
**INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
RESOLUTION TO LIFT PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES 22/2025**

Precautionary Measure No. 83-14

Keron López and Garvín Sookram regarding Trinidad and Tobago

March 1, 2025

Original: Spanish

I. SUMMARY

1. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) decides to lift these precautionary measures in favor of Keron López and Garvín Sookram regarding Trinidad and Tobago. At the time of making the decision, the Commission observes that, in the approximately 11 years that these precautionary measures have been in force, the representation has not submitted a written response to any of the requests for information issued by the Commission. The State did not provide any response either. Moreover, according to public information, the beneficiaries were removed from death row. Consequently, the Commission considers that there is no information to continue to consider that the requirements of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure have been met. Therefore, it deems it appropriate to lift these precautionary measures.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. On May 19, 2014, the IACHR requested the adoption of precautionary measures in favor of Keron López and Garvín Sookram, who were sentenced to death in Trinidad and Tobago. The request for precautionary measures was accompanied by two petitions alleging the violation of rights recognized in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. Those petitions were registered under the numbers P-331-14 and P-360-14. Through its resolution, the Commission asked Trinidad and Tobago to refrain from executing Keron López and Garvín Sookram until the IACHR has ruled on the merits of the individual petitions filed on their behalf.¹

3. Simons Muirhead Burton exercises representation before the Commission.

III. INFORMATION PROVIDED DURING THE TIME THESE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WERE IN FORCE

4. During the time the precautionary measures were in force, the Commission followed up on the situation by requesting information from the parties, on the following dates:

	State	Representation	IACHR
2021	No communications	No communications	February 18
2022	No communications	No communications	November 2
2023	No communications	No communications	March 9
2024	No communications	No communications	October 8, November 11

5. On October 8, 2024, information was requested from the representation in order to examine if the precautionary measures should remain in force. The request was reiterated on November 11, 2024. The

¹ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), [Resolution 13/2014](#), Precautionary Measure No. 83-14, Matter of Keron López and Garvín Sookram regarding Trinidad and Tobago, May 19, 2014.

IACHR has not received a response to any of the requests for information, and all the deadlines have since expired.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF SERIOUSNESS, URGENCY, AND IRREPARABLE HARM

6. The precautionary measures mechanism is part of the Commission's function of overseeing compliance with the human rights obligations established in Article 106 of the Charter of the Organization of American States. These general oversight functions are provided for in Article 41 (b) of the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as in Article 18 (b) of the Statute of the IACHR; while the mechanism of precautionary measures is set forth in Article 25 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. In accordance with this Article, the IACHR grants precautionary measures in urgent and serious situations in which these measures are necessary to avoid irreparable harm to persons or to the subject matter of a petition or case before the organs of the inter-American system.

7. The Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ("the Inter-American Court" or "I/A Court H.R.") have established repeatedly that precautionary and provisional measures have a dual nature, both protective and precautionary.² Regarding the protective nature, these measures seek to avoid irreparable harm and protect the exercise of human rights.³ To do this, the IACHR shall assess the problem raised, the effectiveness of state actions to address the situation described, and how vulnerable the persons proposed as beneficiaries would be left in case the measures are not adopted.⁴ Regarding their precautionary nature, these measures have the purpose of preserving a legal situation while under study by the organs of the inter-American system. Their precautionary nature aims at safeguarding the rights at risk until the petition pending before the inter-American system is resolved. Their object and purpose are to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of an eventual decision on the merits and, thus, avoid any further infringement of the rights at issue, a situation that may adversely affect the useful effect of the final decision. In this regard, precautionary or provisional measures allow the State concerned to comply with the final decision and, if necessary, to implement the ordered reparations. In the process of reaching a decision, according to Article 25(2) of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission considers that:

- a) "serious situation" refers to a grave impact that an action or omission can have on a protected right or on the eventual effect of a pending decision in a case or petition before the organs of the inter-American system;
- b) "urgent situation" refers to risk or threat that is imminent and can materialize, thus requiring immediate preventive or protective action; and
- c) "irreparable harm" refers to injury to rights which, due to their nature, would not be susceptible to reparation, restoration or adequate compensation.

² Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court H.R.), Matter of the Yare I and Yare II Capital Region Penitentiary Center, Provisional Measures regarding the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Order of March 30, 2006, considerandum 5; Case of Carpio Nicolle et al. v. Guatemala, Provisional Measures, Order of July 6, 2009, considerandum 16.

³ I/A Court H.R., Matter of Capital El Rodeo I and El Rodeo II Judicial Confinement Center, Provisional Measures regarding Venezuela, Order of February 8, 2008, considerandum 8; Case of Bámaca Velásquez, Provisional Measures regarding Guatemala, Order of January 27, 2009, considerandum 45; Matter of Fernández Ortega et al., Provisional Measures regarding Mexico, Order of April 30, 2009, considerandum 5; Matter of Milagro Sala, Provisional Measures regarding Argentina, Order of November 23, 2017, considerandum 5 (Available only in Spanish).

⁴ I/A Court H.R., Matter of Milagro Sala, Provisional Measures regarding Argentina, Order of November 23, 2017, considerandum 5 (Available only in Spanish); Matter of Capital El Rodeo I and El Rodeo II Judicial Confinement Center, Provisional Measures regarding Venezuela, Order of February 8, 2008, considerandum 9; Matter of the Criminal Institute of Plácido de Sá Carvalho, Provisional Measures regarding Brazil, Order of February 13, 2017, considerandum 6 (Available only in Spanish).

8. In this sense, Article 25(7) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure establishes that decisions granting, extending, modifying or lifting precautionary measures shall be adopted through reasoned resolutions. Article 25(9) sets forth that the Commission shall evaluate periodically, at its own initiative or at the request of either party, whether to maintain, modify or lift the precautionary measures in force. In this regard, the Commission shall assess whether the serious and urgent situation and the risk of irreparable harm that caused the adoption of the precautionary measures persist. Furthermore, it shall consider whether there are new situations that may meet the requirements outlined in Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure.

9. Similarly, the Commission recalls that while the assessment of the procedural requirements when adopting precautionary measures is carried out from a *prima facie* standard of review, keeping such measures in force requires a more rigorous evaluation.⁵ In this sense, when no imminent risk is identified, the burden of proof and argument increases over time.⁶ The Inter-American Court has indicated that the passage of a reasonable period of time without threats or intimidation, added to the lack of imminent risk, may lead to the lifting of international protection measures.⁷

10. In this matter, the Commission recalls that the precautionary measures were granted in 2014 in favor of Keron López and Garvín Sookram considering that, if the beneficiaries were executed before the Commission examined their petitions, any eventual decision could become irrelevant, resulting in irreparable harm. However, the Commission did not receive any response regarding this matter. None of the parties provided any report on the matter.

11. In regard to the lack of response from the State, the Commission recalls that failure to comply with the state duty to report on all the measures adopted in the implementation of its decisions is particularly serious, given the legal nature of these measures that seek to prevent irreparable harm to persons in serious and urgent situations.⁸ The duty to report constitutes a dual obligation that requires, for its effective fulfilment, the formal presentation of a document in due time and the specific, true, current and detailed material reference to the matters related to such obligation.⁹

12. The Commission also recalls that the beneficiaries' representation that wish the measures to continue must provide proof of the reasons for doing so.¹⁰ In this regard, the Commission observes that the representation has not responded since 2014. The Commission is therefore unable to take note of the representation's observations or to obtain information on this matter. The Commission notes that it has repeatedly demanded information from the representation. In particular, it identifies that, in 2024, upon being requested information to analyze keeping the precautionary measures in force, the representation did not provide an answer.

13. In addition to the above, it is observed that according to public information, the death sentences of the beneficiaries were annulled. In this regard, the Judge of the Supreme Court of Justice of Trinidad and Tobago, Margaret Mohammed, ordered that Messrs. Keron López and Garvín Sookram be removed from death row and that the cases be re-evaluated by a judge in the Criminal Court.¹¹

⁵ I/A Court H.R., [Case of Fernandez Ortega et al.](#), Provisional Measures regarding Mexico, Order of February 7, 2017, considerandums 16 and 17.

⁶ I/A Court H.R., previously cited.

⁷ I/A Court H.R., previously cited.

⁸ I/A Court H.R., Matter of Communities of Jiguamiandó and Curvaradó regarding Colombia, Provisional Measures, Order of February 7, 2006, considerandum 16; Case of Luisiana Ríos et al. (Radio Caracas Televisión – RCTV), Provisional Measures, Order of September 12, 2005, considerandum 17.

⁹ I/A Court H.R., previously cited.

¹⁰ I/A Court H.R., [Case of Fernandez Ortega et al.](#), Provisional Measures regarding Mexico, Order of February 7, 2017, considerandums 16 and 17.

¹¹ Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, Jada Loutoo, [Four convicted killers removed from death row](#), August 20, 2023.

14. In light of the previous considerations, the nature of the precautionary measures mechanism, the lack of information, and the analysis conducted, the Commission understands that it currently does not have elements to support compliance with the requirements of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure. In view of the above, and taking into account the exceptional and temporary nature of precautionary measures,¹² the Commission deems it appropriate to proceed with the lifting of these measures.

15. Lastly, a decision to lift precautionary measures does not imply considering, in any way, that the State has effectively complied with the precautionary measures ordered, nor can it imply that the State is relieved from its general protection obligations, in the framework of which the State is especially obliged to guarantee the rights of persons at risk and must promote the necessary investigations to clarify the facts, followed by the consequences that may be established.¹³ In the same way, the lifting of precautionary measures, or the declaration of non-compliance with them, does not imply an eventual decision on the merits of the controversy if the case were to be brought before the inter-American system through a petition, nor does it prejudice state responsibility for the events denounced.¹⁴

V. DECISION

16. The Commission decides to lift the precautionary measures granted to Keron López and Garvín Sookram, in Trinidad and Tobago.

17. The Commission emphasizes that regardless of the lifting of these measures, in accordance with Article 1(1) of the American Convention, it is the obligation of the State of Trinidad and Tobago to respect and guarantee the rights recognized therein, including the life and personal integrity of the beneficiaries.

18. The Commission recalls that the lifting of these measures does not prevent the representation from filing a new request for precautionary measures should they consider that there is a situation that meets the requirements established in Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure.

19. The Commission instructs its Executive Secretariat to notify this Resolution to the State of Trinidad and Tobago and the representation.

20. Approved on March 1, 2025, by José Luis Caballero Ochoa, President; Andrea Pochak, First Vice-President; Arif Bulkan, Second Vice-President; Edgar Stuardo Ralón Orellana; Carlos Bernal Pulido; and Gloria Monique de Mees, members of the IACHR.

Tania Reneaum Panszi
Executive Secretary

¹² I/A Court H.R., Matter of Adrián Meléndez Quijano et al., Provisional Measures regarding El Salvador, Order of August 21, 2013, para. 22; Matter of Galdámez Álvarez et al., Provisional Measures regarding Honduras, Order of November 23, 2016, para. 24.

¹³ I/A Court H.R., Matter of Velásquez Rodríguez, Provisional Measures regarding Honduras, Order of January 15, 1988, considerandum 3; Matter of Giraldo Cardona et al., Provisional Measures regarding Colombia, Order of January 28, 2015, considerandum 40.

¹⁴ I/A Court H.R., Matter of Guerrero Larez, Provisional Measures regarding Venezuela, Order of August 19, 2013, considerandum 16; Matter of Natera Balboa, Provisional Measures regarding Venezuela, Order of August 19, 2013, considerandum 16.