



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts celebrates the release of Vannesa Rosales and calls on the Venezuelan State to guarantee her rights in criminal proceedings for her work as a defender of sexual and reproductive rights in the country.

Washington DC, July 28, 2021. The Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the Follow-up Mechanism of the “Convention of Belém do Pará” (MESECVI) celebrates the release of Vannesa Rosales and maintains attention on the situation of this defender of sexual and reproductive rights in Venezuela.

The Committee has received complaints according to which Vannesa Rosales was detained by the Criminal Investigation Police (CICPC) in October 2020 after she allegedly advised a 13-year-old girl, pregnant as a result of sexual violence, which represented a risk to his life and health, as this Committee has repeatedly pointed out.

The defender was deprived of liberty and placed under house arrest. The Committee received information about unjustified delays and the postponement of the preliminary hearing on three occasions, which was finally held on July 21 and Vannesa Rosales was released.

Since its First Hemispheric Report, the Mechanism has pointed out to the States Parties the importance of addressing as a priority the right of women to live free from violence and to be educated free of stereotypes for the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights and recognizes that the rights Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights and that all people have the right to disseminate and receive information about them.

The Committee also highlights that this specific case began with the actions carried out to protect the life and integrity of a girl victim of sexual violence. In this regard, this Committee has reiterated that sexual violence against girls is a serious violation of their human rights and that the State is obliged to provide, by all means at its disposal, comprehensive care and access to all the necessary measures to avoid a early pregnancy and to eradicate tolerance to forced child pregnancy of girls, which has been highlighted as a harmful practice and contrary to regional and universal treaties for the protection of girls and women.

The Committee emphasizes that the prohibition and criminalization of abortion and the criminalization of the legitimate work of defenders of sexual and reproductive rights exacerbate violence against women and girls and result in a violation of the rights to health, life, and dignity, integrity and reproductive autonomy, among others.

Additionally, the Committee notes that the Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women in Political Life, establishes the right of women to the recognition, enjoyment, exercise and protection of all human rights and freedoms enshrined by regional and international instruments on human rights, which include, among others, the right to have equal access to public functions in your country and to participate in public affairs, including decision-making, as well as the right to liberty association and protects the exercise of women's political rights, which clearly includes women's human rights defenders.

The Committee highlights that, in accordance with the Convention, the State must provide women with enhanced due diligence, guaranteeing in an expeditious manner that all the rights established in international human rights protection treaties are guaranteed and, in a special way, are investigated and prevented any actions that cause harm, physical, psychological or sexual suffering to women.

The Committee welcomes the release of Vanessa Rosales and urges the Venezuelan State to:

Guarantee Vanessa Rosales a reinforced due diligence in the judicial case against her that has been initiated based on a discriminatory norm.

Refrain from continuing to criminalize the work of defense of human rights in the country and, especially, guarantee the work of the defenders of women's rights and sexual and reproductive rights; Y

Take urgent and adequate measures to guarantee the sexual and reproductive rights of women, girls and adolescents in the country who are victims of violence, including sexual violence, especially taking into account the impacts of the humanitarian emergency that the experts themselves have already recognized

The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI, responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the process of implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It is composed of independent experts, appointed by each State Party from among its nationals, who serve in their personal capacity.