, which highlights transformative trajectories in the history of the Americas.*
- *The portrait, created by Chilean artist Luna Morgana, is part of the "Women Painting Women" series, an initiative that highlights the legacy of women in diplomacy, culture, and public life.*

Washington, D.C., November 21, 2025. The portrait of Elena Caffarena, lawyer, feminist and historic defender of women's civil and political rights in Chile, was unveiled in the Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas of the Organization of American States (OAS). With their incorporation, the Gallery now honors 12 women whose trajectories have left a decisive mark on the history of the hemisphere.

The event was attended by the Ambassador of Chile to the OAS and Chair of the Permanent Council, Tomás Pascual; the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Laura Gil; the principal specialist of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), Hilary Anderson; as well as representatives of the Member States, Ambassadors, Ambassadors and authorities of the Art Museum of the Americas.

The painting, created by artist Luna Morgana as part of the series *"Women Painting Women,"* pays tribute to one of the most influential figures of the 20th century in Chile. Caffarena was a pioneer of Chilean and Latin American feminism, a tireless advocate for women's civil and political rights, and a jurist whose legacy continues to inspire generations.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Tomás Pascual stated that "it is a profound honor for Chile to participate in this tribute to one of our most relevant figures." He recalled that Caffarena blazed trails in a country and at a time when women faced profound restrictions. He stressed that her presence in the Gallery reflects Chile's commitment to gender equality, human rights, and democracy, and dialogues with the country's feminist foreign policy. She added that this recognition "is not only a symbolic gesture, but a reminder that advances in rights require constant protection in every institutional and multilateral space."

The OAS Assistant Secretary General, Laura Gil, highlighted the indispensable nature of her legacy: "We celebrate Elena and applaud the decision recognizing her as a heroine of democracy and the country. She was uncomfortable for her time, and that is why she is indispensable for ours". She also added that Chile's recognition "transcends the borders, because it tells the region that democracy is strengthened when it recognizes those who defend it with courage".

CIM Senior Specialist Hilary Anderson highlighted the parallels between Caffarena's life and the Commission's historic mandate. She noted that Elena dedicated her career to the political and economic emancipation of women; she promoted suffrage and economic autonomy; and she defended physical autonomy at decisive moments for Chile. She added that it also created feminist spaces for meeting and reflection, even in adverse contexts. Anderson stressed that the CIM continues this legacy by promoting parity, strengthening legal frameworks, and consolidating spaces for dialogue to defend women's rights in all spheres.

The Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas was named in March 2024 by decision of the OAS Permanent Council, with the objective of highlighting the fundamental role of women in hemispheric history. With the incorporation of Elena Caffarena, the commitment to recognizing the leadership of women who have transformed the democratic, legal, and social life of the Americas is reinforced.

The Gallery currently includes portraits of Eva Perón (Argentina); Juana Azurduy de Padilla (Bolivia); Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes (Brazil); Angela Acuña Braun (Costa Rica); Matilde Hidalgo de Procel (Ecuador); Dalia Xóchitl Sandoval López (El Salvador); Dolores Bedoya (Guatemala); Elvia Carrillo Puerto (Mexico); Clara González (Panama); Doris Stevens (United States); María Elena Moyano (Peru); and now, Elena Caffarena (Chile).

***INFORMATION FOR JOURNALISTS**

About the CIM/OAS

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) is the principal hemispheric forum dedicated to the promotion and protection of women's human rights and gender equality. Founded in 1928, the CIM has been a pioneer in identifying the barriers faced by women in the social, economic, and political spheres and in formulating policies and programs to overcome those barriers. CIM works in collaboration with OAS Member States, civil society organizations, and other key actors to advance the gender equality agenda in the Americas.

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