

## **Parental Alienation Syndrome and access to justice as an antidote to violence against women: key axes of meetings of the MESECVI Committee of Experts in Buenos Aires**

*Buenos Aires, November 18, 2022.* The participation of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) in a series of high-level regional meetings and events in Buenos Aires, Argentina, wrapped up with agreements to advance work on the so-called "parental alienation syndrome" and the violence that affects women in the region, in particular, the trafficking of migrant women and digital violence against younger girls, adolescents, and women. Likewise, commitments were made to improve and strengthen the mechanisms for access to justice to reduce femicides/feminicides in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Committee of Experts, the monitoring body of MESECVI that is responsible for the analysis and implementation of the Convention, held its XIX Meeting, which was the first of the meetings in this round of events. Following on the heels of the first meeting, the Experts also participated in a high-level regional meeting on justice and gender, organized jointly by the MESECVI with the Women's Office of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico and ELA (Latin American Team of Justice and Gender).

### **SAP, trafficking and digital violence, agreements of the XIX Meeting of the Committee of Experts**

During the XIX Meeting of the Committee, which included the participation of twenty of the Experts<sup>1</sup>, the work agenda for 2023 was defined. The experts agreed on the strategic lines during the reflection and debate sessions.

In particular, they expressed their concern and the urgent need of working to curb the widespread use in the region of the "parental alienation syndrome" (PAS). PAS is a concept with no scientific basis that is being used to delegitimize complaints by women for gender-based violence against them and towards their daughters and sons.

The Committee also agreed to focus its activities on the relationship between migrant women and violence, including situations of trafficking, and digital violence against women, adolescents, and girls.

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<sup>1</sup> The event was attended in-person and through virtual connexion by the Experts of Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

A series of reports on shelters for women victims of violence in the region were also approved, as well as a general recommendation regarding gender-based violence against women, adolescents and girls with disabilities.

This meeting took place within the framework of the IV Round of Multilateral Evaluation on the progress in the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention. Against this background, the Committee committed to moving forward with the work strategy with the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean to begin the collection of information, developing a parallel process of accompaniment and training to support the States Parties in this task.

### **Justice and gender, from the punitive approach to a comprehensive strategy to face femicide.**

On Monday the 14th and Tuesday the 15th, the Palace of Justice of Argentina was the setting to convene the highest judicial authorities from Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Peru, and the region, along with representatives of civil society, international organizations and academia for the event entitled: "From the punitive approach to a comprehensive approach: Strategies and challenges in the prevention, attention, investigation, sanction, and reparation of femicide/feminicide in Latin America".

"In this space of justice that welcomes us, we must fight for the rights of women and talk about one of the greatest injustices: femicides," said the President of the Committee of Experts, Marcela Huaita, in her opening remarks.

Public policies for access to justice were at the heart of the debate, and participants thoroughly considered the idea that the prevention of femicide/feminicide should not be limited to punitive matters but requires a truly comprehensive look at the phenomenon.

It was in this context that, Minister Andrea Muñoz, President of the Permanent Commission on Gender and Access to Justice of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit, insisted on the key role of justice operators and the need to develop permanent, massive and mandatory training for the cultural transformation of the judiciary.

During the second day of the meeting, training and accompaniment work was carried out for the provincial judicial powers of Argentina. At the end of this activity, it was agreed to continue strengthening the capacities of justice operators through the Women's Office of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, the Association of Women Judges of Argentina (AMJA) and the Federal Board of Courts Supreme Courts of the Provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (JuFeJus)