



# Communique Committee of Experts

## **Committee of Experts of the MESECVI expresses concern over cases of extreme violence against girls in Paraguay and calls for a prompt response from the State to protect their rights**

*Washington, DC, August 6, 2025.* [The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Belém do Pará Convention" \(MESECVI\)](#) condemns two recent cases of sexual and femicidal violence against girls in Paraguay, which reflect a concerning pattern of gender-based violence. These events highlight the urgent need for State action to strengthen prevention, as well as, comprehensive care and protection, and guarantee access to justice, reparation, and non-repetition in response to violence against girls.

The Committee of Experts (CEVI) has taken note of the information disseminated by the media and confirmed by official sources reporting the violent deaths of three girls under the age of 18 in the space of a month and a half. These are the femicides of Melania Monserrat, aged 12<sup>1</sup>, and María Fernanda Benítez, aged 17<sup>2</sup>, for whose deaths two teenagers have been charged; as well as the death of a 13-year-old girl after giving birth by caesarean section following a pregnancy resulting from continuous sexual abuse since she was 11 years old<sup>3</sup>.

In these situations, where patterns of extreme violence—including femicide and sexual violence—against girls and adolescents are repeated in contexts of serious vulnerability, marked by a lack of access to justice, comprehensive care, and institutional response, serious human rights violations occur. These events demand the highest level of commitment from the State in terms of investigation, punishment, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

In light of the information provided, the Committee of Experts also expresses its deep concern about the persistence of harmful, violent, and discriminatory practices that violate the human rights of girls and sustain acts of extreme violence against them. The alleged

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.ultimahora.com/juzgado-decreta-prision-preventiva-para-segundo-sospechoso-por-crimen-de-melania-monserrath>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/2025/06/27/a-un-mes-del-caso-maria-fernanda-esperan-adn-y-peritaje-del-celular/>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://efeminista.com/muere-nina-embarazo-violacion/>

involvement of adolescents is also troubling, reinforcing the need to strengthen prevention and education policies from an early age.

The Committee recalls that the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, Convention of Belém do Pará, through its Article 7, imposes on States Parties the obligation of due diligence to punish all forms of violence against women and girls, including physical and sexual violence, forced child motherhood, and the consequences of lack of access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

Furthermore, under the Convention States Parties commit to promote awareness and observance of the right of women and girls to live free from violence (Article 8), as well as to take special account of the vulnerability of girls to gender-based violence (Article 9).

This Committee has been emphatic in pointing out that forcing a girl to continue with a pregnancy resulting from sexual violence, or when her life is in danger, constitutes a form of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, in violation of Article 4 of the Convention and contrary to the fundamental principles of international human rights law<sup>4</sup>.

This Committee understands that forced pregnancy in girls under the age of 14 constitutes in any case an act of violence. Therefore, States Party that prohibit the termination of pregnancy in these cases would be engaged in institutional violence against the victims<sup>5</sup>. For this reason, the Committee recommends eliminating unsafe abortion, ensuring through legislation that all pregnancies in girls are considered high risk, and allowing access to legal termination of pregnancy<sup>6</sup>.

Likewise, in its Declaration on Violence against Women, Girls, and Adolescents and Their Sexual and Reproductive Rights<sup>7</sup>, the Committee maintains that denying access to adequate medical services, including termination of pregnancy in cases of sexual violence, may constitute a violation of human rights and a form of institutional violence that, in contexts of state omission, can have lethal consequences. This could even give rise to criminal liability with penalties similar to those for femicide, in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the Inter-American Model Law on Femicide/Feminicide<sup>8</sup>.

In its recent country report on Paraguay<sup>9</sup>, prepared in the framework of the Fourth Round of Multilateral Evaluation on the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention, the CEVI recommended strengthening instruments and strategies to prevent and punish sexual violence

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<sup>4</sup> MESECVI, Hemispheric Report on Sexual Violence and Child Pregnancy in the States Party to the Belém do Pará Convention, para 126. See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/MESECVI-EmbarazoInfantil-EN.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> MESECVI, *ibid.*, para 128.

<sup>6</sup> MESECVI, *ibid.*, para 224.

<sup>7</sup> See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DeclaracionDerechos-EN.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> MESECVI, Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of the Gender-Based Killing of Women (Femicide/Feminicide). See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LeyModeloFemicidio-EN.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://belemdopara.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/INFORME-PAIiS-PARAGUAY.pdf>

against girls and adolescents with a differentiated approach; legally prohibit child marriage and early unions before the age of 18, in line with international standards; and incorporate voluntary termination of pregnancy on the basis of the three established grounds. The report also highlighted the lack of investigation protocols for femicides/feminicides and violent deaths of women, as well as comprehensive attention procedures in cases of violence against women and girls.

In view of the above, the Committee of Experts urges the Paraguayan authorities to act with due diligence to investigate, punish, and repair the damage caused in the situations mentioned. It calls for the strengthening of public policies and the implementation of existing regulatory frameworks, with the aim of preventing sexual violence against girls and adolescents, avoiding preventable deaths due to forced pregnancies, and ensuring respect for the human rights of women and girls in accordance with inter-American standards.

The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the State of Paraguay 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.*