



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts expresses its repudiation and concern regarding the attempted femicide of the Vice President of Colombia, Francia Márquez

Washington, DC, January 19th, 2023. The [Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women](#) "Belém do Pará Convention" (MESECVI) expresses its categorical condemnation of the assassination attempt against the Colombian Vice President, Francia Márquez. According to the Convention that protects and defends the human rights of women, including the right to have their lives respected and to exercise their political rights free of violence, this Committee calls for the investigation and punishment of this violent act,

According to the facts emerging from the ongoing investigation by the authorities and reported by the Vice President herself and the media, in recent days more than seven kilos of explosives were found on the road that leads to her family residence. This Committee considers this finding as a serious expression of violence against the Vice President and by extension against women and also a threat to the democratic system.

In this regard, the Committee of Experts recalls that the States Parties recognize that violence against women prevents and nullifies the exercise of their right to participate in political processes and agree to adopt, by all appropriate means and without delay, policies aimed at preventing, punishing, and eradicating such violence¹. Article 1 of the Belém do Pará Convention states that: "violence against women shall be understood as any act or conduct, based on gender, that causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere." Additionally, Article 5 entitles every woman to the free and full exercise of her civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, with full protection of those rights.

According to the "Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life", elaborated by this Committee: "Violence against women in the political life shall be understood as any action, conduct or omission, carried out directly or through third parties that, based on gender, causes harm or suffering to a woman or to various women, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of their political rights."

¹ Articles 5 and 7, Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, Belém do Pará Convention. See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/texto-de-la-convencion-INGLES.pdf>

As stated in Article 6 of the aforementioned Model Law, acts of violence against women in the political life are, among others, those actions based on gender that cause, or may cause, the violent death of women because of their participation or political activity (Femicide); as well as threats or intimidation, with the effect or purpose to limit their political rights, including the resignation of the position or function they hold or apply for.

In the specific case, the Vice President has also been confronting hate speech in the public space, due to her work to reduce social, environmental, and racial gaps, and especially those based on gender stereotypes embedded in the invisible web of symbolic violence which, ultimately contribute to the exercise of all other forms of violence against women.

For all the reasons stated above, the Committee of Experts urges the Colombian Republic to urgently exercise their obligation to act with due diligence to investigate and punish this act of violence against Vice President Francia Márquez, as well as, to prevent such attacks and to guarantee the no repetition as well as give an undertaking to provide the necessary reparation to reestablish trust and democratic stability. The Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the State of Colombia for any technical support it 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.