

Press release 39/2025

THE INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS HELD A REGULAR SESSION IN GUATEMALA

San José, Costa Rica, May 30, 2025. From May 19 to 23, 2025, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held the first week of work corresponding to its 176th regular session in Guatemala City. This was possible thanks to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, with the support of the Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights (COPADEH), as the local organizing body.

The Court is also grateful to the Universidad Rafael Landívar for its collaboration in the organization and for providing its facilities for the jurisdictional, academic and institutional activities.

In addition, the Court appreciates the cooperation provided by Sweden (SIDA), Spain (AECID) and Germany (BMZ/GIZ), whose financial support was essential in order to hold this session in Guatemala.



I. Inaugural ceremony for the 176th regular session

The inaugural ceremony took place on Monday, May 19, in the Peace Hall of the Palacio Nacional de la Cultura. The event was presided by Judge Nancy Hernández López, President of the IACtHR; the President of the Republic of Guatemala, His Excellency Bernardo Arévalo de León; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Carlos Ramiro Martínez Alvarado, and the Deputy Executive Director responsible for the Office of the Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights (COPADEH), Arely Marisol Zea. During the ceremony, emphasis was placed on the central role played by the inter-American system in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. The inaugural ceremony

was attended by the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, senior Government officials and authorities, and members of civil society, academia, and the media. The video of the event can be seen [here](#).

II. Public hearings on contentious cases¹

The Court held three public hearings on the following contentious cases:

a. *Case of the Salango Community v. Ecuador*

When lodging this case before the Court, the Commission indicated that it concerned the alleged international responsibility of the Ecuadorian State for the failure to protect the ancestral property of the Salango Community in the context of the sale of land by the Community to a foreign businessman. The transmission of the hearing can be found [here](#).



b. *Case of the Cayos Cochinos Garifuna Community and its members v. Honduras*

When lodging this case before the Court, the Commission indicated that this case concerned the alleged responsibility of the State of Honduras for the alleged failure to recognize the collective right to ancestral lands of the Cayos Cochinos Garifuna Community, the alleged harm to the use and enjoyment of the collective property and resources, and the presumed harm caused by State concessions and the restrictions imposed on the traditional way of life. The transmission of the hearing can be found [here](#)



c. Case of Ramos Durand et al. v. Peru²

When lodging this case before the Court, the Commission indicated that it concerned the death of Celia Edith Ramos Durand in 1997 after she had allegedly been subjected to a non-consensual sterilization in Peru in 1997 in a place that did not have the necessary resources to perform this procedure safely. It alleged that the facts had not been properly investigated within a reasonable time. According to the Commission, the facts occurred in the context of implementation of the National Reproductive Health and Family Planning Program which discriminated against women's sexual and reproductive rights, and was addressed at women of reproductive age, with emphasis on those living in poverty or from indigenous communities. The transmission of the hearing can be found [here](#).



III. Private hearings on monitoring compliance with judgments

On May 19 and 23, private hearings were held on monitoring compliance with judgments in five cases against Guatemala. This was possible owing to the State's agreement and its collaboration in order to conduct these hearings on monitoring compliance with judgments in its territory.

- a. Case of *Rodríguez Revolorio et al. v. Guatemala*.** The photographs of the hearing can be found [here](#)

The 2019 judgment declared the international responsibility of the State for: (i) the imposition of the death penalty on Aníbal Archila Pérez based on the "dangerousness of the agent"; (ii) the violation of the right to personal integrity of Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Revolorio, Miguel Ángel López Calo and Aníbal Archila Pérez owing to the prison conditions under which they were confined and their subjection to the "death row" phenomenon in the "El Infiernito" Prison, and (iii) the violation of the right to appeal the ruling before a higher judge or court.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive information on compliance with the guarantee of non-repetition relating to the adoption of the necessary measures to ensure that conditions in the "El Infiernito" Prison were in keeping with international human rights norms.

- b. Case of *Chinchilla Sandoval et al. v. Guatemala*.** The photographs of the hearing can be found [here](#)

The 2016 judgment declared the international responsibility of the State for failing to comply with the obligation to guarantee the rights to personal integrity, life, judicial guarantees and judicial protection of María Inés Chinchilla Sandoval, who suffered from various illnesses and a physical disability. While she was deprived of liberty serving a criminal sentence in the Female Orientation Center, she suffered a fall from her wheelchair and died. The Court found that Ms. Chinchilla had been held in detention conditions that were incompatible with the right to respect for physical and mental integrity of any person with a disability, and that the State had failed to diligently guarantee emergency medical care for the victim on the day of her death, taking into account her vulnerable situation owing to the illnesses from which she suffered and her sensory disability.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive information on compliance with two guarantees of non-repetition relating to: (i) training judicial and prison authorities, medical and health personnel, and other competent authorities working with those deprived of liberty, and (ii) organizing workshops to provide information and guidance on the human rights of those deprived of liberty in the Female Orientation Center.

- c. Case of *Former Employees of the Judiciary v. Guatemala*.** The photographs of the hearing can be found [here](#)

The 2021 judgment declared the international responsibility of the State for the violation of various rights of 65 former employees of the Guatemalan Judiciary who were dismissed for taking part in a strike that was declared illegal, in violation of the rights to strike and to freedom of association, and trade unions rights.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive information on compliance with two reparations relating to: (i) adaptation of the legislation concerning appeals, and the procedure and judicial competence for contesting the declaration of the illegality of a strike, and (ii) payment of the compensation for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage to each of the victims or their heirs.

d. *Case of Cuscul Pivaral et al. v. Guatemala.* The photographs of the hearing can be found [here](#)

The 2018 judgment declared the international responsibility of the State for the violation of diverse rights of 49 people living, or who lived, with HIV, and their families. Among other matters, the Court found that different omissions by the State in the medical treatment of the victims constituted non-compliance with the duty to guarantee the right to health, and that the impact of those omissions resulted in a violation of the rights to life and to personal integrity of some of them.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive information on compliance with nine measures of reparation, including those concerning medical and psychological or psychiatric treatment for the victims and their family members. Also, on several guarantees of non-repetition, including guarantees relating to implementing effective mechanisms for the periodic oversight and monitoring of public hospitals to ensure that they provide comprehensive health care to those living with HIV; designing a mechanism to guarantee the accessibility, availability and quality of antiretroviral drugs, diagnostic tests and health services for people living with HIV, and ensuring that pregnant women have access to HIV testing, that those living with HIV are monitored regularly, and that adequate treatment is provided to avoid the vertical transmission of the virus during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

e. *Case of the Maya Kaqchikel Indigenous Peoples of Sumpango et al. v. Guatemala.* The photographs of the hearing can be found [here](#)

The 2021 judgment declared the international responsibility of the State for the violation of the rights to freedom of expression, equality before the law, and to participate in cultural life, in relation to the obligations to respect and to ensure the rights without discrimination, and the duty to adopt domestic legal provisions of the following indigenous peoples: the Maya Kaqchikel of Sumpango, the Achi of San Miguel Chicaj, the Mam of Cajolá, and the Mam of Todos Santos Cuchumatán. These violations resulted from the regulatory framework for broadcasting in Guatemala; in particular, the General Telecommunications Act.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive information on compliance with four reparations relating to: (i) adopt measures to ensure that the indigenous communities, who are the victims in this case, may freely operate their community radio stations; (ii) adapt domestic law to recognize community radio stations as differentiated communication mediums; (iii) refrain from criminally prosecuting the individuals who are operating these radio stations, and also from raiding the latter and seizing the equipment, until legal mechanisms are ensured for the indigenous communities to access the radio spectrum and the corresponding frequencies are assigned, and (iv) overturn the convictions of members of the indigenous communities sentenced for the use of the radio spectrum, and eliminate the consequences.

IV. Other activities

A. International Seminar

On Monday, May 19, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, together with the Universidad Rafael Landívar, organized the international seminar “Case law of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and its impact” on the central campus of this university. The activity included two academic panel sessions with the participation of judges of the Court and officials from its Secretariat, public officials, and academics from the Universidad Rafael Landívar. Further information on the program and content of the seminar can be found [here](#).

Prior to the start of the seminar, a prize was awarded for one category of the photographic competition “Focusing on rights: a photographic journey with the IACtHR,” within the framework of the Court’s 45th anniversary. The winning photograph, “29th anniversary of the Pak’oxom massacre,” presented by Lawyers Without Borders Canada in Guatemala and submitted by its author, James Rodríguez, paid homage to the victims and to those who are still fighting for justice.

The transmission of the seminar and the award of the photographic prize is available [here](#)



B. Dialogue on leadership and experiences in international law

On Tuesday, May 21, officials from the Legal Area of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Court took part in a dialogue on leadership and experiences in international law organized by the Universidad Rafael Landívar and its Association of Law Students, for those studying this discipline. The activity was held at the university, and graduates of this institution who have worked at the Court or completed internships also participated in the event.



C. Roundtable with States on “National mechanisms for the implementation of judgments of the IACtHR”

On Friday, May 23, a second roundtable was held on the topic of national mechanisms, instances or institutional structures for the implementation of the Court’s judgments. The first roundtable had taken place on May 6 in Santiago de Chile.

The roundtable was a private, non-jurisdictional activity organized jointly by the IACtHR and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in order to provide a space for constructive dialogue and exchange among agents representing different States at the stage of monitoring compliance with judgments.

Those participating in this activity included Judge Verónica Gómez, the Deputy Registrar, Gabriela Pacheco Arias, the Director of Monitoring Compliance with Judgments, Ana Lucía Aguirre, and the lawyer, Ana Belém García. In addition, representatives of the States of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru took part in the activity.

The roundtable addressed two main topics:

- i. Existing national mechanisms or, at least, instances or institutional structures for the implementation of judgments of the IACtHR, and
- ii. Norms, best practices, advances and challenges in relation to compliance with measures of a pecuniary nature.



V. Official activities and meetings

A. Meeting with the President of the Republic of Guatemala

On Monday May 19, prior to the inaugural ceremony, the IACtHR had an official meeting at the National Palace with the President of the Republic of Guatemala, His Excellency Bernardo Arévalo de León, during which a discussion took place on human rights, international justice and the commitment to comply with the international obligations assumed by the State of Guatemala. Other participants in the meeting included: the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Carlos Ramiro Martínez Alvarado; the Attorney General, Julio Roberto Saavedra Pinetta, and the General Secretary of the Presidency, Juan Gerardo Guerrero Garnica.



C. Institutional meeting with the authorities of the Universidad Rafael Landívar

On Monday May 19, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights took part in an institutional meeting with authorities of the Universidad Rafael Landívar. Participants included Dr. Larry Andradre-Abularach, General Secretary, and Dr. Rolando Escobar Menaldo, Dean of the Faculty of Juridical and Social Sciences. In addition, the Deputy Executive Director responsible for the Office of the Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights (COPADEH), Arely Marisol Zea, took part in the activity. The purpose of the meeting was to express the

Court's appreciation for the University's support and provision of facilities for the activities of the session, and also to strengthen the academic and institutional ties between the University and the Court in favor of the promotion of human rights in the region.



D. Meeting with authorities of the Constitutional Court of Guatemala

On May 23, the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judge Nancy Hernández López, and the Registrar of the Court, Pablo Saavedra Alessandri, attended an official meeting in the Constitutional Court of Guatemala, where they were received by its President, Leyla Susana Lemus Arriaga, and Justice Roberto Molina Barreto. The meeting took place in the Ambassadors' Hall of the Constitutional Court.



E. Institutional meeting with the Guatemalan Judiciary

On Friday, May 23, the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judge Nancy Hernández López, and the Registrar of the Court, Pablo Saavedra Alessandri, made an official visit to the Guatemalan Judiciary. Those participating in the meeting included: Justice Carlos Rodimiro Lucero Paz, senior member of the Supreme Court of Justice by appointment of the President; Justice Estuardo Adolfo Cárdenas, and the Deputy Secretary of the President of the Judiciary and of the Supreme Court of Justice, José Vicente Mérida Vásquez.



1 For reasons beyond their control, Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch, Vice President (Brazil), and Judge Patricia Pérez Goldberg (Chile) were unable to attend the session in Guatemala. Judge Pérez Goldberg took part in the hearings virtually.

2 Judge Alberto Borea Odría, a Peruvian national, did not take part in the public hearing for this case pursuant to Article 19 of the Court's Rules of Procedure.

The composition of the Court for this week of the session held in Guatemala was as follows: Nancy Hernández López, President (Costa Rica), Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique (Uruguay), Verónica Gómez (Argentina), Alberto Borea Odría (Peru) and Diego Moreno Rodríguez (Paraguay).

The Court appreciates the cooperation provided by Sweden (SIDA), Spain (AECID) and Germany (BMZ/GIZ), whose financial support was essential in order to hold this session in Guatemala.

Organizadores:



Corte IDH
PROTEGIENDO DERECHOS



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