

**Presentation of the 2023 Annual Report
of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)**

54th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS)

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*Remarks by IACHR President, Commissioner **Roberta Clarke***

His Excellency Ruben Ramirez Lezcano, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay and President of the OAS General Assembly; Secretary General Almagro, Heads of Delegation, Permanent and Alternate Representatives of Member States and Observers to the OAS, Civil society organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honor to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Commission continues to focus on its efficiency. In 2023 we achieved the initial study of 88% of over 2,000 petitions received, approved 216 admissibility reports and 100 merits reports, a record for the Commission. 34 cases were submitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and 32 friendly settlement agreements were homologated.

Portfolio meetings with states to follow up on compliance with recommendations and to deal with cases in transition contributed to the Commission's effectiveness.

52 precautionary measures were processed through which 187 identified individuals and over 12,000 people from indigenous communities and traditional groups were protected.

We published 10 thematic reports and 2 country reports on Peru and Nicaragua, issued 135 press releases and sent 81 requests for information to the States, as input into our monitoring. We think the quantification of our work is important for transparency.

With guidance from the States, academia, and civil society, we adopted a prioritization policy that should ensure more timely justice and contribute to the development of Inter-American standards.

The Commission undertook two on-site visits to Bolivia and Honduras, and 12 working, promotional and cooperation visits to Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, the United States, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Uruguay.

Chapter IV.A presents the achievements of the States but also persistent human rights challenges, including:

The weakening of democratic institutions through threats to the separation of powers, judicial independence, and autonomy of national human rights institutions.

We documented restrictions on civic spaces, violence, stigmatization and criminalization of human rights defenders and journalists, and repression of social protests.

Impunity for discrimination and violence against historically marginalized populations are discussed. As is an intensification of the militarization of citizen security tasks and the recurrent application of states of exception.

The use of force against people in human mobility as well as the risks of violence during displacement, particularly in the case of women and girls.

The report notes the consequences of excessive use of pretrial detention, and a lack of criminal policies with a human rights and social reinsertion approach.

Our region faces real threats to multidimensional security because of the growth of non-state armed groups and the increase in the possession of firearms by private individuals.

Chapter IV.B of the Annual Report contains documentation on Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

- For Cuba, the report considers the absence of political pluralism, and the prohibition of political association.
- We note the misuse of authorities in Guatemala, which threatens the legitimate outcome of the general elections.

- The report highlights intimidation and silencing of organized civil society and the arbitrary deprivation of the nationality of 317 people in Nicaragua.
- As it does document repression against individuals and organizations that defend rights, express dissent or are perceived as opponents in Venezuela.

Chapter V of the Annual Report includes follow-up reports on the recommendations made to Brazil, El Salvador and Mexico, and reinforces the Special Mechanisms in Bolivia and Chile, as well as the installation of a new special mechanism on Colombia.

During 2023, I am proud to say we reached almost 83,000 people through 107 training events and over 200 promotional events.

We held three sessions in hybrid format, the first of which was held in Los Angeles, California. We thank the States and civil society in the region for their participation in 70 hearings held during 2023.

I want to recognize the work and contributions of the Commission's two Special Rapporteurs.

I thank civil society, OAS Member States and observers, international and regional organizations, OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro and his team for the support provided to the Commission to achieve the accomplishments presented in the 2023 Annual Report.

It is worth noting in this 65th year of the Commission, that our independent human rights system can only contribute to more rights for more people, the slogan of our strategic plan, with the constructive support of States and civil society. I take the opportunity to thank Costa Rica for their support on our 65th commemoration resolution.

I thank the Commissioners and the staff of the Executive Secretariat, led by Executive Secretary Tania Reneaum.

I invite you to read the report, to reference it, and to contribute to the next report on 2024.

Thank you very much.