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COMMUNIQUE

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

MESECVI

Follow-Up Mechanism to the
Belém do Pará Convention

Committee of Experts of the MESECVI Expresses Concern over Bill in Guatemala that Would Undermine the Rights of Children and Their Mothers by Incorporating the Concept of Parental Alienation

Washington, DC, July 9, 2026. [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) expresses concern regarding Bill No. 6502, *Law on the Protection of Children and Their Parent-Child Relationships*, currently under consideration by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala. The bill incorporates the concept of parental alienation—widely discredited internationally and rejected by this Committee—as one of the legal grounds for establishing criminal sanctions for the alleged obstruction of parent-child relationships.

The Committee of Experts (CEVI) has become aware of this legislative initiative, which was recently considered in its second reading before the plenary of Congress. Among other provisions, the bill relies on the concept of parental alienation as a basis for creating the offence of “*denial of parent-child and family relationships*” and for increasing the corresponding criminal penalties.

In a regional context marked by narratives and legislative initiatives aimed at toughening criminal penalties against women who report violence against themselves or their children, the Committee warns that bills such as the one mentioned, far from strengthening the State’s response to violence, undermine the protection they claim to promote. Furthermore, they discourage legitimate reports of domestic and sexual violence and hinder access to justice for women and their children who are victims of gender-based violence.

The Committee recalls that, in [a joint statement](#) issued with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, it emphasized that the use of this controversial concept against women in cases where they denounce gender-based violence against themselves or against their daughters and sons is part of the continuum of gender-based violence and could invoke the responsibility of States for institutional violence. The Committee and the Special Rapporteur also urged States to eliminate the use of this concept in order to avoid placing women, girls and boys in situations of heightened vulnerability.

In this regard, the Committee calls upon the Guatemalan authorities to adopt a gender-responsive and intersectional approach, to respect the principle of the best interests of the child, and to apply enhanced due diligence, in accordance with the obligations assumed under the Belém do Pará Convention and international standards for the protection of the human rights of women, as well as of girls and boys.

The Committee of Experts recalls that, as a State Party to the Belém do Pará Convention, Guatemala undertook, pursuant to Article 7(a) and (e), to refrain from engaging in any act or practice of violence against women and to adopt all appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to modify or abolish laws, regulations, legal practices or customary practices that sustain the persistence or tolerance of violence against women.

In this regard, the Committee of Experts reiterates that States Parties must refrain from adopting discriminatory laws or measures that undermine the credibility of victims, hinder their complaints or perpetuate gender stereotypes, as doing so is inconsistent with the obligations undertaken under the Convention. It further recalls that, where there are allegations or convictions of gender-based violence against women or children, such allegations or convictions must be treated as an essential factor in determining child custody and visitation arrangements.

In light of the foregoing, the Committee of Experts urges the Guatemalan State, in particular the Legislative Branch and its representatives, to ensure that any legislative initiative in this area fully complies with the obligations undertaken under the Belém do Pará Convention and with international standards for the protection of the human rights of women, as well as of girls and boys. The Committee also calls upon the State to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the prevention of, response to, protection from and support in situations of domestic and sexual violence, while ensuring a comprehensive response grounded in a gender perspective, intersectionality and respect for the best interests of the child.

The Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará, through its Committee of Experts, remains at the disposal of the State of Guatemala to provide any technical assistance it may require in this regard.

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.