



## Communique Committee of Experts

### **The Committee of Experts expresses its concern over acts of violence against Senator Martha Lucía Míchler in Mexico**

Washington DC, June 10, 2020. The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) expresses its concern over the reproduction and dissemination of the picture of Martha Lucía Míchler, Senator of the Government of Mexico, regarding the incident that occurred on May 28th of this year. Its diffusion, promotion, and distribution could be considered as an act of violence against women in the political life.

On May 28th of this year, Senator Míchler was attending an online work meeting with people from the public sector and media representatives when she accidentally turned on her camera, appearing bared-chested. One or more people that participated in the online meeting took a photo of the screen and spread it through social networks such as WhatsApp. The Committee of Experts believes that this constitutes an act of political violence against women since it distributed an image that was not in the public interest and intended to damage the Senator's political image.

In this regard, the CEVI emphasizes the *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women* which establishes that the "the use of symbolic violence as an instrument of political discussion gravely affects women's exercise of their political rights."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in the *Inter-American Model Law On the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women in Political Life*, the Committee states that when it comes to "[the] role of social networks and the new information and communication technologies as tools of political influence, over which there are few controls, [the State must adopt measures] in order to ensure that messages and images of women transmitted through these platforms are respectful of their rights."<sup>2</sup>

For these reasons, the Committee of Experts requests the State of Mexico to a) carry out the appropriate investigations to sanction the people that disseminated the images and, in the event that the person responsible is a public official, aggravate the sanction; b) that the act does not go

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<sup>1</sup> MESECVI, *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women*, Lima, Peru, October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Available at: <https://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/docs/DeclaracionViolenciaPolitica-EN.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> MESECVI, *Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women in Political Life*, 2017. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/LeyModeloViolenciaPolitica-EN.pdf>

unpunished within the framework of ethics, criminal and administrative legislation of Mexico; and c) take the pertinent actions to prevent violence against women in the political life.

It is highly relevant to send a message of zero impunity to these types of conducts, because “violence against women in the political life prevents women from contributing to decision-making that affects their lives, or benefitting from this process, by restricting their choices and limiting their ability to influence political life...[which is] an essential condition for democracy and governance in the hemisphere.”<sup>3</sup>

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*The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI that is responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Belém do Pará Convention. It is made up of independent Experts, designated by each of the Member States among their nationals, who carry out their functions at a personal capacity.*

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<sup>3</sup> Idem.