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COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

MESECVI
Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention

Committee of Experts of the MESECVI Expresses Concern over Delays in Legal Proceedings Involving Former Public Officials in Sexual Violence Cases in Chile

Washington, DC, November 10, 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 over delays in legal proceedings against two former public officials in Chile: former Undersecretary of the Interior Manuel Monsalve, who has been reported for the alleged rape and sexual abuse of a female employee under his authority, and former member of Congress Francisco Pulgar Castillo, who is accused of repeated rape and sexual abuse of a 13-year-old girl.

The Committee of Experts (CEVI) has received information from civil society organizations regarding delays in both proceedings. In the case of former Undersecretary Monsalve, the pretrial hearing, initially scheduled for early October 2026, was postponed until March 2027. The precautionary measure of full house arrest was also relaxed to nighttime house arrest, a decision subsequently reversed by the Santiago Court of Appeals. In the case of former member of Congress Pulgar, the trial concerning acts reported in May 2021 was postponed until November 2027.

In November 2024, CEVI issued a statement on the former Undersecretary's case, urging the authorities to act with transparency, promptness, and heightened due diligence. Two years after that appeal, the Committee expresses concern over the postponements in both cases and reiterates that a timely judicial response is essential to ensuring effective access to justice in cases of violence against women and girls.

The CEVI has also become aware, through media reports, of sentence reductions granted to individuals convicted of sexual offenses against children and adolescents. This situation adds to the concerns outlined above and underscores persistent gaps in the institutional response to sexual violence.

In this regard, the Committee recalls that Article 7 of the Belém do Pará Convention, to which Chile is a State Party, provides that States Parties condemn all forms of violence against women and agree to "apply due diligence to prevent, investigate and impose penalties for violence against women" (paragraph b), as well as to "establish fair and effective legal procedures for women who have been subjected to violence which include, among others, protective measures, a timely hearing and effective access to such procedures" (paragraph f).

In accordance with these provisions, expeditious proceedings, diligent judicial case management, and clarity of decisions for the parties are essential to preventing

revictimization and ensuring effective access to justice. Comprehensive protection for victims also requires avoiding excessive delays that prolong uncertainty, create additional burdens, and increase the risk that victims will withdraw from proceedings.

In cases involving individuals who held positions of public authority, delays are particularly concerning, as they may discourage victims and send a message to society that violence is tolerated.

As the CEVI notes in its Fourth Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará, lengthy legal proceedings undermine access to justice, weaken the trust of women survivors of sexual violence in institutions, and contribute to impunity. In that report, the Committee also expresses concern over the lack of information on access to justice for girls who are victims of sexual violence and emphasizes the need to ensure an age-appropriate response, specialized support, and measures to safeguard their integrity and prevent revictimization.

The Committee further recalls that heightened due diligence requires both a timely response and the application of standards on consent and the elimination of gender stereotypes in judicial proceedings. In this regard, it reiterates the position set out in its November 2024 statement, grounded in its General Recommendations No. 3 and No. 6: unequal power relations, coercion, and fear of violence may vitiate or invalidate consent, and gender stereotypes must not interfere with the investigation, trial, or subsequent stages of proceedings.

CEVI thanks the authorities of the Chilean State for the information provided on efforts to strengthen institutional coordination and the response to violence under Law No. 21.675, as well as on ongoing legislative initiatives to strengthen State action in this area. In this regard, it underscores the importance of coordinated action by all branches and institutions of the State to prevent, investigate, and punish sexual violence against women and girls, in accordance with the obligations established in the Convention of Belém do Pará.

In light of the foregoing, the Committee calls on the authorities of the Chilean State, particularly the judiciary and the Public Prosecutor’s Office, to ensure that ongoing proceedings are conducted expeditiously, transparently, and with heightened due diligence, avoiding delays that undermine effective access to justice. It also calls on them to ensure comprehensive protection for the complainants, including by taking their safety into account when imposing or modifying precautionary measures, providing psychosocial support at all stages of the proceedings, and keeping them informed in a timely manner of decisions adopted. This duty is heightened in cases involving girls, who require an age-appropriate response and specialized support.

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