

Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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Inter-American Court of Human Rights elects new Board for 2020-2021

Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica) will be the next President and Judge Patricio Pazmiño Freire (Ecuador) Vice-President

San José, Costa Rica, November 22, 2019.- During the 132 Period of Sessions, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights elected Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica) as the new President. Simultaneously, Judge Patricio Pazmiño Freire (Ecuador) was elected as the new Vice President. The President and Vice President-elect's mandate goes from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021.

The current President of the Inter-American Court, Judge Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor Poisot, stated that "for the second time in its history, the Inter-American Court is chaired by a woman. Judge Odio Benito is a leading reference in the defense and promotion of human rights worldwide."

Judge Ferrer Mac-Gregor recognized the enormous trajectory of Judge Odio and her leadership, and stressed that her election represents an important message from the Inter-American Court about the call for a larger representation of women in international courts. Likewise, he recognized the trajectory of Judge Patricio Pazmiño Freire in the field of human rights.

He also pointed out that the election of the new board takes place on the American Convention on Human Rights' 50-years anniversary, which is "an important moment for reflection, considering the delicate political and social situation of our region."

"Therefore, today, more than ever, we must strengthen the commitment to the work of the Inter-American Court within the framework of the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights," said the President.

In turn, he showed appreciation to the confidence given by his colleagues to his 2-year mandate. He highlighted "the great work and constant support of his fellow Judges and the Registry, which undoubtedly denotes a great commitment to human rights."

For her part, the President-elect Judge Odio Benito thanked her election, and reaffirmed her commitment to the great work that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights does for justice in the continent. "The region faces great challenges that require a perspective that integrates an unrestricted respect to human rights as the key to solve the problems that affect us."



Elizabeth Odio Benito is Judge of the Inter-American Court since 2016. Judge Odio Benito has an outstanding career of over fifty years in the defense of human rights and working for justice at the international level.

She was Judge of the International Criminal Court (2003-2012) and the ad hoc International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia (1993-1998). In Costa Rica, she served as Vice President of the Nation, Minister of Justice, Attorney General, Minister of Environment and Energy. Ambassador Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Chief Ambassador of Delegation to the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, based in Vienna (1993). She has been a member of the Costa Rican national group of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, Chairman of the Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights responsible for drafting the Optional Protocol Against Torture (2000-2002). She has received several awards, including the Honoris Causa Saint Andrews Doctorate, San Antonio, Texas (USA); Honorary Doctorate and designation "Elizabeth Odio Benito Chair of the National University of Costa Rica; Rodrigo Facio distinction from the University of Costa Rica; Honorary Doctorate Faculty of Law, University of Buenos Aires (Argentina); Hector Fix Zamudio International Prize, and the nomination of "1000 Women of Peace for the Nobel Peace Prize." As a teacher, she was appointed professor emeritus at the University of Costa Rica, where she also served as the academic vice-president. She has several publications, mainly in the field of human rights. She holds Law Degree from University of Costa Rica and is a Public Notary. She was born in Costa Rica on September 15, 1939.



Leoncio Patricio Pazmiño Freire is Judge of the Inter-American Court since 2016. He was President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Ecuador (2008-2015) and was the chair from 2007 to 2008. He was National Director of Legal Consulting (2007) in the Attorney General's Office. He worked as a professor of economic, social and cultural rights at the Master of Law, of the Andean University Simón Bolívar, Ecuador and at the headquarters of La Paz Bolivia and the State University of Guayaquil. Author of several texts and publications, among which are: "Approach to the New Constitutionalism. Debate on its foundations (Quito: 2011)" and "Deciphering paths of social activism to Constitutional Law (FLACSO, 2010)". He holds a Phd in Constitutional Law from the

University of Valencia (sum cum laude), Spain; a Master's Degree in Social Sciences from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Ecuador (FLACSO), a Degree in Social and Political Sciences and a Law Degree from the Central University of Ecuador. He received the Bicentennial Medal awarded by the Senate of the Republic of Chile, and a recognition from the Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic, among others. Guest professor at Universities in Central, South America, and Europe. He was born in Quito, Ecuador, in 1957.

This press release was produced by the Secretariat of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which has the sole responsibility to do so.

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