



## Communique Committee of Experts

### **Committee of Experts expresses rejection over acts of repression and discrimination against indigenous women during protests in Peru**

Washington, DC, March 17th, 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) rejects and expresses deep concern regarding the recent acts of violence and discrimination exercised by State agents and authorities against a group of indigenous Aymara women, who together with their daughters and sons participated in citizen protests in Peru<sup>1</sup>. In addition to being victims of the use of disproportionate force while exercising their right to demonstrate, these women were subsequently subjected to discriminatory and denigrating statements issued by the Minister of Education.

According to images recorded during a demonstration in the city of Lima, the security forces used tear gas to violently repress a group of indigenous women carrying their children on their backs. These women were subsequently re-victimized by discriminatory statements made by the Minister of Education, Manuel Becerra, who accused them of intentionally exposing their children to harm, and even insinuated that they were not their real mothers but had rented the children<sup>2</sup>.

The Committee of Experts recognizes the State efforts in approving, on February 8, the "Protocol for joint action by the State for the coordination of services in the context of detention, retention and police intervention for women and persons in vulnerable conditions," which seeks to safeguard their integrity during the current situation the country is going through.

Taking into consideration this information provided by the authorities, the Committee calls for the implementation of this protocol, respecting the legitimate right to protest and guaranteeing due process and the principle of proportionality in the use of force, especially in the presence of children, all in accordance with international and inter-American human rights treaties, including the Belém do Pará Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/2023/03/03/puno-ciudadanos-aimaras-denuncian-que-fueron-reprimidos-por-la-policia-en-lima-lrsd-81516>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.infobae.com/peru/2023/03/06/lamentable-declaracion-del-ministro-de-educacion-contra-mujeres-aimaras-ni-los-animales-exponen-a-sus-hijos-asi/>

In this regard, the Committee recalls that according to Article 5 of this Convention: "Every woman is entitled to the free and full exercise of her civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and may rely on the full protection of those rights as embodied in regional and international instruments on human rights. The States Parties recognize that violence against women prevents and nullifies the exercise of these rights."

Furthermore, the Committee of Experts insists that the right of every woman to a life free of violence includes, among others, the right to be free from all forms of discrimination and to be valued free of stereotyped patterns of behavior<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, the use by State authorities of language that discriminates against women not only reproduces gender stereotypes but also sends a message of impunity in the face of possible acts of violence against them.

Therefore, in accordance with Articles 7 and 9 of the Belém do Pará Convention, the Committee of Experts urges the State: to punish and eradicate discriminatory acts and acts of violence against women, especially against those in vulnerable situations due to their ethnic status; to eradicate all practices that deepen gender stereotypes and relations of domination, condemning in an exemplary manner public discourses that revictimize women and reproduce such stereotypes; to carry out the effective implementation of the aforementioned protocol for joint State action with the objective of guaranteeing non-repetition and reparation for the acts of violence in question.

For all of the above reasons, the Committee of Experts calls on the State of Peru to investigate the acts of violence reported based on the due diligence principles established in the Convention. It also calls upon the State to guarantee the right to peaceful protest by women and citizens, taking the necessary measures to prevent acts of violence in the context of the current social demonstrations, punish perpetrators and ensure reparations to victims of these acts of violence.

The Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the authorities of the Peruvian State for any technical support they may require in this matter.

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*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.*

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<sup>3</sup> Article 6, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women "Belém do Pará Convention." See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/texto-de-la-convencion-INGLES.pdf>