



Communique Committee of Experts

The Committee of Experts expresses concern about the death, during a fire, of women detained in a Tucumán police station and asks the Argentine State for a thorough and immediate investigation.

Washington, DC, October 13, 2021. The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) expresses its concern over the death, during a fire, of four women detained in a Tucumán police station and calls to the Argentine State an exhaustive and immediate investigation.

On September 2, 2021, a fire broke out at the Concepción Women's Brigade Police Station, in the province of Tucumán, as a result of which four women died of suffocation. María José Saravia, Macarena Salinas, Micaela Mendoza and Yanet Santillán were deprived of liberty, under police custody, when the event occurred. The fire would have occurred while the detained women were staging a protest denouncing the precarious conditions of detention and demanding that they be transferred to a prison, due to the fact that they had been in the police station for months, which must be restricted to temporary detention. Civil society organizations report that the Concepción Police Station does not have the minimum fire protection conditions, denouncing various infrastructure deficiencies and a situation of severe overcrowding, among other breaches of international standards on detention conditions.

This Committee reminds the Argentine State of its obligation to respect and guarantee compliance with the obligations derived from its domestic legislation and international instruments for the protection of human rights, the rights of women and persons deprived of liberty, protecting from all form of violence against women in prison.

Likewise, the Argentine State is obliged to provide special protection to the persons in its custody, guaranteeing detention conditions compatible with human dignity and adopting measures that prevent risk situations that threaten the life and integrity of persons deprived of liberty. The events that occurred constitute a violation of Articles 1, 2 and 7 of the Convention of Belém Do Pará, among other international instruments and Argentine legislation.

in addition, the State, in accordance with inter-American standards on the matter, must immediately investigate the specific facts, as well as punish the officials at all levels who were directly or indirectly responsible for the death of the victims, repair indirect victims, as well as generating measures of non-repetition of these events, reviewing the prison practices and the conditions of detention of all women in the country, making an act of public apology and the symbolic acts that are necessary to honor the women victims and persons who have suffered violations of their human rights as a result of actions or omissions of the State in relation to the conditions of detention.

For all the above, the Committee of Experts requests the Argentine State that the investigation into the facts be exhaustive, with a gender perspective and respectful of the principles of impartiality and promptness; to act with reinforced due diligence, as stipulated in the prevention, investigation, punishment, and reparation regulations in cases of violence against women. Such investigation must lead to the clarification of the facts, the establishment of responsibilities, the reparation of the victims and the application of the sanctions that may be applicable.

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 exercise their functions in a personal capacity.