



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts of the MESECVI expresses concern over the imminent risk of discontinuity of the Ministry of Women in Panama

Washington, DC, July 24, 2025. [The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Belém do Pará Convention" \(MESECVI\)](#) expresses its concern over the announcement issued by the highest authorities of the Panamanian State regarding the imminent risk of the discontinuation of the Ministry of Women. This decision would entail a reduction in its institutional autonomy and authority, as it would be downgraded to the rank of a Secretariat within the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES).¹

If carried out, this action would constitute a violation of the progressive nature of human rights and the principle of non-regression that governs them, in contradiction with the international obligations and commitments assumed by the State. It would also severely undermine its capacity to guarantee all women the full exercise of these rights.

This situation arises in parallel to serious reports of alleged acts of violence against a group of women in the context of recent social protests in the country, particularly in the province of Bocas del Toro. In relation to these cases, the Committee of Experts (CEVI) will request information from the State in order to obtain further background information that will enable it to monitor compliance with obligations regarding the protection of women's human rights.

In this context, and in line with the Belém do Pará Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action, which mark respectively 31 and 30 years since their adoption this year, the Committee reiterates the importance of having a strengthened institutional framework capable of addressing, in a cross-cutting manner, the defense of women's rights and interests in Panama. In particular, it emphasizes the urgency of strengthening State capacities to prevent, respond to, investigate and punish violence against women.

To this end, it is essential to consolidate a robust gender institutional framework with ministerial rank, technical and decision-making autonomy, and sufficient resources. In this regard, the CEVI notes in its Fourth Hemispheric Report on the implementation of the Belém

¹ See: <https://www.laestrella.com.pa/panama/nacional/organizaciones-feministas-piden-conservar-el-ministerio-de-la-mujer-PG14305578>

do Pará Convention that Panama is among the States whose budgetary allocation to the National Mechanism for the Advancement of Women represents a minimal share of national public expenditure—only 0.011% of GDP—according to official data from the State during the Fourth Evaluation Round (2018–2022)².

Therefore, the Committee of Experts urges the Panamanian authorities to ensure the continuity of the Ministry of Women, in accordance with Law 375 that established its creation, preserving its institutional hierarchy and operational capacity to fulfill its mandate to protect women's human rights.

In light of the above, the Committee of Experts calls on the State authorities not to reverse the progress made in institutional strengthening for women and in public policies to protect their rights, maintaining the hierarchical status of the Ministry of Women and providing it with the necessary budget to fulfill all its obligations.

The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the State of Panama for any technical support they may require in this matter.

The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI, responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It is made up of independent Experts, appointed by each of the States Parties from among their nationals, who perform their duties in a personal capacity.

² MESECVI. Fourth Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention (Latin America chapter). Access to Justice, Truth, and Reparation: Structural Challenges and Institutional Progress (para 639). See <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fourth-Hemispheric-Report-LA-Chapter.pdf>