

INTRODUCTION

A. Origin, Legal Basis, Structure, Purposes, Mandates

1. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (“IACHR” or “Inter-American Commission”) is an autonomous organ of the Organization of American States (OAS), headquartered in Washington, D.C. Its mandate is established in the OAS Charter, the American Convention on Human Rights (“American Convention”) and the IACHR Statute. Along with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, headquartered in San Jose, Costa Rica, the Inter-American Commission is one of two organs of the Inter-American system responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. The IACHR is made up of seven members, who act independently of each other and do not sit in representation of any country. The Commission members are elected by the OAS General Assembly for a four-year period and are permitted one-time reelection. The Inter-American Commission convenes for regular and special sessions several times each year. Under Article 13 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure, the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission performs the tasks entrusted to it by the Commission and provides legal and administrative support to the Commission in order for it to fulfill its duties.

3. In April 1948, in Bogota, Colombia, the OAS approved the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man (“American Declaration”), which was the first international human rights instrument of a general nature. The IACHR was created in 1959 and held its first session in 1960.

4. In 1961, the IACHR began to conduct *in situ* visits to different countries in order to observe the human rights situation first hand on the ground. Since that time, it has conducted more than 107 visits to Member States of the Organization. Based partly on these fact-finding country visits, the Inter-American Commission has thus far published 121 country and thematic reports.

5. In 1965, the IACHR was expressly authorized to hear complaints or petitions pertaining to specific human rights violations. Final published reports on these individual cases can be found in the Annual Reports of the Inter-American Commission and can also be viewed on the IACHR Web page under the *Petitions and Cases* tab.

6. The American Convention on Human Rights was approved in 1969 and came into force in 1978. As of December 2015, twenty-three OAS Member States are parties to this treaty: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname and Uruguay. The IACHR has at times expressed deep concern about the consequences of the denunciation of the American Convention by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela¹ and Trinidad and Tobago.

7. The American Convention defines the human rights that the ratifying States have agreed to respect and ensure. This instrument creates the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as well as establishing the functions and procedures of the Inter-American Commission and Court. In addition to considering complaints of violations of the American Convention committed by States Parties to that instrument, the IACHR has the legal authority, under the OAS Charter and its own Statute, to examine alleged violations of the American Declaration by OAS Member States that are not yet parties to the American Convention.

8. In fulfillment of its mandate, the duties of the Inter-American Commission are to:

¹ IACHR, ‘[IACHR Regrets Decision of Venezuela to Denounce the American Convention on Human Rights](#)’ Washington, D.C., September 12, 2012; IACHR, ‘[IACHR Deeply Concerned over Result of Venezuela’s Denunciation of the American Convention](#)’ Washington D.C., September 10, 2013.

- a) Receive, examine and investigate individual petitions alleging human rights violations, in keeping with Articles 44 to 51 of the American Convention, Articles 19 and 20 of its Statute and Articles 23 to 52 of its Rules of Procedure.
- b) Observe the general human rights situation in the Member States and publish special reports on the situation in a particular Member State, when it is deemed necessary, as provided under Article 60 of its Rules of Procedure.
- c) Conduct *in situ* visits to countries in order to carry out a thorough analysis of the general situation and/or to investigate a specific situation, as provided for under Article 18 of its Statute and Article 53 of its Rules of Procedure. In general, these visits result in the preparation of a report on the human rights situation of the country concerned, which is published and submitted to the OAS Permanent Council and General Assembly.
- d) Raise public awareness about human rights in the Americas. For this purpose, the Inter-American Commission conducts and publishes studies on specific topics in keeping with Article 15 of its Rules of Procedure. Examples of such topics include: what measures must be adopted to ensure greater access to justice; the effects of internal armed conflicts on particular groups of persons; the human rights situation of children, women, LGBTI persons, migrant workers and their families, persons deprived of liberty, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples and persons of African descent; racial discrimination, freedom of expression and economic, social and cultural rights.
- e) Organize and host visits, conferences, seminars and meetings with representatives of governments, academic institutions, non-governmental entities and others, in order to disseminate information and foster broad awareness of the work of the Inter-American human rights system, in accordance with Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 18 of the IACHR Statute.
- f) Recommend that OAS Member States adopt measures that contribute to the protection of human rights in the countries of the hemisphere, in accordance with Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 18 of the IACHR Statute.
- g) Request Member States to adopt precautionary measures, as provided under Article 25 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, in order to prevent irreparable harm to persons in serious and urgent cases. Additionally, in keeping with Article 76 of its Rules of Procedure, the Inter-American Commission may request the Inter-American Court to order the adoption of provisional measures in cases of extreme gravity and urgency in order to prevent irreparable harm to persons.
- h) Bring cases before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and appear before the Court during the processing and consideration of the cases, in accordance with Article 61 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Articles 45 and 74 of the IACHR Rules of Procedure.
- i) Request advisory opinions from the Inter-American Court, in accordance with Article 64 of the American Convention and Article 19 of the IACHR Statute.

9. Every person, group of persons or non-governmental entity legally recognized in one or more OAS Member States may submit petitions to the Inter-American Commission regarding violations of a right recognized in the American Convention, the American Declaration or other relevant instruments, in

accordance with the respective provisions thereof and with the IACHR Statute and Rules of Procedure. Additionally, in the circumstances described and regulated under Article 45 of the American Convention, the IACHR may consider interstate communications. Petitions may be submitted in any of the four official OAS languages (Spanish, French, English or Portuguese), either by the alleged victim of the human rights violation or by a third party; and in the case of interstate communications, by a government.

B. Status of Ratification of Inter-American Instruments

CURRENT STATUS OF RATIFICATION OF THE AMERICAN CONVENTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE COURT

SIGNATORY COUNTRIES	SIGNING	RATIFICATION/ ACCESSION	DEPOSIT	ACCEPTANCE OF JURISDICTION OF THE COURT
Antigua and Barbuda				
Argentina	02-02-84	08-14-84	RA 09-05-84	09-05-84
Bahamas				
Barbados	06-20-78	11-05-81	RA 11-27-82	06-04-00
Belize				
Bolivia		06-20-79	AC 07-19-79	07-27-93
Brazil		07-09-92	AC 09-25-92	12-10-98
Canada				
Chile	11-22-69	08-10-90	RA 08-21-90	08-21-90
Colombia	11-22-69	05-28-73	RA 07-31-73	06-21-85
Costa Rica	11-22-69	03-02-70	RA 04-08-70	07-02-80
Dominica		06-03-93	RA 06-11-93	
Ecuador	11-22-69	12-08-77	RA 12-28-77	07-27-84
El Salvador	11-22-69	06-20-78	RA 06-23-78	06-06-95
United States	06-01-77			
Grenada	07-14-78	07-14-78	RA 07-18-78	
Guatemala	11-22-69	04-27-78	RA 05-25-78	03-09-87
Guyana				
Haiti		09-14-77	AC 09-27-77	03-20-98
Honduras	11-22-69	09-05-77	RA 09-08-77	09-09-81
Jamaica	09-16-77	07-19-78	RA 08-07-78	
Mexico		03-02-81	AC 03-24-81	12-16-98
Nicaragua	11-22-69	09-25-79	RA 09-25-79	02-12-91
Panama	11-22-69	05-08-78	RA 06-22-78	05-09-90
Paraguay	11-22-69	08-18-89	RA 08-24-89	03-26-93
Peru	07-27-77	07-12-78	RA 07-28-78	01-21-81
Dominican Republic	09-07-77	01-11-78	RA 04-19-78	03-25-99
San Kitts and Nevis				
Santa Lucia				
St. Vincent & Grenadines				
Surinam		11-12-87	AC 11-12-87	11-12-87
Trinidad & Tobago		04-03-91	AC 05-28-91*	05-28-91
Uruguay	11-22-69	03-26-85	RA 04-19-85	04-19-85
Venezuela	11-22-69	06-23-77	RA 08-09-77**	08-09-77

Source: Department of International Law of the OAS General Secretariat

* Denunciation submitted in May 1998 ** Denunciation submitted in September 2012
 RA = RATIFICATION AC = ACCESSION

10. With respect to the other eight instruments, which make up the Inter-American system, the table below shows ratification or accession by OAS Member States:

CURRENT STATUS OF RATIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION AND OTHER INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

States	APACAESCR ²	PACHRADP ³	IACPPT ⁴	IACFDP ⁵	IACPPEVW ⁶	IACEDPD ⁷	IACDI ⁸	IACRRDI ⁹
Antigua and Barbuda					A 12-08-98			S 07-06-13
Argentina	R 03-30-03	R 06-18-08	R 11-18-88	R 10-31-95	R 04-09-96	R 09-28-00	F 06-07-13	S 06-07-13
Bahamas					A 05-03-95			
Barbados					R 02-08-95			
Belize					A 11-25-96			
Bolivia	R 07-12-06		R 08-26-96	R 09-19-96	R 10-26-94	R 02-27-03	S 03-10-15	S 03-10-15
Brazil	A 08-08-96	R 07-31-96	R 06-09-89	R 07-26-13	R 11-16-95	R 07-17-01	F 06-07-13	F 06-07-13
Canada								
Chile		R 08-04-08	R 09-15-88	R 01-13-10	R 10-24-96	R 12-04-01	S 10-22-15	S 10-22-15
Colombia	A 10-22-97		R 12-02-98	R 04-01-10	A 10-03-96	R 12-04-03	S 09-08-13	S 09-08-14
Costa Rica	R 09-29-99	R 03-30-98	R 11-25-99	R 03-20-96	R 07-05-95	R 12-08-99		S 06-07-13
Cuba								
Dominica					R 06-30-95			
Ecuador	R 02-10-93	R 02-05-98	R 09-30-99	R 07-07-96	R 06-30-95	R 03-01-04	S 06-07-13	S 06-07-13
El Salvador	R 05-04-95		R 10-17-94		R 11-13-95	R 01-15-02		
United States								
Grenada					R 29-11-00			
Guatemala	R 05-30-00		R 12-10-86	R 07-27-99	R 01-04-95	R 08-08-02		
Guyana					R 08-01-96			
Haiti					A 07-04-97	R 29-05-09	S 25-06-14	S 25-06-14
Honduras	A 09-14-11	A 09-14-11		R 04-28-05	R 07-04-95	A 09-14-11		
Jamaica					R 11-11-05			
Mexico	R 03-08-96	R 06-28-07	R 02-11-87	R 02-28-92	R 06-19-98	R 12-06-00		
Nicaragua	R 12-15-09	R 03-24-99	A 09-23-09		R 10-06-95	R 07-15-02		

² Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in San Salvador, El Salvador, on November 17, 1988, 18th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

³ Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty, adopted in Asunción, Paraguay, on June 8, 1990, 20th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁴ Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture, adopted in Cartagena de Indias, Barranquilla, Colombia, on December 9, 1985, 15th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁵ Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons, adopted in Belém do Pará, Brazil, on June 9, 1994, 24th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁶ Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted in Belém do Pará, Brazil, on June 9, 1994, 24th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁷ Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disability, approved in Guatemala City, Guatemala, June 7, 1999, 29th Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁸ Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, adopted in Guatemala City, on June 5, 2013, 43rd Regular Session of the General Assembly.

⁹ Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance, adopted in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on June 5, 2013, 43rd Regular Session of the General Assembly.

Panama	R 10-28-92	R 06-27-91	R 06-27-91	R 07-31-95	R 04-26-95	R 01-24-01	S 06-05-14	S 06-05-14
States	PACAMDESC	PCADHAPM	CIPST	CIDFP	CIPSEVM	CIEFDPD	CICTFDI	CICDRFCI
Paraguay	R 05-28-97	R 10-31-00	R 02-12-90	R 08-26-96	R 09-29-95	R 06-28-02		
Peru	R 05-17-95		R 02-27-90	R 02-08-92	R 04-02-96	R 07-10-01		
Dominican Republic		A 12-19-11	R 12-12-86		R 01-10-96	R 12-28-06		
San Kitts and Nevis					R 03-17-95			
Santa Lucia					R 03-08-95			
San Vincent and the Grenadines					R 05-23-96			
Surinam	A 02-28-90		R 11-12-87		R 02-19-02			
Trinidad and Tobago					R 01-04-96			
Uruguay	R 11-21-95	R 02-08-94	R 09-23-92	R 02-06-96	R 01-04-96	R 05-24-01	S 07-06-13	S 06-07-13
Venezuela		R 04-06-94	R 06-25-91	R 07-06-98	R 01-16-95	R 06-06-06		

Source: Department of International Law of the OAS General Secretariat

R = RATIFICATION S = SIGNING

A = ACCESSION

C. Progress Achieved

11. This section highlights several measures taken by OAS Member States in 2015, which stand as evidence of the progress that has been made toward achieving the goals enshrined in the American Declaration, the American Convention and other regional human rights instruments.

Death Penalty

12. The IACHR is very pleased that the state of Nebraska, United States, has abolished the death penalty. On May 27, legislators from both parties overrode the governor's veto of a law designed to overturn the practice of the death penalty and, in so doing, effectively abolished it. This state has joined another 18 states and the District of Columbia in abolishing the death penalty, thus contributing to progress toward gradually eliminating the practice in the United States. Over the past decades, the IACHR has raised the issue of the death penalty as a crucial challenge in the field of human rights. The Commission has noted in this regard that the United States is currently the only country of the western hemisphere to carry out executions under the death penalty. The Commission hopes that other states of the United States follow this example and that our hemisphere will one day be a death penalty-free zone.

13. Surinam's decision on March 3, 2015 to abolish the death penalty is another positive news item. The Commission notes that the elimination of the death penalty from Surinam's Criminal Code poses an opportunity for the other countries of the Caribbean to take this important step toward ensuring human rights in the region. The Commission recalls the significant progress made in the Caribbean region on this topic, when most countries repealed mandatory application of the death penalty after conviction of a crime without any opportunity to introduce attenuating circumstances or for such circumstances to be taken into account. The Inter-American Commission emphasizes the need to move forward in amending legislation in these countries in order to abolish this punishment throughout the region or, otherwise, impose a moratorium on the application thereof. In this regard, the Commission also urges the States, which have not done so, to ratify the Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Rights of Older Persons

14. The IACHR is encouraged by the approval of the convention protecting the rights of older persons. The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons represents the first regional instrument for the promotion, protection and recognition of the rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons. The Member States of the Organization of American States approved said Convention during the General Assembly on June 15, 2015 and, thus far, it has been signed by the States of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay. As indicated in the preamble to this Convention, its purpose “is to promote, protect and ensure the recognition and full enjoyment and exercise, on an equal basis, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons, in order to contribute to their full inclusion, integration, and participation in society.” It also establishes that persons may submit petitions to the IACHR on alleged violations of the human rights of older persons recognized in this instrument. The States Party also agree to take measures to foster a positive attitude toward old age and dignified, respectful and considerate treatment of older persons, and, based on a culture of peace, encourage actions to disseminate and promote the rights and empowerment of older persons, and avoid stereotypical images and language in relation to old age. The IACHR urges all OAS Member States to sign and ratify this Convention, as part of the effort to make the Inter-American human rights system universal, so that all treaties and conventions protect the inhabitants of all countries of the Organization.

Rights of LGBTI Persons

15. On the topic of the rights of LGBTI persons, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights commends the State of Chile for approving a measure granting marital status to domestic partnerships without gender distinction. On January 28, 2015, Chile’s Chamber of Deputies approved the Civil Union Law in an effort to put an end to discrimination against domestic partners and provide protection to both same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partners. The bill was signed into law on April 13, 2015 by President Michelle Bachelet. Even though same sex marriages are not recognized in that country, the Civil Union Law grants formal recognition to the union of any couple living together and amends their marital status to “*convivente*” (‘living together’). It also grants domestic partners death-related rights, protection in the area of health, and regularizes aspects of property ownership. The Civil Union Law legally recognizes domestic partners as a family. The IACHR is pleased by the enactment of the law, inasmuch as it will help to combat discrimination against same sex couples and possibly against other members of the LGBTI community in Chile. Additionally, the Commission hopes that Chile will continue to approve measures to promote and protect the rights of the LGBTI community.

16. The IACHR is also pleased that the States of Mexico and Colombia have issued decrees to permit rectification of sex on the national identity document through simple administrative procedures, which apply to Mexico City and throughout Colombian territory, respectively. The IACHR notes that prior to these measures being taken, the process of rectification of sex was done through a long, drawn-out and burdensome judicial procedure, requiring psychiatric diagnosis and/or medical examination, in such a way that it cast transgender persons as pathological. As for Mexico, a decree came into force on March 7, 2015, allowing the recognition of trans persons’ identity in the Federal District of Mexico City through an administrative procedure, as provided in amendments to the Civil Code approved by the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District in November 2014. With respect to Colombia, the IACHR was informed that Ministerial Decree 1227 of June 4, 2015 allows for rectification of sex in the Civil Registry of Births by means of a simple administrative procedure. Under this decree, trans persons are able to obtain an identity document reflecting their gender, by following an administrative procedure before a Notary Public, providing a sworn statement, and single copies of birth certificate from the Civil Registry of Birth and their national citizenship card, while prohibiting that any other proof or documentation be required. The IACHR urges Mexico and Colombia to adopt the necessary measures to ensure full and effective compliance with these decrees on rectification of sex. The IACHR additionally encourages Mexico and Colombia to adopt gender identity laws to ensure greater protection of trans persons.

17. The IACHR hails the landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court recognizing marriage equality nationwide. On June 26, 2015, the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality,

on the grounds that it is a constitutionally protected right. The decision makes recognition of same sex marriages mandatory in the 50 States of the nation, including the 14 states that still do not recognize marriage between same-sex couples. President Barack Obama expressed his support for the decision proclaiming that this action was a “victory for [the United States of] America.” Likewise, writing for the majority opinion, Justice Kennedy noted that marriage was a fundamental institution in the social order of the nation, from which no person should be excluded. The decision represented a huge victory for thousands of activists and the culmination of years of litigation on the issue. The IACHR commends the United States for making a fundamental decision to promote the human rights of LGBTI persons and urges the other States Parties to take similar measures to recognize the fundamental rights of these persons.

18. The IACHR is pleased at approval of the Buenos Aires Province Trans Employment Quota Law in the State of Argentina. The law was enacted in September and provides that at least one-percent of all public sector positions in the Province of Buenos Aires must be held by trans persons. The law establishes as beneficiaries any trans persons qualified for the position, regardless of whether or not they have been beneficiaries of the gender identity law. Any person who is found responsible for either partial or total non-compliance with the law would be subject to a serious penalty or a record of poor performance of duties. The IACHR considers this type of measure to constitute a fundamental step toward inclusion of trans persons into the public sphere and urges states to continue to adopt pro-rights measures, including legislation and public policies on behalf of trans, lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex persons.

19. The IACHR commends the Colombian State for approving adoption equality. On November 6, 2015, the Constitutional Court of Colombia amended three articles of the Code of Infancy and Adolescence. This decision extends this right to all partners regardless of the biological link between one of the parents and the child. The Court also changed its approach to the issue: rather than casting it as a change in the rights of same sex couples, the Court framed this situation as a change in the right of the child to have a family. The government of President Juan Manuel Santos, several public agencies and non-governmental organizations supported the Constitutional Court’s ruling. The IACHR hails the decision of the Colombian State and urges Colombia to continue forging ahead toward equality of persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and, in this way, respect and promote the rights of LGBTI persons in their country. The IACHR encourages the other States Parties to take similar measures, if they have not already done so, in order to further the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI persons in the region.

Restoration of Cuba-US Relations

20. As follow-up to the adoption of bilateral measures between the United States and Cuba, it is fitting to note that after six months of negotiations, embassies were reopened in each other’s country, as diplomatic relations continue to be reestablished. In July, each country reopened its respective embassy in the other country, which stands as a concrete symbol of the restoration of diplomatic ties. On a visit to Cuba, Secretary of State John Kerry stressed that renewal of relations, including lifting the embargo, will be contingent upon progress made by the Cuban government in its human rights record. The IACHR welcomes this as strengthening ties between two OAS members and hopes that the populations of both countries greatly benefit from it. The Inter-American Commission hopes that in the wake of the Cuban government’s recent decision, the country will be opened further to an international presence, including to human rights oversight bodies, with a view toward achieving concrete progress in the protection of its inhabitants. As for the United States, the IACHR reiterates its position regarding the embargo’s negative impact on the people of Cuba and, on this score, renews its call for the US Congress to lift the embargo in the context of renewed dialogue between the countries.

Transitional Justice and the Right to the Truth

21. The Inter-American Commission welcomes the signing of the transitional justice agreement on September 23, 2015, in Havana, between the government of Colombia and the FARC. Both parties anticipate that the final peace accord will be signed on March 23, 2016. Under the transitional justice agreement, a special jurisdiction for crimes committed during the armed conflict is established aiming justice for the parts. The Special Jurisdiction will be independent from the regular judicial system and will be made

up of Colombian and foreign magistrates. The IACHR will be monitoring the adopted measures in the context of transitional justice in the light of the State obligations in regarding protection and judicial guaranties. The parties also agreed that once the final peace agreement is signed, a Truth Commission will be established to help elucidate the truth about all events, as well as a special unit to investigate cases of forced disappearances during the armed conflict. The Commission urges the State of Colombia and the leaders of the Armed Forces to engage in these processes under the tenets of justice, truth and reparation for the victims of human rights violations.

Combatting Impunity

22. As for efforts to combat impunity, the Commission welcomes the ruling of Chilean judge Miguel Vásquez that there is sufficient evidence for formal charges to be brought against 10 former members of the military forces for the abduction and murder of songwriter singer Víctor Jara and former Gendarmerie Commissioner Littré Quiroga Carvajal. There is also evidence that these military officers were behind other executions, which were never investigated and took place several days after the military coup of September 11, 1973. The former Chilean officer, who allegedly perpetrated Jara's murder, will be brought to trial in the United States. Additionally, another seven former military officers have been arrested in the case of Rodrigo Rojas and Carmen Gloria Quintana. These two young people were doused with gasoline and set on fire during a protest in 1986, and Mr. Rojas died as a consequence. This news signifies the beginning of a new stage of truth and justice for victims of human rights violations during the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. The IACHR commends the State of Chile for the steps it has taken to protect the right to truth and justice in this context and encourages the State to continue working to further elucidate the events that took place during the military dictatorship.

23. The Commission is also pleased that the State of Guatemala has extended the mandate of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). The extension of the mandate is a testament to the State's commitment to combat impunity and to the principles of judicial independence and the rule of law, inasmuch as the CICIG has been instrumental in furthering investigations into unlawful activities of public officials and organized crime networks and the connection between the two. In taking these actions, the CICIG has contributed to strengthening the country's democratic institutions, which is essential in order to ensure respect for the human rights. The Commission hails the extension of the mandate and urges the government of Guatemala to continue to cooperate with the CICIG in performance of its duties and to combat impunity and corruption and, in so doing, violations of human rights.

24. On September 28, Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro announced the creation of the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). The Mission seeks to enhance the quality of judicial services in Honduras. The MACCIH initiative also includes cooperation between institutions of the State and civil society. The IACHR commends the State of Honduras for taking the initiative to seek assistance in its fight against impunity and corruption, which foster human rights violations. The IACHR urges the State of Honduras to continue to implement and further the project. Additionally, the IACHR reiterates its call to the other Member States to take the necessary measures to combat impunity and corruption in their governments.

25. The Commission welcomes the notice of the State of Canada about the launch of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. This instrument will be designed after hearing the perspectives of survivors, families, loved ones, Indigenous organizations and communities, provinces and territories, and experts.

Signing of Human Rights Conventions

26. The IACHR is pleased that the States of Bolivia and Chile have signed the conventions against discrimination and racism on March 10 and October 22, respectively. The government of Chile signed the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance, and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance at OAS headquarters. While the Commission commends Bolivia's and Chile's initiative, it also encourages both State and other Member

States to ratify said conventions in order for them to take effect. The IACHR believes that ratification of these instruments is crucial for the protection of rights in the region.

Progress toward Fulfillment of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

27. The IACHR is pleased with the Second Session of the Working Group to examine the periodic reports of the States Parties to the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Working Group of this instrument, also known as the Protocol of San Salvador, held public meetings and examined the national reports on the first group of rights: health, education and social security. In this space, attendees engaged in discussion and exchanged best practices with a view toward progress in fulfillment of economic, social and cultural rights. This was the first time that the States presented their reports on implementation of the mechanism established under the Convention at public meetings where two Commissioners of the IACHR participated, who consider important to bring together the activities of the Working Group with the efforts of the Commission to achieve the purpose of creating the Special ESCR Rapporteurship, once the financial resources necessary for this objective have been reached, based on the States' voluntary contributions.

Right to Education

28. On the subject of the right to education, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights welcomes the cooperation agreement entered into between the Organization of American States and the State of Colombia in order to expand educational opportunities and human development in the region. The agreement was signed by Colombia's National Training Service (SENA) and the OAS Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) on January 29, 2015. It is designed to enhance the exchange of training opportunities between SENA and other education institutions and, in this way, help to reinforce education in the region. The IACHR is pleased with the agreement, inasmuch as it believes that this type of social investment is crucial to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

29. The IACHR applauds the approval made by the Congress of the State of Chile of the Law of Gratuity of Higher Education, which is the first step to guarantee public education.

30. On September 17, the Organization of American States launched the first PopUp School for displaced children in Colombia through its Virtual Educa program. The IACHR commends the initiative, which serves displaced children affected by the situation on the border between Colombia and Venezuela. The school will also function as an educational resource center for all people living in the area. Several Colombian government institutions, such as the Department of Education of the Government of Norte de Santander and the National Unit for Risk and Disaster Management, have joined the cause by providing a transportation system so children can travel between the center and the border area. The IACHR congratulates the State of Colombia for its cooperation, given the importance of defending the right to education. The IACHR urges the government to continue to take similar measures to promote the rights of children and adolescents.