

# Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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## I/A Court H.R. Protecting Rights

### OPENING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN JUDICIAL YEAR 2022



The composition of the Court, by seniority: Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique, President (Uruguay), Judge Humberto Antonio Sierra Porto, Vice President (Colombia), Judge Eduardo Ferrer Mac Gregor Poisot (Mexico), Judge Nancy Hernández López (Costa Rica), Judge Verónica Gómez (Argentina); Judge Patricia Pérez Goldberg (Chile) and Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch (Brazil).

*San José, Costa Rica, February 7, 2022.* Today, the Opening Ceremony of the Inter-American Judicial Year 2022 was held, with the symbolic introduction of the new President and Vice President of the Inter-American Court: President Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique (national of Uruguay) and the Vice President Judge Humberto Antonio Sierra Porto (national of Colombia).



Former President Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito delivered the presidential gavel of the Inter-American Court to President Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique.

Also, the new Judges of the Inter-American Court were sworn in for the period 2022-2027: Judge Nancy Hernández López of Costa Rican nationality; Judge Verónica Gómez of Argentine nationality; Judge Patricia Pérez Goldberg of Chilean nationality; and Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch of Brazilian nationality.

The ceremony was attended by the former President of the Inter-American Court, Elizabeth Odio Benito, the former Vice President, Patricio Pazmiño Freire, and former Judge Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni. The former President thanked her fellow Judges for the work done during the 2020-2021 working period during the pandemic, which "enabled the Court to do its work despite the circumstances," she said.

The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Rodolfo Solano Quirós, highlighted the great work carried out by the Inter-American Court in the defense and protection of human rights in the Hemisphere and called on States to continue the process of strengthening the Court.

The President of the Court, Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique, thanked the Judges for the trust placed in him in having elected him President for 2022 and 2023. "I assume this great responsibility with total humility and with the commitment to give my best to guide this institution, which shelters all the hopes and fears of the people of our America," he said.



"Together with my esteemed colleague Humberto Antonio Sierra Porto, who will accompany me as Vice President, we want to make the Inter-American Court an open Court that is close to the people and its various stakeholders, with ears and eyes open to understanding and interpreting the complex situation of the region. We want to listen to those without the opportunity to be heard, to people in vulnerable situations, of which there are millions in the region," the President said.

"This mission is entrusted to us by those who elect us, the States, but more than 600 million people depend on us to act in accordance with the Convention, fairly and swiftly. We are committed to continue fulfilling this important function, as the Court has done for more than 40 years," the President said.

Regarding the important work in terms of gender parity in the composition of the Inter-American Court, the President recalled that "the administration of justice, both nationally and internationally, must be built on the basis of an adequate balance between men and women. Parity is recognizing that women have the right to be fully represented in decision-making spaces", he said.

The President mentioned the challenges to democracy in the region, noting that "we are at a turning point. We must take charge of our destiny and, instead of looking with apathy at the events that are taking place, we must create and promote a new feeling of solidarity and union, prioritizing the three "Ds:" More *democracia* (democracy), more *derechos humanos* (human rights) and more *desarrollo sostenible* (sustainable development). That is the only way to ensure the rule of law prevails, to protect human rights, to avoid weakening multilateralism, and ultimately to give life and force to our democracies," the Judge said.

In this regard, the President issued a call to "respect and strengthen institutions. Do not remain indifferent to the erosion of democracy. We must recognize the right moment to raise our voices," he said.

Regarding the interrelationship between human rights and sustainable development, the President stressed that "as an Inter-American Court, we are not detached from the 2030 Agenda, nor should domestic judges be. The crises resulting from climate change, the migration crisis, citizen insecurity, and violence against women, among other major problems, need to be addressed from a perspective that integrates the Sustainable Development goals."

Addressing the situation of millions of migrants in multiple countries of the continent, the President recalled that "migrants continue to face widespread stigmatization, inequality, xenophobia, and racism. Migrant women and girls face a higher risk of gender-based violence and have fewer options to seek support. Our America must address the issue of migration urgently, in solidarity, multilaterally, and pursuant to international human rights law."

Regarding the institutional strengthening of the Court, the President pointed out the need to reduce the system's operating times and open it up so people can have direct access to the Court. "I call on the States to take firm steps in this direction and, thus, strengthen access to justice in our region," he said.

Read the full speech of President Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique [here](#).

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