



Annual Report on the implementation of the IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2021

2018

January 2019



The Executive Secretariat is submitting a report on results achieved for the period of January to December 2018 in the implementation of the 2017-2021 IACHR Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Commission on March 20, 2017 (OEA/Ser.L/V/II.161, Doc. 27/17) as the principal instrument for the management of the institution.

The Report first provides a summary of the major results for the period. The summary is followed by 6 chapters, one for each of the Plan's five Strategic Objectives and one chapter on the Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations (Program 21). In a final section, conclusions are drawn about plan implementation.

We thank the member and observer countries and donors, whose voluntary contributions have been instrumental in achieving the results reported hereafter: Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, United States, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Dominican Republic; Germany, European Commission, Spain, France, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden and Switzerland; Fundación ARCUS, Fundación Aldeas Infantiles, Google, Freedom House, Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and UNHCR.

Main Achievements

- Strengthening the petition and case system by hiring 21 new professionals to increase the staff by 75%.
- Streamlining case system management and decision-making processes, increasing the number of petitions and cases examined as compared to the number in 2017. Examining 2,897 petitions at the Initial Review stage, while completing 133 reports on admissibility and 43 reports on the merits.
- Increasing the number of requests for Precautionary Measures and of precautionary measures granted, breaking the all-time yearly record.
- Strengthening the friendly settlement process, with 9 agreements being signed and 106 cases making progress in complying with reparation at the monitoring stage.
- Greater impact of IACHR mechanisms on rights as a result of two resolutions on issues of great consequence in the region: corruption and human rights, as well as the rights of migrants.
- Responding in a timely, organized and manner to the serious human rights crisis of Nicaragua through the RIRCU (Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit), by means of: 1) A working visit to Nicaragua; 2) Publishing Preliminary Observations on the visit; 3) Publishing the country report in record time; 4) creating and installing the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI); and, 5) creating and setting up the Special Mechanism to Monitor IACHR Recommendations on the ground in order to closely follow up on the serious human rights crisis in the country.
- Expanding the IACHR's public presence in the region by holding three periods of sessions outside of headquarters (Dominican Republic, Colombia and United States), conducting an unprecedented 2 country visits in the same year, to Honduras and to Brazil, and carrying out 25 working visits to 12 different countries.



- Increasing the impact of monitoring and production and enriching standards, as a result of the preparation and approval of 13 thematic and country reports.
- Publishing 3 reports on the general human rights situation in Guatemala, Venezuela and Nicaragua.
- Monitoring freedom of expression and the realization of ESCER, with the development of standards on new issues.
- Expanding the IACHR's response to specific situations in 4 countries through the Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Units (RIRCU), specifically in Brazil, Honduras, Venezuela and Nicaragua.
- Building the capacity of 5695 members of civil society and public officials on Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS) mechanisms and standards, through workshops and promotional activities, which were carried out in 26 countries.
- Providing advisory services and technical cooperation to Central America in order to strengthen the institutional framework and public policies with an enhanced human rights-based approach.
- Expanding the IACHR's presence before the OAS political bodies, giving 23 presentations over the course of the year.
- Expanding the social participation of civil society organizations in IACHR activities and processes.
- Launching the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas with the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR).
- Achieving a 33% increase of the budget from the OAS Regular Fund and 12%, from specific funds, as compared to 2017 funding levels, and obtaining the General Assembly's approval of the second of three equal increases for the 2019 budget.
- Increasing the representation of different nationalities on the Executive Secretariat staff, especially of persons from the countries of the Caribbean.
- Maintaining the Working Group on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic.
- Setting up and presenting the results of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI).
- Progressing in the implementation of the Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (SIMORE).



SO1

To contribute to the development of more effective and accessible Inter-American justice in order to overcome practices of impunity in the region and achieve comprehensive reparation for victims through decisive measures for the strengthening of the petition and case system, friendly settlements and precautionary measures.

Results achieved

- Increasing decisions to begin processing at the initial review stage by 74%, as compared to 2016.
- Increasing the management and approval of decisions on admissibility and the merits, by 189% as compared the numbers in 2016, issuing a total of 176 reports.
- Strengthening the Friendly Settlement Mechanism by launching an updated version of the Report on the Impact of Friendly Settlements and training officials and users. In addition, entering into 9 new friendly settlement agreements and verifying progress in the implementation of 106 reparation measures.
- Strengthening the precautionary measure mechanism by legal evaluation of 100% of the 1,618 requests received in 2018, a 56% increase in the number of requests evaluated in 2016. Of the total number of these requests, 120 precautionary measures have been granted, which stands as the highest number ever in the history of the IACHR. Also, the number precautionary measures that were granted in the space of less than one month from the date of filing quadrupled.

In 2018, the petition and case system was greatly strengthened by the hiring of 21 new professionals and, consequently, procedural backlog could continue to decline. In the area of friendly settlements, results were also positive in terms of the ongoing efforts to move matters forward in that process.

As for precautionary measures, the team has provided an effective response to the sharp rise in demand, stemming from the worsening human rights situation in several regions of the hemisphere, as well as greater awareness of the mechanism. We have been able to keep up with examination of the matters and attest to an increase in the number of precautionary measures granted, partly as a result of the serious human rights situation in Nicaragua and the IACHR closely following it through its Monitoring Mechanism.

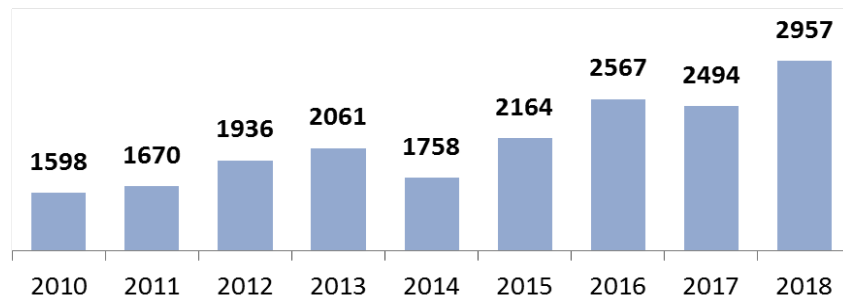


Based on all of the foregoing, the conclusion can be drawn that results for Strategic Objective 1 have been more than satisfactory in 2018.

P1: Special Procedural Delay Reduction Program

In 2018, a total of 2,957 petitions were received, representing an 18.6% increase compared to those received in the preceding year and a 15% increase over those in 2016. It is projected that 3,050 petitions will be received in 2019.

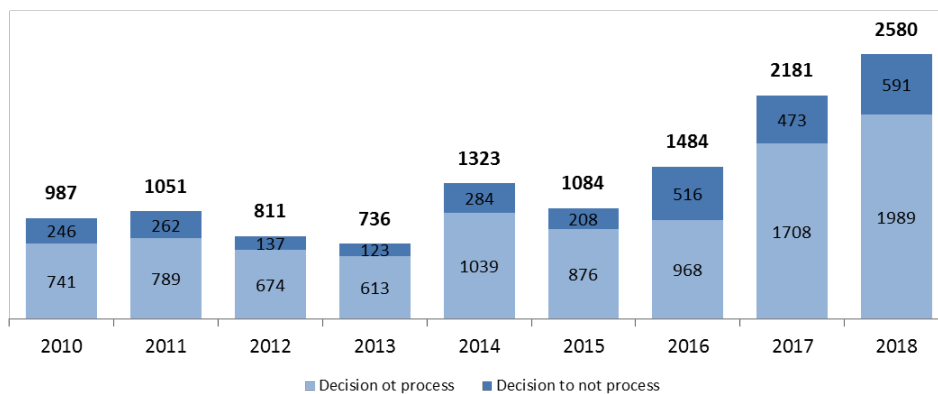
Petitions received per year



➤ Initial review

In 2018, a total of 2,897 petitions were reviewed. Additional information was requested from the petitioners in 251 of those petitions, while a decision was made as to whether or not to start processing in 2,580 petitions. It was decided to start processing 591 of those petitions and to not process 1,989 of them. This means that the number of decisions to start processing increased by 18.2% compared to 2017 and 74% compared to 2016.

Decisions to process or to not process



The table below shows reviews conducted by year of receipt of petition.



	Start processing	No processing	Request additional information
Petitions prior to 2016	113	168	0
Petitions 2016	69	77	9
Petitions 2017	409	1120	242
Petitions rejected in which additional information was received	0	624	66*

*requires additional review

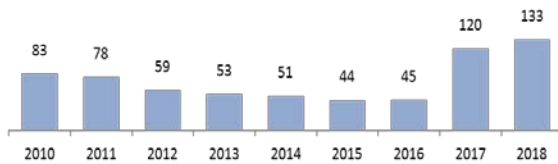
As of the close of 2018, there were 6,963 petitions at the review stage pending final decision to process, which came from prior years.

➤ **Stages of admissibility, merits and Court**

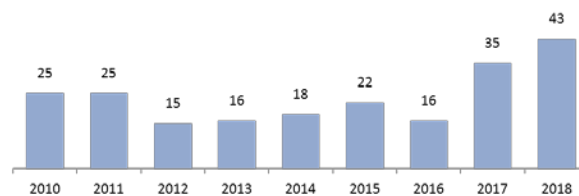
In 2018, the IACHR approved 133 reports on admissibility, which meant an 11% increase over the preceding year and a 196% increase over 2016.

Additionally, the IACHR approved 43 reports on the merits, a 23% increase over 2017 and a 175% increase over 2016.

Reports on admissibility approved¹



Reports on merits approved



In qualitative terms, the Commission deepened and consolidated its legal precedents on a wide variety of topics in the reports on the merits adopted by it this year. These topics include freedom of expression and subsequent liability, use of pretrial detention, death penalty, States’ obligations to young people doing military service, forced disappearance, access to information and military archives, racial discrimination in the exercise of punitive power of the State, torture, duty to protect the right to life, due criminal process, due punitive administrative process, extrajudicial executions, failure to comply with judicial rulings, use of force against migrant persons, sexual violence, right to equality in the context of reparation in transitional contexts, due process in proceedings relating to migratory situation and the right of non-return (*non-refoulement*), right to health, judicial independence, prison benefits and purpose of punishment, conditions of rights and States’ position as guarantor for persons deprived of liberty, and persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the Commission made its pronouncements in reports on the merits about issues that had not been addressed up until that point, developing legal precedents in so doing. These issues include prejudice-

¹ The figures from prior years, cited in the First Partial-Term Report, were corrected, because the figure for reports on inadmissibility approved had not been included.

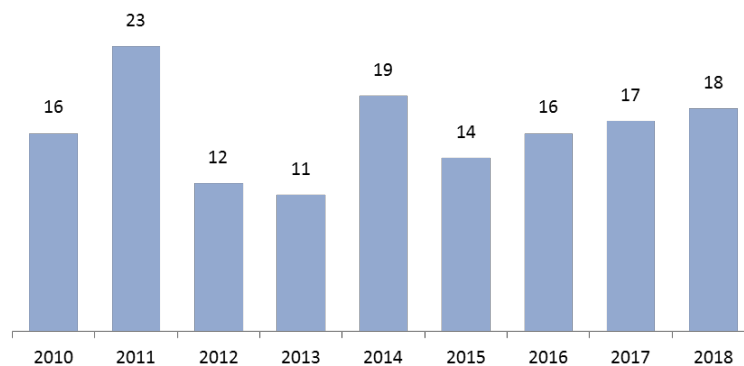


based violence against LGBTI persons, discrimination based on sexual orientation in public service and the work place, right to health and medical secrecy, legal capacity of persons with disability, institutionalization in psychiatric facilities, duties of regulation, supervision and oversight of business activities, especially those entailing dangerous jobs, right to work, the worse forms of child labor and violence and sexual harassment against young girls in school settings.

➤ **Proceedings brought by the IACHR before the IA Court of HR**

In 2018, the IACHR sent 18 cases to the Inter-American Court, a 6% increase over the preceding year and 13% over 2016. The IACHR expects to refer 20 new cases to the Inter-American Court in 2019.

Cases sent to the Inter-American Court



The IACHR also requested two provisional measures in 2018 and continued to be engaged in written proceedings in contentious matters, filing around 40 pleadings in active cases. The Commission fulfilled its mandate under the Convention to appear at all hearings before the Court, on both contentious matters as well as on judgment supervision and provisional measures. In 2018, IACHR representatives appeared at a total of 17 of such hearings. In addition, the IACHR submitted more than 80 pleadings to the Inter-American Court on the subject of judgment compliance and provisional measures.

➤ **Results in procedural delay reduction**

Over the past 2 years, the IACHR Executive Secretariat has used significant resources to address the procedural backlog that has built up since the 1990s, substantially overhauling how it organizes the work of the Secretariat; making more efficient and strategic the management of human resources and the use of available technological materials and creating a pilot management model, among other actions.

During this time period, significant administrative measures were implemented, including the creation of the Assistant Executive Secretariat, which exclusively handles the petition and case system, friendly settlements and precautionary measures; reinforcing the staff of this Secretariat by adding 21 more professionals than there were in August 2016; section coordinators exclusively focusing on their duties and strengthening the job security of the consultant team contractors, in addition to raising the institutional status of the protection group to a precautionary measures section. In September 2017, the IACHR Executive Secretariat also put into operation a Processing Unit, which centralizes the administrative processing of petitions and cases into the



different procedural stages, so that staff attorneys are able to focus exclusively on the legal side of cases. Several efforts have also been made to update the computerized procedural management system to add new features, which help to make internal work easier and bring about greater transparency and efficiency. The new administrative structure was announced on August 17, 2017 and was made public along with an organizational chart in press release 123/2017.

As for procedural-related matters, one first step taken was to approve Resolution 1/16 and to apply it to 360 cases that had been undergoing processing for more than 10 years, in order to join examination of admissibility and merits into a single report. Application of Resolution 1/16 has been progressive and staggered; thus far, notice of 307 petitions has been served. This is the highest number of petitions to move on to the merits stage ever in the history of the IACHR in a single, similar length of time.

The IACHR took new measures, following a broad participatory process of regional consultations of States and civil society with specialists and IACHR technical staff during the drafting stage of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and the Programs of Action thereof, such as strictly applying the requirements to start processing a petition, decreasing the number of requests for information at this stage, and implementing a policy of deactivating petitions whose petitioners have been inactive for protracted periods of time. At the admissibility stage, the use of a new, more concise admissibility report template; at the merits stage, cutting down on the length of the description of the factual platform and the length of the report with a view toward simplification, in addition to specialization into work portfolios and the use of accumulation or joining of cases. All of these changes aim to significantly increase the production rate of reports while preserving the technical depth and quality of their content.

Additionally, in keeping with a longstanding demand of the IAHRs, over these past two years we have been able to further bolster case and petition system personnel. In this regard, pursuant to the rigorous criteria set forth under its hiring policy, based on the principles of merit, transparency and representativeness, the IACHR Executive Secretariat was able to strengthen the institution and personnel to the most significant degree of the past decades. A total of 21 professionals were added to the area, that is, a 75% increase as compared to August 2016 staffing.

In order for this important process to continue, and to underscore its importance to the petition and case system, in February 2018 the IACHR created a working group to support the process of overcoming procedural backlog. The group is made up of Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño and Commissioners Joel Hernández, Francisco Eguiguren, Luis Ernesto Vargas and Executive Secretary Paulo Abrão. As a first step, this group played a leading role in the second stage of consultations, which was open to all users of the system and was held in June 2018 to receive additional suggestions on how to address the challenge of years of built up procedural backlog. After reviewing all suggestions, the IACHR decided to adopt the following additional measures for this second stage of measures under the Plan of Action of the Special Procedural Delay Reduction Program, as established in its Strategic Plan:

Initial Review Stages

1. Creating a task force to overcome procedural delay at the initial review stage

The IACHR has created a special task force team to resolve procedural delay at the initial review stage. The IACHR was conducting initial review of petitions received in 2017. However, in addition to initial review of 2017 petitions, there is also a high number of petitions dating back to before 2017, for which no decision has been made yet as to whether or not they can be processed. Moreover, the parties to the petitions, that were



reviewed over the past two years, were not fully notified either. In this regard, the IACHR is going to continue to make efforts to review and start processing pending petitions, and will overhaul current practices, which proved inadequate to provide a timely response to the demand of the victims. The IACHR decided that this special group would temporarily be overseen by the office of the Executive Secretary, who put together a group of specialists to set up said task force, and they are currently engaged in the review of all petitions received as of December 31, 2018.

Admissibility Stage

1. Pilot plan for serial decision-making on the same issue

The Commission extended to the admissibility stage the pilot plan of serial or collective report approval, originally adopted at the merits stage for matters pertaining to issues of criminal and punitive due process. In practice, implementation of this plan raised productivity significantly: all cases about criminal due process in the context of application of the death penalty in a country were approved; and progress was made on the recurring issue of pretrial detention and double jeopardy, to cite only a few examples. The Commission resolved to continue with specialization by portfolio, at the merits, admissibility and even at the initial review stages of petitions. For this purpose, the IACHR instructed the Executive Secretary to a systematic practice based on report templates for repetitive matters. Thus, part of the Admissibility Section team was assigned to this pilot plan, which will consist of drafting reports on admissibility with model or form paragraphs following the same line of analysis for different situations dealing with the same issue.

2. Examination of colorable claim

When the Commission adopted the current admissibility report template, it decided that the examination of colorable claim should only consist of a brief paragraph. This is because admissibility reports are mainly supposed to focus on examination of exhaustion of domestic remedies and colorable claim, for the most part, should only be mentioned in connection with the articles that will be examined at the merits stage. Nonetheless, in most reports of the past years, the analysis has been progressively expanding. The IACHR decided to return to the colorable claim analysis template originally planned to be more expeditious over the whole cycle: drafting, report review, translation, discussion and approval.

Measures common to Admissibility and Merits stages

The IACHR approved the following measures:

1. Reassign the most experienced attorneys with the Case and Petition System to work directly in the respective sections of admissibility and merits as a measure to focus efforts to overcome procedural delay at these stages;
2. Decrease the number of requests for observations at the admissibility and merits stages, maintaining the necessary flexibility based on each particular case;
3. Continue to move forward in simplifying admissibility and merits reports, by identifying cases that are identical to other cases previously adjudged by the IACHR or the IA Court of HR, being ever so careful for the case to be able to be submitted eventually to the jurisdiction of the Court without any limitations on the facts;
4. Keep in place the measure of joining or accumulating cases when parties, facts or similar patterns of conduct are identified, while always ensuring full respect for the right of defense and of equality of the parties;
5. As for archiving policy, the IACHR resolved to reduce the time period of inactivity of the parties from four years to three years for transmittal of a notice of potential archiving; and to archive cases at the merits stage on the grounds of failure to comply with a statutory requirement by the petitioner, specifically, failure to submit additional observations on the merits, in keeping with the circumstances set forth in subsections a) and



b) of Article 42.1 of the Rules of Procedure. Notices of the archiving of a case are transmitted after a period of inactivity, whether or not proceedings are pending. The IACHR deems it appropriate to inquire of the petitioners whether or not the grounds subsist for the petition and the petitioners are still interested in the claim moving forward, because new events may have transpired and it may be that the petitioners no longer wish for the petition or case to continue to be processed. In other words, the petition or case will be archived, in any cases in which the IACHR does not have the necessary information available to it to reach a decision on the petition or case, despite efforts made to obtain said information, on the grounds that there is an evident sign of a lack of interest in the claim being processed.

6. Continue to follow the policy of deactivation of petitions, when the petitioner is inactive, taking the utmost care, in keeping with the particular circumstances of the case and the existence of information to enable the IACHR to rule, even when there is no procedural momentum of the petitioner

7. Continue to implement its policy of advance review of petitions or *per saltum* treatment, particularly, in cases where it is proven that the decision may remedy grave structural situations that will have an impact on the enjoyment of human rights, or other situations in which the passage of time may deprive the decision of its *effet utile* or practical effect of the law.

P2: Program to Expand the Use of Friendly Settlements

In 2018, important results were achieved in moving cases forward in the friendly settlement process and in disseminating information and raising awareness about the mechanism. These efforts are described below:

➤ Results achieved and promotion of innovative methods of follow-up to friendly settlements

In 2018, fifteen new matters came into the friendly settlement negotiation portfolio. It must also be noted that a total of 33 matters were removed from the friendly settlement negotiation portfolio because the negotiation process came to a close (at the request of the parties). As of the close of 2018 and the planning process for 2019, there are 105 matters in the process of negotiation or the stage prior to the issuance of the Approval Report.

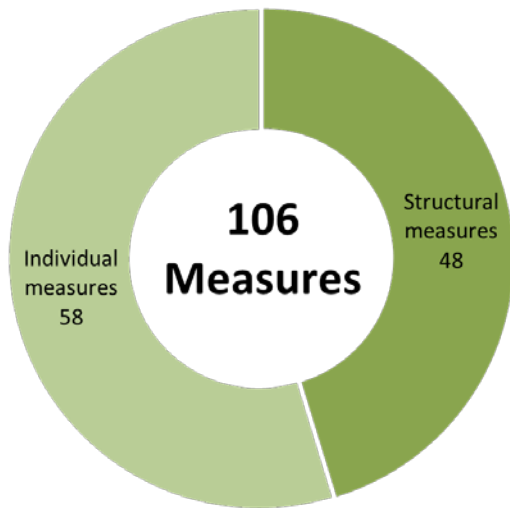
Throughout 2018, the IACHR facilitated 41 working meetings with the participation of States, petitioners and victims, regarding matters at a variety of stages of negotiation or implementation of friendly settlement agreements. During this year, parties entered into nine new friendly settlement agreements. In particular, in July 2018, the first friendly settlement of the State of Costa Rica was signed.

The Commission is pleased to see that, with the progress made in the implementation of measures set forth in friendly settlement agreements, 6 petitions and cases were moved from the status of partial compliance to full compliance and 1 case was moved from pending compliance to partial compliance.

Likewise, the Commission notes that progress was made in the implementation of 106 measures, with 69 measures of reparation attaining total compliance; 20 measures of reparation, substantial partial compliance; and 17 measures, partial compliance. Of the 106 posting progress in 2018, 48 are of a structural and 58 are of an individual nature. It is of note that in 2017, the Commission declared 16 measures in total compliance; thus, with this indicator, we can attest to a considerable rise in full compliance with measures of reparation.



**Number of measures advancing by type of impact
 (structural-individual)**



Number of measures advancing by level of compliance

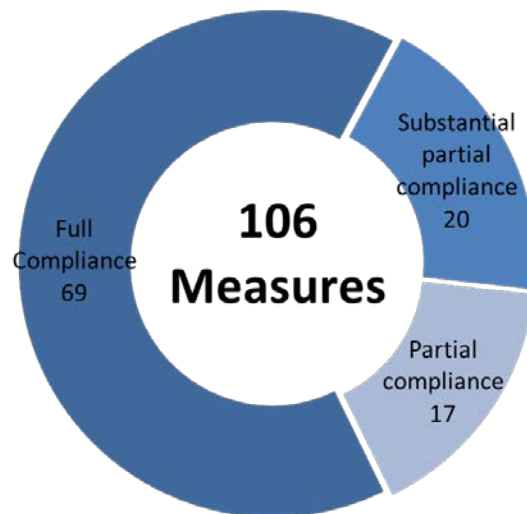


Table of progress in implementation of measures by country

	Total measures progressing	Full compliance	Substantial partial compliance	Partial compliance	Progress structural measures	Progress individual measures
Argentina	26	15	5	6	15	11
Bolivia	1	1			1	
Brazil	3	3			3	
Chile	4	4			4	
Colombia	29	12	8	9	12	17
Guatemala	12	8		4	5	7
Mexico	5	3		2	1	4
Peru	23	20	3		6	17
Venezuela	3	3			1	2
Total Measures progressing	106	69	16	21	48	58



➤ **Dissemination of the friendly settlement mechanism**

The Commission launched an updated edition of its [Report on the Impact of the Friendly Settlement](#). Progress was also made in the dissemination of the procedure through five training workshops and a seminar on international arbitration and mediation.



P3: Program to Strengthen Precautionary Measures

In 2018, through its precautionary measure mechanism, the IACHR continued to protect the rights of individuals throughout the hemisphere, who face a situation of grave and urgent risk of irreparable harm. For this purpose, it implemented measures to meet the challenge of increasing efficiency of the precautionary measure mechanism, in a context of increased demand for the mechanism, as described below.

➤ **Strengthening institutional management**

On May 10, 2018, the IACHR approved [Resolution 3/2018](#) for the purpose of ensuring the efficiency of the precautionary measure mechanism and helping to step up the pace of decision-making. The resolution makes it possible to focus efforts on examination of the matters of at-risk individuals, who are in need of a precautionary measure to safeguard their rights. Under this resolution, the Commission brought to light some of the matters or claims which it has historically and consistently been considering and cannot be examined through the precautionary measure mechanism, in view of the fact that such matters require a thorough examination of the allegations in the claims in conjunction with the obligations set forth in the American Declaration or Convention. Such an examination is the province of the petition and case system. This Resolution strengthens the initial review of the requests received by the Commission, ensuring greater predictability as to the scope of the mechanism and aiding the decision-making process on such types of matters.

Additionally, in order for the Commission to have up-to-date information from the party requesting the measure and to streamline examination of the requests it receives, the IACHR resolved to deactivate precautionary measure requests for which information was requested from the party or parties and, once the response period established in the communication has lapsed, no response has been received. It was also determined to deactivate requests when no information has been requested from the State and no updated information has been made available by the party or parties seeking the measure with a period of 6 months as of the date of the last information submitted. As of the date of the Resolution, inactive matters are periodically reviewed for deactivation. In the event that a matter has been deactivated and additional information is submitted, the information will be processed under a new precautionary measure registry identifier, based on the current situation of risk.

➤ **Results achieved**

In 2018, a total of 1,618 requests for precautionary measures were received, representing a 56% increase over requests received in 2017 and 52% over those received in 2016. This is the highest number of requests for



precautionary measures ever received by the IACHR in its history. All requests received thus far have been examined and categorized based on signs of degree of seriousness and urgency in accordance with the requirements established in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure.

Given the serious situation faced by many people requesting precautionary measures, especially in the context of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, in 2018 the Commission granted a significant number of precautionary asures without asking the State in advance for information, pursuant to the exception provided for in Article 25.5 of the Rules of Procedure. In fact, most precautionary measures granted this year (58%) were granted in this way, that is, without any prior request for relevant information to the State. In such matters, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Commission has examined whether or not it is appropriate to keep these measures in effect.

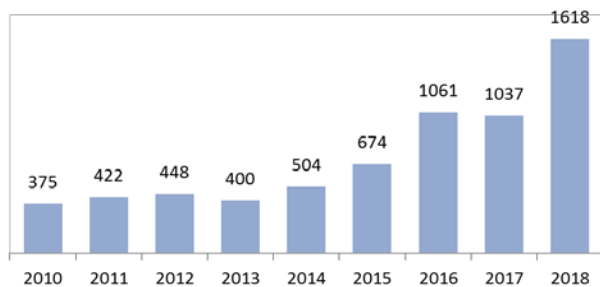
It must be noted as well that throughout this year, the Commission received a high number of requests for precautionary measures during its country visits on-site and from parties in situations of high vulnerability. This led to an increase in the use of technology to make access more flexible for requestors to recount the situations and events of risk by submitting recorded audio accounts or even through *WhatsApp*.

In order to achieve a timely response to requests for precautionary measures and because of the exponential increase in requests, in 2018 a substantial number of staff was added to the Precautionary and Provisional Measures Section, doubling the number engaged in both legal and administrative tasks as compared to the number working in late 2016.

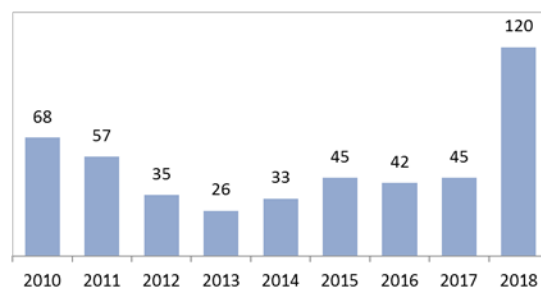
Over the course of 2018, 96 resolutions were issued: 86 granted, 7 lifted, 1 extended, 1 follow-up. Under the aforementioned resolutions, the IACHR granted a total of 120 precautionary measures, representing the highest number of such measures granted by the IACHR and a 186% increase over those granted in 2016. A high number of the precautionary measures granted (67) were approved in relation to the human rights crisis in Nicaragua.

Measures were granted for human rights defenders, journalists, groups in situations of vulnerability or historic discrimination such as women, children and adolescents, Afro-descendant communities, indigenous peoples, forcibly displaced persons, members of the LGBTI community, persons deprived of liberty, migrants, justice operators and persons with disability.

Requests for Precautionary Measures



Precautionary Measures Granted



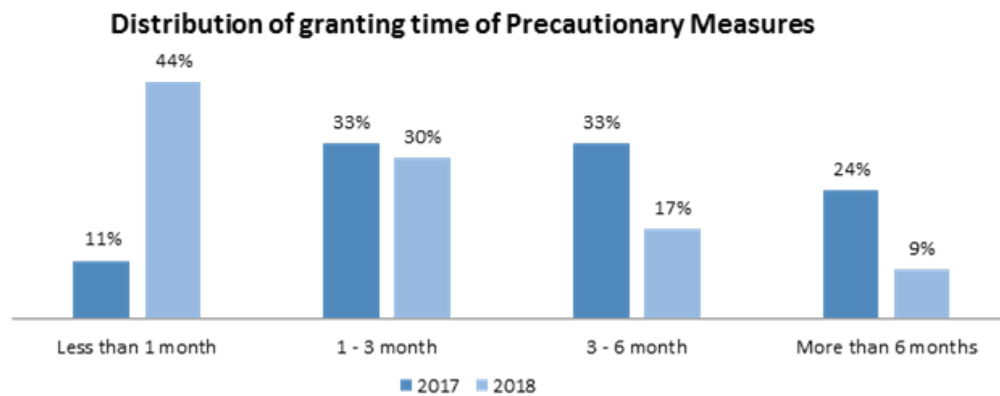
It must be noted that the Commission held 41 working meetings and 5 public hearings on precautionary measures currently in effect at its periods of sessions in order to identify and solve difficulties in the implementation thereof. The working meetings and hearings were related to request to 13 States. This represents progress, as compared to 2017, when meetings related of 10 States were convened by the IACHR.

Table of the number of meetings and hearings on precautionary measures by State involved

State	Total
Argentina	2
Bahamas	1
Brazil	1
Chile	2
Colombia	10
Ecuador	3
Guatemala	4
Honduras	5
Mexico	7
Nicaragua	1
Paraguay	1
Peru	4
Venezuela	5
Total	46

The Commission also sent more than 700 communications to States and representatives regarding implementation of measures in effect. During its country and working visits, the IACHR had the chance to engage in dialogue with authorities and representatives of the beneficiaries of precautionary measures about compliance thereof. In 2018, the IACHR issued 10 press releases about the precautionary measures it approved.

The time it took for precautionary measures to be granted was significantly reduced as compared to previous years, taking an average of 74 days. The percentage of these measures granted within the first month as of the date of request quadrupled, increasing from 11% in 2017 to 44% in 2018.



2

² Dates of request and granting of precautionary measures can be viewed in the available resolutions posted on the IACHR webpage. (<http://www.oas.org/pt/cidh/decisiones/cautelares.asp>)



Because of the exceptional at-risk situation of many of the individuals requesting the protection measure, most measures were granted in 2018 (58%) without any previous request for information to the State, as provided for under Article 25.5 of the Rules of Procedure. In such matters, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Commission has examined the appropriateness of keeping these measures in effect based on information

P4: Program for Transparency and Access to Information

In 2018, the IACHR increased efforts to bring about greater transparency, as described below.

In March, the Executive Secretariat released the [first partial-term performance report of implementation of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan](#). The Executive Secretary presented this report to the Permanent Council in June. Likewise, in September, the IACHR [released](#) the evaluation and results of its work during the first quarter of 2018. These results were also presented by the Executive Secretary to the Permanent Council in October. In so doing, the IACHR has established a new way to account for its work, that is, on a quarterly basis.

As of the issuing of Resolution 3/18, the Commission has brought to light some of the matters or claims, which it has historically and consistently been considering and cannot be examined through the precautionary measure mechanism.

In addition, the Commission also issued 3 press releases to shed light on or make transparent the measures it has taken to overcome procedural backlog and to strengthen the precautionary measure mechanism. In these releases, the IACHR reports on strengthening the organizational structure of the petition and case system by adding professional staff and making changes in processes, by making the work flow and internal procedure manual public. In these press releases, the Commission posts the results achieved as of the present time and quantitative data on the petition and case system.

The IACHR has prepared and published data, which up until that time had never been released to the public, about the case system in its [Press Release 257/18](#). In this release, the IACHR's workflow and processes were made public for the first time ever.

The Commission has also engaged in initiatives with civil society through meetings at the periods of sessions.

Lastly, throughout the year, consultations and outreach were conducted with a view to prepare a draft Transparency and Access to Information Policy proposal. In this way, the major challenges were identified in the area of access to information and a draft is in the process of being drawn up in order to support the preparation of the IACHR's Access to Information Policy. It is anticipated that a draft Policy and also an official policy on access to its historic archives will ready for review by the IACHR in 2019.



SO2

To have an impact on prevention measures and the factors that lead to human rights violations through the coordinated use of IACHR mechanisms and functions to achieve improved capacity for monitoring and coordinating relevant, timely and appropriate responses

Results achieved

- Greater impact of IACHR mechanisms on rights as a result of two of resolutions on issues of great consequence in the region: corruption and human rights, as well as the rights of migrants.
- Expanding the IACHR's public presence in the region by holding three periods of sessions outside of headquarters (Dominican Republic, Colombia and United States), conducting an unprecedented 2 country visits in the same year, to Honduras and Brazil, and carrying out 25 working visits to 12 different countries.
- A structured and coordinated response to the grave human rights crisis of Nicaragua through the RIRCU (Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit), with: 1) A working visit to Nicaragua; 2) Publishing Preliminary Observations on the visit; 3) Publishing the country report in record time; 4) creating and setting up the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI); and, 5) creating and setting up the Special Mechanism to Monitor IACHR Recommendations on the ground in order to closely follow the serious human rights crisis in the country
- Expanding the monitoring of the general human rights situation in countries through the release of three country reports on Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela.
- Conducting the consultation on the Persons with Disability Unit.
- Increasing the production of and further enriching Inter-American human rights standards.
- Monitoring freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, along with the development of innovative standards on new issues.
- Placing greater emphasis on public hearings to address the topic of forced disappearance at the periods of sessions.

In 2018, the IACHR has continued to make progress in integrating its monitoring functions and introducing an intersectional approach to its work agenda with relation to countries and themes, as expressed in several outputs delivered by the IACHR. Likewise, over the first quarter, progress was made in establishing area action



protocols, drawing up yearly action plans, and in operationalizing the new thematic units created in 2017 (Memory, Truth and Justice; Older Persons; and Persons with Disability).

The results are reflected in the indicators presented in this report. There was a proportional increase for the period in the production of letters and releases, as compared to the preceding year. All of the IACHR's priority issues have been covered by press releases, striking a better thematic balance. The human rights situation of 29 countries of the region has been monitored in general or specific issues have been examined by the IACHR through press releases, Article 18 or 41 letters, or public hearings.

It is important to underscore the challenge posed by the serious human rights crisis in Nicaragua in terms of the acts of violence that transpired as of April 18, 2018. In this regard, the IACHR put into place a [Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit](#) (RIRCU, also known as SACROI from its Spanish language acronym), in order to pay special attention to the human rights situation in the country. The IACHR has conducted working visits, produced a report and set up two special investigation and monitoring mechanisms: the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI from its Spanish acronym) and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), which will be explained below.

The creation and operationalizing of all these mechanisms has taken place in record time. Within the space of 2 months, from the time the RIRCU was set up, the visit conducted and the report issued, MESENI and the GIEI had been instituted. This has all enabled the IACHR to have a timely, comprehensive and effective impact.

In 2018, the IACHR has redesigned and implemented a new template for the Annual Report. The main changes it implemented are listed hereunder:

1. Chapter II.D regarding follow-up to recommendations is added to Chapter I.i. The memorandum with the proposal approved by the IACHR includes new classification criteria, the suggestion to classify the level of compliance by recommendation, underscoring the challenges and progress for the year, and writing individual case follow-up sheets.
2. In Chapter III, all information on the IACHR's Monitoring and Promotion work was consolidated through its Thematic and Country Rapporteurs using: country visits; working visits, technical visits; press releases; requests for information (Articles 41 and 18); thematic and country reports; training and promotion activities.
3. In Chapter IV.A, an overview on the human rights situation in the hemisphere will be added, based on the Commission's monitoring efforts, highlighting major trends, issues, challenges, progress and best practices with regard to both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

All programs have made progress over the period, so the conclusion can be drawn that implementation of this strategic objective has been satisfactory.



P5: Program to Improve the Scope and Impact of the Monitoring of Human Rights Situations by Theme and Country

The institutional changes promoted in Monitoring continued to yield significant results in 2018, as listed and described below:

➤ **Integration of the work methodology and processes for thematic and country-specific monitoring**

After integrating the monitoring sections in terms of structure, a process of standardization and harmonization of work flows, processes and instruments was undertaken, as well as the drafting of protocols, all of which concluded in 2018. By late 2018, the Executive Secretariat had in place standardized action protocols and harmonized workflows with respect to each of the IACHR's mechanisms. At present, there are five completed protocols: working visits, request for information letters, thematic reports, press release drafting and conducting promotional activities.

➤ **Development of innovative human rights standards in the region.**

In 2018, significant progress was made on standards, which made it possible to expand the scope of protection of persons in the Americas and this, in turn, helped to flesh out interpretation of the human rights set forth in Inter-American instruments. The new issues about which the IACHR developed standards include:

- **Harassment** in several different settings, including the school: as a result of the **rape of an indigenous girl**, the IACHR granted precautionary measures to an indigenous girl, known as U.V.O. and her family (PM 1014-17) in May 2018, ordering, to the extent it is pertinent, the adoption of culturally appropriate measures with a gender-based approach and taking into consideration her best interests to ensure U.V.O.'s right to education and for her to be able to attend school in a safe setting;
- **Evictions and internal displacement:** the IACHR granted four precautionary measures to individuals who were evicted and displaced from the Laguna Larga Community (MC 412/17) in September 2017, indigenous families of the Chaab'il Ch'och' community (MC 860/17), the Maya Q'eqchi Community "Nueva Semuy Chacchilla" (MC 872-17) and the Maya Q'ueqchi Community "La Cumbre Sa'kuxhá" (MC 44/18), in January, February and June 2018, respectively. Through these measures and its report on the Situation of Human Rights in Guatemala, the IACHR has made its first pronouncement on internal displacement caused by forced evictions and established standards in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement for the purpose of: (i) preventing displacement; (ii) protecting and providing assistance during displacement; (iii) providing and facilitating humanitarian assistance; and (iv) facilitating return, reintegration, resettlement, and rehabilitation or fair compensation, in safe conditions;
- **Forced migration of persons:** the IACHR drafted specific standards to address the situation of forced migration of Venezuelans in the region from a human rights and shared responsibility-based perspective through approval of Resolution 2/18 on Forced Migration of Venezuelan;
- **Child separation from parents on borders:** the IACHR granted precautionary measures to children, who had been separated from their fathers and mothers (MC 731/18) and, to persons who had been separated from their children (MC 505/18), as a result of the "Zero Tolerance" policy of the United States, in August 2018. Through these measures, the IACHR requested that measures be adopted to



protect the rights to family life, humane treatment and to identity of the beneficiaries, through reunification of the children with their biological families. Likewise, the Commission requested that measures be adopted to immediately ensure adequate, free and regular communication between the children and their families; to provide medical and psychological assistance, and interpreting services; as well as, in the event that any person were deported separately from his or her child, to immediately adopt measures to ensure reunification. Lastly, the IACHR requested the suspension of any migratory proceeding that may result in the separation of children from their parents;

- **Political participation of Afro-descendant women:** recognizing the obstacles faced by these women to gain access to political office and recommending that the necessary actions be taken to further the political participation of Afro-descendant and Afro-Caribbean women and women of the diaspora, through special measures and affirmative actions to promote a gender and ethnic-racial balance in decision-making positions. Likewise, the Commission established the duty of States to adopt appropriate measures to encourage political parties to make sure that Afro-descendant women have fair and equal opportunity to run and be elected to all public offices (CP 066/18).
- **LGBTI persons:** beginning with authorship of the thematic report “Progress and Challenges toward Recognition of the Rights of LGBTI Persons in the Americas,” the Commission has developed standards with respect to the recognition of the rights of LGBTI persons as a fundamental factor to achieve equality, dignity and non-discrimination, such as: a) the obligation to gather data on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression and corporal diversity; b) the obligation of protection against non-recognition by society; c) the obligation of the State to promote cultural changes against prejudice and discrimination; d) freedom of religion and non-discrimination against LGBTI persons; e) the culture and responsibility of private business; f) political participation, guarantee of more egalitarian societies and consolidation of representative democracy; g) education as an essential means for the consolidation of respect for the rights of LGBTI persons; h) health and vulnerabilities of LGBTI persons; i) the role of the judiciary in the defense and guarantee of the human rights of LGBTI persons; j) access and control of economic resources as a form of comprehensively developing personality and k) non-regression of rights acquired through recognition of gender identity.
- **Deprivation of liberty:** the IACHR has noted that a preference for building maximum security prisons is at odds with a model based on guaranteeing the human rights of persons deprived of liberty and their family members. In addition, the IACHR examined infringements of human rights at so-called ‘therapeutic communities,’ and underscored States’ obligation to oversee this type of treatment. In this context, in order to avoid consequent institutionalization, the Commission emphasized the importance of establishing outpatient services for the treatment of persons with problematic drug use. Likewise, the IACHR found detention based exclusively on the act of participating in public protest to be arbitrary.
- **Women’s rights:** the IACHR urged States to refrain from adopting measures that represent regression in respect and guarantee of women’s rights; and to document, investigate and punish emerging forms of violence against women, children and adolescents, such as sexual and workplace harassment, obstetric violence, violence taking place in digital settings and on Internet, human trafficking, among other ones. Additionally, the IACHR reaffirms that gender-based perspective is a concept that sheds light on the position of inequality and structural subordination of women vis-à-vis men based on their gender and is a key tool to combat discrimination and violence against women, in keeping with Inter-American standards on the subject matter. In this regard, it urged States to prevent the influence of trends aimed at limiting the rights of women, such as the worrisome use of the phrase “gender ideology” pejoratively to refer to a gender-based perspective. The IACHR announced the adoption of a Protocol for States on the investigation and litigation of cases of violent deaths of women (femicides). This marks an important

forward step for the prevention, punishment and eradication of gender-based violence against women and young and adolescent girls in a country. The IACHR also issued an appeal to States to promote and strengthen political participation of Afro-Latin American Women and Afro-Caribbean Women. The Commission is concerned about the forced sterilizations that were carried out in Peru as part of a systematic, violent and discriminatory policy particularly targeting indigenous and *campesina* women, who are still awaiting justice to this day and it also reiterated to the Peruvian State its obligation to investigate the policy of forced sterilizations without delay, earnestly and thoroughly in order to identify and punish those responsible. Lastly, the IACHR affirmed that States are jointly responsible for preventing cyber-violence against women and confronting it, in particular, in response to new types of gender-based violence against women that have been emerging (“doxing”, “sextortion” and “trolling,” “revenge porn,” etc.).

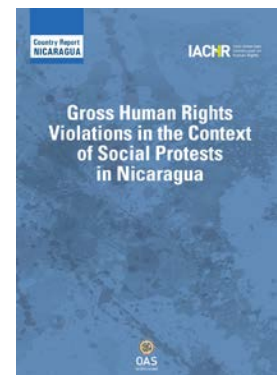
➤ Coordinating strategy to deal with the serious human rights crisis situation in Nicaragua

It is important to underscore the challenge that is posed by the context of the grave human rights crisis in Nicaragua in terms of the acts of violence that took place as of April 18, 2018. In this regard, the IACHR set up on May 3, 2018, a [Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit \(RIRCU\)](#) in order to pay special attention to the human rights situation in the country.

From May 17 to 21, 2018, the IACHR conducted a **working visit to Nicaragua** in order to take a first look at the human rights situation in the country on the ground, document these events and issue concrete preliminary recommendations to the State. On May 21, the IACHR released its [Preliminary Observations](#) on the visit, and on June 22, the IACHR released its [Final Report Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua](#).

On May 30, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OEA) reached an agreement with the State of Nicaragua to create an international mechanism of investigation into the incidents of violence that have been taking place in the country since April 18. The IACHR introduced a proposal to create an **Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI)**, with assurances of autonomy and independence, in order to aid and support the investigations into the violent incidents. [The GIEI was set up in Nicaragua on July 2, 2018](#).

In addition, the IACHR set up the [Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua \(MESENI\)](#), by dispatching its technical team, which began its work in Nicaragua on June 24, 2018. (For more information, see Program 21)



➤ Release of report on the human rights situation in Venezuela

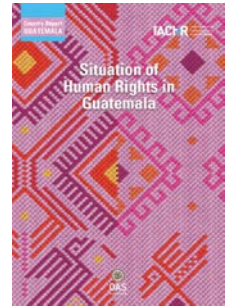
On February 12, 2018, the IACHR released the report “[Situation of Human Rights in Venezuela](#)”. The Commission decided to write this report in response to the deep deterioration of respect for human rights and the grave political, economic and social crisis Venezuela is undergoing. The report examines the institutional and human rights crisis of the past two years, with special emphasis on the events of 2017.

The report is divided up into four main focal points of concern to the IACHR: democratic institutions; social protest and freedom of expression; violence and citizen security; and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights (ESCER). It also examines the cross-cutting effects of specific infringements of rights that persons, groups and population segments face as a result of their higher-risk condition, and historic

discrimination and exclusion, such as women, children and adolescents; older adults; human rights defenders; persons deprived of liberty; migrants; and refugees or persons in a similar situation; among others.

➤ **Release of report on the situation of human rights in Guatemala**

On March 27, 2018, the IACHR released its report "[Situation of Human Rights in Guatemala](#)". This report was based on observation during the country visit from July 31 to August 4, 2017, as well as other visits of the IACHR and its Thematic Rapporteurships, on the Commission's monitoring functions under its mandate and through the use of different mechanisms available to it, such as hearings, processing of precautionary measures, petitions and cases.



The IACHR addressed the issues of the justice administration system, the situation of human rights defenders and justice operators, women, children and adolescents, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, migrants and displaced persons, the situation of freedom of expression, issues related to citizen security, and the situation of persons under the custody of the State. The report then provides recommendations to assist the Guatemalan State in strengthening its efforts to protect and guarantee human rights in the country.

➤ **Preparation and approval of 13 thematic and country-specific reports**

In 2018, the following thematic reports were written by the rapporteurships:

Table of thematic and country reports:

Rapporteurship	Report Title
Country Rapporteurship /Follow-up.	Situation Report. Special Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case of the IACHR.
Country Rapporteurship /Follow-up.	Final Report: Follow-up Mechanism on the Ayotzinapa Case.
Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child.	Children and Adolescents in the USA Adult Criminal Justice System.
Country Rapporteurship.	Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of the Social Protests in Nicaragua.
Technical Cooperation and Public Policies /Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants.	Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policy
Technical Cooperation and Public Policies /Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants.	Practical Manual: Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies on Internal Displacement
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendants and against Racial Discrimination.	Afro-Descendants, Police Violence, and Human Rights in the United States.
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian,	Progress and Challenges toward Recognition of the Rights



Gay, Trans, Bisexual and Intersex Persons.	of LGBTI Persons in the Americas.
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants.	Right to Seek and Receive Asylum, Right of Non-Return and Due Process Guarantees in Proceedings for the Determination of Refugee Status. Thematic Compendium: Norms and Standards.
Technical Cooperation and Public Policies.	Public Policies with a Human Rights-Based Approach.
Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression.	Special Report on the Situation of Freedom of Expression in Mexico.
Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression.	Women Journalists: Discrimination and Gender-based Violence against Women Journalists for Practicing their Profession.
Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression.	Freedom of Expression in Cuba.

➤ 25 working visits to 12 countries of the region:

Table of working visits:

State	Dates / Places	Theme(s) / rapporteurships
Mexico	February 6-7, Mexico	MESA
Honduras	April 3 Tegucigalpa	Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child
Honduras	April 2-4, Tegucigalpa	Post-election context, country situation.
Peru	Lima, April 10-13	Rapporteurship Rights of Women, Rapporteurship Rights of Child
Colombia	May 14- 18, Bogota and Cali	Rapporteurship Rights of Women, Rapporteurship Rights of Child
Nicaragua	May 17- 21	Excessive use of force. Freedom of Expression. Human Rights Defenders. Arbitrary Detentions. Life and Humane Treatment
Bolivia	May 20, 21, Cochabamba	Rapporteurship Rights of Women
Colombia	June 26- 28	Country Rapporteur and Vice President and Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child
Nicaragua	July 2- 4, Managua	MESENI. Country Rapporteur
Ecuador	July 23- 27	Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Country Rapporteur



United States	July 24- 25, Washington D.C.	First Working Group on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic
Bolivia	August 14- 17	Cases and petitions, labor rights, indigenous peoples
Ecuador	August 20- 24, Quito and Guayaquil	Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression
Mexico	September 3- 5	MESA
Nicaragua	September 18- 20, Managua	MESENI, Rapporteurship on the Rights of People Deprived of Liberty
Colombia	September 24- 26, Bogota	First official visit to Colombia in the context of the ESE Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression and Country Rapporteur
Costa Rica	October 14- 18	Rapporteurship Migrants
Uruguay	October 21- 26, Montevideo	Rapporteurship Rights of the Child
Nicaragua	October 25- 27, Managua	MESENI, Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women and Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendant Persons
Peru	October 29- 31, Lima	Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women, Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child, Democratic Institutions and Judicial Independence.
Dominican Republic	November 20- 21, Santo Domingo	Second Working Meeting on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic
Ecuador	November 22- 24, Quito	Second official visit to Ecuador in the context of the ESE Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression and Country Rapporteur
Mexico	November 26,	MESA
Colombia	November 27- 30	Human Rights Defenders
Bahamas	Nassau, December 11	Rapporteurship Rights of Women, Rapporteurship Rights of the Child

➤ **118 hearings on monitoring and new human rights situations or to follow-up on IACHR recommendations.**

The IACHR kept a close eye on and brought attention to a significant number of human rights situations through the thematic hearings it convened. The hearings addressed the topics of monitoring regional, sub-regional and/or 22 country situations, as well as new human rights violation trends and follow-up on the recommendations issued by the IACHR. The hearings covered the 13 priority topics of the strategic plan further developing them and striking a better thematic balance as compared to 2016. In an effort to make the Inter-American system totally accessible to everyone, the Commission provided sign language interpreting at two public hearings.



Number of hearings by priority theme

Priority topics	2016	2017	2018
ES CER	22	18	18
Freedom of Expression	14	9	11
Persons Deprived of Liberty	9	5	10
Migrants	6	6	8
Children	7	7	7
LGBTI	5	6	8
Indigenous Peoples	10	8	14
Racial Discrimination	2	6	4
Persons with Disabilities	1	1	4
HR Defenders	11	14	11
Women	10	3	12
Memory, Truth and Justice	4	10	10
Older Adults	0	1	3
Topic Coverages	12	13	13

Number of hearings per country

Country	2016	2017	2018
Argentina	5	7	3
Bahamas			1
Bolivia	3	2	3
Brazil	7	11	7
Canada	4	3	1
Chile		6	1
Colombia	7	8	9
Costa Rica	1	2	0
Cuba	2	2	2
Ecuador	3	3	6
El Salvador	3	3	6
United States	6	9	7
Granada			0
Guatemala	5	4	5
Guyana		1	0
Haiti		2	2
Honduras	5	3	5
Jamaica		1	0
Mexico	8	12	8
Nicaragua	5	2	5
Panama	1	2	1
Paraguay	3	4	1
Peru	7	6	8
Dominican Republic	3	1	2
Trinidad and Tobago			0
Uruguay		4	1
Venezuela	9	9	11
Country Coverage	19	24	22
Regional	15	18	23
Total hearings	102	125	118



➤ **Impact on prevention measures and factors that lead to human rights violations through the issuing of 78 Requests for Information to 26 Member States.**

In exercising its monitoring functions, the IACHR also issued 78 letters requesting information from States of the region, a 90% increase in the number as compared to the number sent in 2017. Fourteen of these letters were sent under Article 18 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man; and 64 of them under Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights. Ten of these letters were written by the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression. Likewise, the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights issued 4 requests for information and jointly wrote another three letters with the Executive Secretariat. The total number of letters sent in 2018 is higher than the total number of 42 sent in 2017. It is noteworthy that 49 of the total number of requests for information for the year were answered by the States, and 29 went unanswered, a 63% response rate by States.

Number of requests for information sent to States by letters

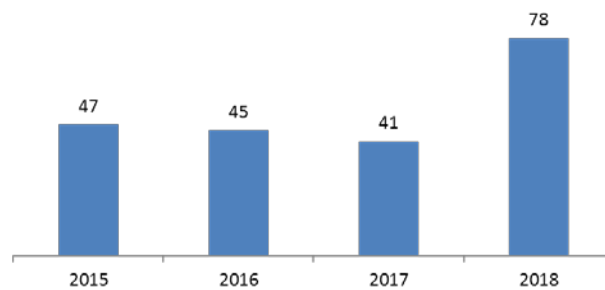


Table showing number of requests for information by State

Countries	Requests for Information (Art. 18 & Art. 41 Letters)
Antigua and Barbuda	2
Argentina	3
Barbados	1
Bolivia	2
Brazil	8
Canada	1
Chile	3
Colombia	7
Costa Rica	1
Cuba	3
Ecuador	2
El Salvador	5



Granada	1
Guatemala	4
Haiti	1
Honduras	5
Jamaica	1
Mexico	4
Nicaragua	4
Paraguay	2
Peru	6
Dominican Republic	2
Surinam	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Uruguay	1
Venezuela	7
Total	78

- **204 press releases issued by the IACHR monitoring the human rights situation in the region, countries and thematic priorities of the IACHR.**

The IACHR has expanded its ability to protect and promote human rights in the region, through this mechanism. In 2018, 204 of the 276 press releases issued by the IACHR were related to monitoring the human rights situation in the region, countries and thematic priorities of the Commission; and 8 were related to technical cooperation and promotion and training activities. Through this mechanism, the Commission addressed the human rights situation in 22 countries of the region either as a general situation or with regard to particular themes and specific population groups in the country. It also dealt with issues such as forced eviction and internal displacement, migration policies that lead to the separation of children from their families, military involvement in citizen security and public order, sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls, the rights of LGBTI persons and of older adults, racial discrimination, the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, the right to freedom of expression and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, among other ones.

- **2 resolutions issued by the IACHR linked to matters of great consequence in the region because of their impact on human rights.**
- On March 2, 2018, the IACHR issued [Resolution 1/18, on Corruption and Human Rights](#), wherein it understands corruption to be a complex phenomenon affecting human rights as a whole—civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights- as well as the right to development; it weakens governance and democratic institutions, fosters impunity, undermines the rule of law and exacerbates inequality. Under the Resolution, the IACHR emphasizes four essential pillars, for which it issues recommendations to address the phenomenon with a human rights-based approach, and these are: 1. Independence, impartiality, autonomy and the capacity of justice systems; 2. Transparency, access to information and freedom of expression; 3. Economic, social, cultural and environmental rights; and, 4. International cooperation. The efforts of the IACHR and its Special Rapporteurs are reflected subsequently in the Lima Commitment, the document agreed upon by the Heads of State and of Government of the OAS Member States at the 8th Summit of the Americas, held in Lima, Peru in April 2018. Pursuant to this commitment, and taking into consideration SDG 16.5, the States undertook to confront systematic corruption by strengthening democratic governance, transparency, access to information, protection of



whistle-blowers and of human rights, including freedom of expression; promotion of transparency in the financing of political organizations and electoral campaigns.

- On that same date, the IACHR issued [Resolution 2/18, on Forced Migration of Venezuelans](#), addressing the causes of the mass forced migration of Venezuelans to other countries of the region and of the world; the risks faced by this population in light of the lack of legal, regular and safe channels to migrate; and the myriad of obstacles to obtain international protection, in addition to discrimination, threats on their lives and safety, of sexual and gender-based violence, abuses and exploitation, human trafficking and disappearance, faced by migrants and refugees once they arrive in the receiving country; and the obstacles of access to humanitarian assistance. Based on the foregoing reasons, the IACHR urges the OAS Member States to implement several actions to provide a response to the serious and complex crisis posed by forced migration of Venezuelans to other countries, in accordance with the international obligation of States to respect and ensure the human rights of all persons under their jurisdiction.

➤ Consultation on the Unit on the Rights of Persons with Disability

The IACHR has moved forward in defining priorities for the agenda of the Unit on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (URPD), by holding a public consultation on June 22, 2018 in the city of Lima, Peru. It was made possible thanks to the identification of synergies and collaboration opportunities with the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Peru (PUCP), which ensured the success of the event through its legal clinic for public action on disability and rights (Clínica Jurídica de Acciones de Interés Público en Discapacidad y Derechos). On this occasion, the IACHR had an in-person audience of 70 individuals, including persons with disability, activists, non-governmental organizations, experts, academia and government officials from 17 OAS member countries, in addition to the input received both prior to and during the public consultation event. Everyone's input will serve to prepare a first work plan of the thematic Unit. After holding this consultation, all thematic units created in the framework of the Strategic Plan have gone through a consultation activity of the users of the System to help put together their work agenda.

P6: Special Rapporteurships Program

The IACHR Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression (RFOE)

➤ Designing the Plan of Action Plan

In accordance with the Special Rapporteurships Program of the IACHR's Strategic Plan, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression designed its 2018-2021 Plan of Action, which reflected input from civil society, regional experts and States through the different mechanisms, as well as the result of monitoring the situation of freedom of expression in the region, which is conducted by the office on an ongoing basis.

The new plan of action includes a revamped thematic agenda, which addresses three major dimensions: democratic governance; defense of civic space; and challenges to on-line freedom of expression. The specific issues to which the office will give priority include: a) security of journalists, including women journalists and the issue of impunity for these crimes; b) freedom of expression and access to information in electoral campaign periods; c) the exercise of social protest; d) access to public information and the national security exception; and e) the exercise of freedom of expression and internet. This new plan of action provides for on-line work with the IACHR Strategic Plan and consultation with other OAS bodies, such as the Department for Electoral Observation



and Cooperation (DECO), the Secretariat of Summits, the Department of International Law, the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, and the Inter-American Commission of Women, among other ones.

➤ Disseminating and promoting Inter-American standards

The Special Rapporteurship organized and participated in more than 20 dissemination events on Inter-American freedom of expression standards throughout the region, and at regional and international forums, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) at the United Nations; the celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Ghana, the Summit of the Americas, the Electoral Observation Mission for the presidential elections in Brazil, in which it advised the OAS observation team, the 13th Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Management Bodies, the Conference on Data Protection and Privacy in Brussels, and the 7th Annual Freedom Online Conference in Berlin. The focus was on the issues of violence against women journalists, Internet and freedom of expression, with emphasis on disinformation in electoral contexts, access to information in the context of extractive industries, access to information and women, regulation of official disclosure, and challenges to freedom of expression from a regional standpoint and also, particularly, Nicaragua, Cuba, Argentina and Venezuela. Around 450 persons (60% women) have participated in these promotional events, including members of civil society, academics, students, legislators and justice operators.

➤ Monitoring the situation of freedom of expression

The Special Rapporteurship also achieved important objectives in the context of monitoring the most serious situations in the hemisphere. The Special Rapporteurship submitted to the IACHR for its approval the report on the situation of freedom of expression in Cuba, the first special report of the IACHR on that country since 1983. Likewise, we can note the release of the report on the official mission of the Special Rapporteur to Mexico in conjunction with United Nations Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression David Kaye. The report included several recommendations to overcome the crisis of violence against journalists and the issue of impunity, as well as to address other substantive issues for Mexican democracy, such as online surveillance and disclosure of private information by government.

The official visit conducted by the Special Rapporteurship to Ecuador during the year was just as significant. The visit, which included the cities of Quito and Guayaquil, consisted of meetings with authorities, civil society organizations, the media and victims of violations of freedom of expression. Currently, the Special Rapporteurship is engaged in drafting a joint report with United Nations Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression David Kaye about their observations during the visit.

Additionally, the Special Rapporteurship took part in a working visit of the IACHR to Nicaragua in May, authored the chapter on violations of the right to freedom of expression of the report [“Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua”](#) and collaborated in the drafting of other sections thereof. It also participated in the visit to Honduras together with the IACHR and was part of the IACHR’s country visit to Brazil in November, when the Special Rapporteurship monitored the situation of violence journalists were experiencing in the country, especially, in the context of the electoral campaign, and the use of restrictions on critical speech, including the disproportionate use of force in the context of social protests in the country.

➤ Thematic Reports

As for the production of expert knowledge-based reports, the IACHR approved the report *Mujeres Periodistas: Discriminación y violencia basada en el género contra las mujeres periodistas por el ejercicio de su profesión* [‘Women Journalists: Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence against Women Journalists because of the practice of their Profession.’] The report was written in collaboration with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women and was based on an invitation-only consultation event in Bogotá, Colombia, which was attended by 23



women from all over the region, including representatives of Afro-descendant, indigenous, LGBTI groups, journalists who had been victims of violence, among others.

Additionally, the office made progress in drafting three thematic reports. On the topic of access to public information, the office published a short report on the situation of access to information to combat violence against women in the region based on a consultation about the status of compliance with the recommendations issued in the report “Access to information, violence against women and administration of justice.” In all, 33 States, civil society organizations and private individuals submitted information in response to the consultation. On the topic of children and freedom of expression, the Special Rapporteurship and the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child are currently completing the Report “Children, Freedom of Expression and Media” to be submitted to the IACHR during the first quarter of 2019.

Lastly, in the context of the mandate issued by the OAS General Assembly to the Special Rapporteurship to develop and disseminate the content of the Inter-American legal framework on rights of access to information, the office conducted a consultation of experts by invitation in Washington, DC, on the national security exception and the application thereof in different countries, in preparation of the thematic report on the Right of Access to Information and National Security that the office is drafting.

With respect to the emergence of new challenges to online freedom of expression, the General Assembly directed the Special Rapporteurship, under Resolution AG/RES. 2928 of June 2018, to produce practical guidelines with recommendations to ensure freedom of expression, and access to information from a variety of Internet sources during electoral processes without improper interference. In response to this mandate, a public consultation was held in December in order to gather the input of States, civil society organizations, academia and Internet companies regarding the phenomenon of deliberate dissemination of disinformation, and its impact, mostly in the context of electoral campaigns. The input collected in this consultation will be used in the process conducted by the Special Rapporteurship, which is part of the efforts of this office to address this topic and was set into motion with the release of the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Fake News, Disinformation and Propaganda, in conjunction with the other Rapporteurs in 2017. Other actions taken under this initiative include advisory services provided by the SRFOE to the OAS electoral observation mission during the presidential elections in Brazil last November.

➤ Press Releases

Over the course of 2018, 36 press releases were issued and replicated through different media. The Office issued 19 of all these releases to call attention to incidents related to the murder or disappearance of journalists in Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, Brazil and the United States. They were also used to decry the serious situations in Nicaragua, Venezuela, attacks on journalists and the press and other important freedom of expression issues.

Additionally, the Special Rapporteurship requested information from States, through ten Article 18 and Article 41 letters, regarding situations that could affect freedom of expression. Four of the letters were sent jointly with United Nations Rapporteur David Kaye. The communications addressed structural situations of violations of freedom of expression and mostly processes of draft media-related legislation for the regulation of official disclosure of information, the liability of intermediaries, anti-hatred laws, anti-terrorist laws and laws that could contribute to hampering or do hamper anti-corruption efforts.

➤ Expert advisory services

In 2018, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression jointly participated with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in the process of consultation with justice operators, experts and civil society to review existing regional anti-corruption standards from a human rights-based perspective.



This process culminated in the adoption of IACHR Resolution 1/18 on Corruption and Human Rights. Since the adoption of the Declaration, the Special Rapporteurship has addressed the topic of combatting corruption in technical assistance it has provided to States through letters, legislative analysis, public hearings and press releases.

Lastly, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression participates in the Special Follow-up Team (ESE from its Spanish language acronym, Equipo de Seguimiento Especial), which was created by the IACHR for the Case of journalists Javier Ortega Reyes, Paúl Rivas Bravo and media worker Efraín Segarra, of the daily newspaper “El Comercio” of Quito, who were murdered on the Ecuadorian/Colombian border in April of this year. As part of the ESE, the Special Rapporteurship has been working to achieve the proposed objectives: I) Providing technical advisory services and monitoring to move the investigation forward and punish those responsible for the kidnapping and murder of the journalists; II) Supporting comprehensive assistance to the victims and family members, keeping them up-to-date on the process; III) Providing technical advisory services and monitoring of the State’s compliance with its obligations regarding access to information and to the truth about what happened for both Ecuadorian society and the family members; IV) Advising and supporting the State in adopting appropriate structural measures and avoiding the repetition thereof. Thus far, the ESE has organized four working visits: 3 to Ecuador and 1 to Colombia; two working meeting sessions with the States concerned, two in Washington, D.C. and one in Boulder, Colorado; and two public hearings at the Period of Sessions of December 2018. Additionally, the Special Rapporteurship is coordinating the final report of the Team and the experts’ report on subject of protection of journalists.

➤ Promoting strategic petitions and cases

After several years of work, in 2018, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights handed down three judgments on freedom of expression: Nelson Carvajal Carvajal and family (Colombia), Vladimir Herzog et al (Brazil) and Rocío San Miguel Sosa et al (Venezuela). Together with the report on the merits in the case of Vladimiro Roca Antúnez et al (Cuba), which was published in April 2018, these judgments mark forward progress by the IACHR and its Special Rapporteurship in setting meaningful legal precedents for the protection of the exercise of civil and political rights through the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, and in identifying States’ specific obligations in relation to investigating with due diligence violent premeditated assaults on journalists and other new issues. Additionally, meetings were held to follow up on recommendations from cases 12.799 – Miguél Ángel Millar Silva (Radio Estrella del Mar de Melinka) (Chile); and 12.213 - Aristeu Guida da Silva (Brazil); and 11.728 - Guillermo Cano (Colombia). With regard to the petitions system, five admissibility reports were submitted by the Special Rapporteurship and approved by the IACHR: P-1519-08: Juan Carlos Encinas Mariaca and family (Bolivia), P-1520-08: Carlos Quispe Quispe and family (Bolivia), P-310-08: Rogelio Miguel Ortíz Romero (Ecuador), P-1779-12: Maya Kaqchikuel Indigenous Peoples de Sumpango et al (Guatemala), P-253-10: Alejandro Fernando Aguilera Mendieta et al (Mexico). The Special Rapporteurship also drafted the respective freedom of expression sections of three merits reports, which were then submitted for approval of the IACHR: Case 12. 709: Juan Carlos Flores Bedregal (Bolivia) Case 12.955: Daniel Urrutia Laubreaux (Chile) Case 12.839: Ricardo Vaca Andrade (Ecuador), in which a violation of Article 13 and of other rights protected by the American Convention were established.

As for the precautionary measure mechanism, in 2018, the Special Rapporteurship collaborated in the review of 26 requests for precautionary measures, of which the following requests were granted: MC 309-18 (Ecuador)/MC 310-18 (Colombia), Javier Ortega, Paúl Rivas and Efraín Segarra Abril, on April 12; MC 739-17 Daniel Silva Orrego with respect to Colombia, on May 5; MC 693-18, Aníbal Toruño Jirón and other members of Radio Darío with respect to Nicaragua, on July 2; MC 669-18, Migueliuth Sandoval Cruz and others, with respect



to Nicaragua, on June 12; MC 688-18, Pedro Patricio Jaimes Criollo with respect to Venezuela, on October 4; MC 873-18, Miguel Mora Barberena, Leticia Gaitán Hernández and their immediate family members with respect to Nicaragua, on December 13. In addition, the office took part in two precautionary measure follow-up meetings: MC 339-09: Claudia Julieta Duque Orrego and María Alejandra Gómez Duque (Colombia); Case 12.954 – Jineth Bedoya Lima and another woman (Colombia); Case 12.786 – Luis Eduardo Guachalá Chimbo (Ecuador).

➤ **Training judicial operators on Inter-American freedom of expression standards**

In keeping with its plans to train judicial operators on Inter-American freedom of expression standards, in partnership with UNESCO in 2018, the Special Rapporteurship was able to train 2,200 judges from the region on the application of Inter-American freedom of expression standards, through an online course hosted at the University of Texas at Austin, with the participation of current and former Rapporteurs for freedom of expression and the tutorship of a team of experts. This course reached 7,000 judges of the Americas during the current period. The proportion of women participating in the course was 52.5%. We are currently looking into offering the course to other professionals, such as academics, journalists and attorneys and to create specialized courses on particular issues such as Internet use and criminal law. The 2019 version will take place in April.

Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights – SRESCER

➤ **Progress in launching and sustaining the IACHR Special Rapporteurship on ESCER and in publicizing its positions**

The Special Rapporteurship on ESCER drafted its first strategic work plan and agenda in line with the IACHR's Strategic Plan, as well creating its logo and presentation image of the mandate. Said documents and institutional image were endorsed and approved by the plenary Commission, and are now being widely disseminated. Also, based on this input, funding project proposals are being drawn up for the operation and sustainability of the Special Rapporteurship and it has been fundraising at many forums and meetings, including the donors' conference held at OAS headquarters with the backing of the Secretary General.

In addition, the Rapporteurship on ESCER continued to publically promote its mandate and its actions through the media and social networks – over the Rapporteur's and the IACHR's Twitter accounts as well as through the creation of a special account for the mandate: @DESCA_CIDH. It has also continued to maintain a productive agenda of meetings and contacts with States, public institutions, academia, rights holders, civil society, and other OAS bodies, inter-governmental organizations and donors. Additionally, it should be noted that in September 2018, as part of a special session and on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Rapporteurship, the Special Rapporteurship on ESCER presented to the OAS Permanent Council a summary of the activities in which it has engaged as of the date the Special Rapporteur took office.

➤ **Promoting ESCERs and disseminating the mandate of the Rapporteurship**

The Rapporteurship carried out several promotional and academic activities in several countries of the region on a variety of topics linked to its mandate. Highlights of these activities include an event at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León and the University of Monterrey (Monterrey, Mexico, January 26); Workshop on challenges and best practices in National Human Rights plans on business and human rights, experiences in Colombia, Chile and Mexico; an event organized by the IACHR-SRESCER with the Government of Colombia at Universidad Javeriana (Bogota, Colombia, February 28); Workshop on Persons Deprived of Liberty (March 14);



participation at the Summit of the Americas along with the IACHR, where the Rapporteur was also a panelist at the Forum “Venezuela, a crisis that impacts the world” and at the Forum “Promoting higher standards on access to information and transparency in the extractive sector (April 11); the Rapporteurship on ESCER participated in the Congress organized by the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares with Offices of the Ombudsman of the Ibero-American People on the 2030 Agenda (Alcalá de Henares, Spain, June 7); the Rapporteurship on ESCER participated in the 6th period of sessions and promotional event of the Protocol of San Salvador Working Group (May 28, Quito, Ecuador); the Special Rapporteur gave a course on ESCER and participated in a colloquy on business and human rights at the Human Rights Academy of American University (June); colloquy, meetings and discussions on ESCER at the Max Plank Institute and productive workday and exchange with FIAN International (Heidelberg, Germany, June 25-29); in Brussels, the Rapporteurship met with organizations of the Eu-Lat Network and with representatives of the Gender Equality Human Rights and Democratic Governance Unit of the European Commission (July 1-3); meeting with OXFAM Ibis and organizations working on Nicaragua (Copenhagen, July 8); the Rapporteurship on ESCER participated and presented on the mandate at the International Forum “Restoring Faith in Freedom, hosted by the Carter Center (Atlanta, July 21-24); virtual presentation by the Rapporteur at the seminar hosted by the Permanent Mission of Canada on Corporations, Human Rights and Anti-Corruption (August 24); Forum on the right to the city and ESCER in Mexico City, hosted by the Human Rights commission of the Federal District (August 13); International Seminar enforceability and protection of social rights, hosted by the Center for Constitutional Studies of the National Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico and the Autonomous University of Mexico (August 14-15); Citizens Forum on ESCER and Sustainable Development Goals, held in Guadalajara, and hosted by the National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commission of Jalisco; keynote lectures, one on the gender-based perspective and rights of women in light of the IACHR-ESCR Special Rapporteurship mandate, at an event organized by the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosí (August 20,) and another lecture on the common agenda between the SDGs and ESCERs in the context of the International Forum on ESCER and the 2030 Agenda hosted by the CNDH of Mexico (October 23); lecture at the Fix Zamudio Course in Mexico (September 3); training of public servants with the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District of Mexico City on ESCERs, and participation at the Mexican Congress on Procedural Constitutional Law (October 25); meeting of Experts on ESCERs of the Inter-American Human Rights Observatory of UNAM (October 22 and 23).

Additionally, the Rapporteurship held meetings with diplomatic missions of Member States, such as Canada, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Mexico, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, and Permanent Observer States, such as Norway, France and Spain.

The Rapporteurship on ESCER has maintained an active agenda on environmental matters, to put forward the position not only of the Special Rapporteurship, but also of the IACHR, on matters relating to environmental rights in the region. In this regard, in the context of approval of the Escazú Accord, it took part in a meeting on the occasion of the signing of the treaty in New York City in October. Likewise, the Special Rapporteur participated in a special session of the OAS Permanent Council on environmental rights and the Inter-American system. Lastly, at the invitation of the Inter-American Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA, based on its Spanish language acronym), the Special Rapporteur was a panelist at a Webinar hosted in cooperation with AIDA and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the topic of the application of Advisory Opinion OC-23/17.

The Rapporteurship held meetings on July 8 in Copenhagen, Denmark with OXFAM Ibis and a variety of organizations that work on Nicaragua. Subsequently, meetings were held with officials of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain and the Office of the Mayor of Madrid; on its visit to Spain, the Special Rapporteurship also engaged in talks with the Board of Directors of the coordinating body of development NGOs of Spain, Coordinadora de ONGD, in Madrid on July 10. Lastly, a meeting was held in Berne, Switzerland with representatives of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and



Development, as well as the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Benedict De Cerjat on July 13.

➤ **Monitoring the situation of ESCE rights in the region**

Since the start of its mandate, the Special Rapporteurship on ESCER has been engaged in monitoring in close coordination with the teams of the IACHR Executive Secretariat, receiving and seeking information about the situation of ESCE rights in the region.

In the course of performing these duties, we can highlight the following tasks: (i) participating in the working visit to Nicaragua, where it visited hospitals, as well as morgues, jails and received countless testimonies, gathered information on the guarantee of the right to health, labor rights and other social rights, that were infringed in this context; likewise, it continued to monitor subsequent to the situation and operations, in constant coordination with MESENI; (ii) participating in the country visit to Honduras, where it visited one of the most isolated and impoverished areas of the country, the Moskitia, which aided in the examination of ESCERs in the country; (iii) contributing to the drafting of thematic reports on ESCERs: ESCE rights of trans persons and of Afro-descendants in the Americas; (iv) participating in public hearings addressing the subject of ESCERs; (v) issuing three press releases; (vi) dispatching an Article 41 letter; (vii) organizing 15 public hearings on ESCER-related issues.

➤ **IACHR designating the ESCER Rapporteur as its representative on the Working Group of the Protocol of San Salvador**

The Special Rapporteur on ESCER was appointed as a member of said Working Group, and began to officially serve in that capacity in July 2018. Shortly after her appointment, the IACHR Special Rapporteurship on ESCER provided input on the report submitted by the Republic of Honduras and accepted to be the rapporteurship on the report submitted by the State of Guatemala, submitting for the consideration of the Working Group a preliminary assessment and recommendation document on said report.

➤ **Specialized contributions and opinions in the processing of petitions and cases**

The Rapporteurship also provided the petition and case system with specialized input at all stages of proceedings before the IACHR and at a hearing before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Likewise, in 2018, the Rapporteurship on ESCER conducted specific assessments on ESCER-related issues in 27 reports on admissibility, 6 reports on the merits and in the examination of 11 requests for precautionary measures. Lastly, on March 6, 2018, the Special Rapporteur put in her first appearance before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IA Court of HR) at the hearing in the case of Cuscul Pivaral et al versus Guatemala, with regard to the right to health of patients living with HIV/AIDS; thereafter, the Rapporteurship participated in the preparation of the final pleadings in the case, which were presented to the IA Court of HR.

➤ **Progress in drafting the thematic report on Business and Human Rights: Inter-American Standards**

Over the course of 2018, the Special Rapporteurship on ESCER prepared a report on States' international obligations relating to guaranteeing and protecting human rights in the sphere of business under the project financed by the Spanish Fund for the OAS (FEPO). At the 167th Regular Session of the IACHR, which was held in the city of Bogota, Colombia, the conceptual paper and preliminary table of contents of the report on Inter-American standards for business and human rights were approved. Subsequently, the Special Rapporteurship on



ESCER drew up a questionnaire, to which States and civil society responded, for the purpose of providing additional information for its examination as part of the report drafting process. In October, a meeting of experts was held at the offices of the Inter-American Human Rights Observatory of the Institute for Legal Research of the UNAM. The report will be submitted to the Commission during the first quarter of 2019.

P7: Rapid and Integrated Response Coordination Unit (RIRCU)

In 2018, the IACHR attained important results in terms of the coordination of its mandates and timely response through the RIRCU. Over the past year, the Executive Secretariat has activated the mechanism with respect to four countries, as listed and explained below:

- Brazil: the Executive Secretariat held coordination meetings in preparation for the *in situ* visit scheduled for November 2018, reviewing issues of concern and preliminary agenda proposals. Following the visit, the Unit held other meetings for the purpose of following up on the requests for precautionary measures it received and to begin to prepare the country report, as well as identify petitions it received and cases it is processing relating to the main focuses of the preliminary observations on the visit.
- Honduras: the Executive Secretariat held coordination meetings in preparation for the country visit that was conducted in July 2018.
- Nicaragua: [setting up the RIRCU on Nicaragua](#) on May 3, 2018 was instrumental for coordinating a rapid and comprehensive response to the human rights crisis that had broken out in the country as of April when the social protests began. Promptly conducting a working visit, drafting the country report based on the information it collected, creating and setting up the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), and analyzing the high number of precautionary measure requests that were received, was coordinated by the RIRCU, ensuring that the IACHR could take more effective action. (Further information on actions in Nicaragua are available under Programs 3, 5 and 21)
- Venezuela: the RIRCU was activated regarding Venezuela to prepare for launching events of the country report and to follow up on the situation on the ground. Additionally, the RIRCU met to identify petitions at the admissibility stage and cases at the merits stage, which were procedurally ready for respective report preparation. An IACHR position document was also coordinated regarding Venezuela's denunciation of the OAS Charter, and is still under study.

The results achieved over the course of the year reaffirm the importance of this tool, in particular, with respect to Nicaragua. The IACHR has been able to have an impact on one of the most serious human rights crisis in the region in a timely and effective way, by acting in keeping with its different mandates. Accordingly, it is fair to say that this program has been implemented very satisfactorily.

P8: Integrated Information Analysis and Management Platform (IIAMP)

An initial fundraising plan was drawn up with the Technology Unit for implementation of the different management-related and technology-related component parts of the IIAMP.



In March and April, a training cycle was conducted on human rights situation monitoring and ADIS (Americas Digital Information System) for Executive Secretariat staff. ADIS is a technological tool of the OAS that lifts information from open sources and introduces a technological component into the IACHR's monitoring duty. The staff training began with instruction on these topics, with the support of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, on the proper use of the tool and its human rights-related feedback. This, in turn, makes it possible to specifically identify individuals and categorized the information obtained by specialization area to meet IACHR monitoring needs.

The different monitoring teams provided lists of unique identifiers by rapporteurship and theme to enhance specialized monitoring through ADIS. Thus, the tapping of sources of specialized information by theme and rapporteurship was launched to improve monitoring through ADIS.



SO3

To promote democracy, human dignity, equality, justice and fundamental freedoms based on an active contribution to the strengthening of State institutions and public policies with a human rights approach in accordance with Inter-American norms and standards and to the development of the capacities of social and academic organizations and networks to act in defense of human rights.

Results achieved

- Providing advisory services and technical cooperation to States in order to strengthen State institutions and public policies with an enhanced human rights-based approach, increasing the number of presentations before the OAS political bodies to 23 this year.
- Strengthening promotion and training activities about the Inter-American human rights system, training a total of 5,695 individuals at different courses and workshops held in 26 different countries. In particular, 273 persons were trained in Nicaragua.
- Providing advisory services and technical cooperation to Central America to strengthen institutions and public policies with an enhanced human rights-based approach.
- Expanding mechanisms of collaboration through the signing of 21 inter-institutional technical cooperation agreements with state agencies and academic institutions.
- Building greater capacity for public policy design by authoring the “Practical manual of guidelines for public policy formulation on internal displacement” and the report “Internal displacement in the Northern Triangle. Guidelines for the formulation of public policies.”
- Implementing and expanding mechanisms of collaboration and social participation with academia and civil society.

The IACHR has managed to consolidate its efforts in training, promotion and campaigns to further human rights-based thought and culture in the region, by improving the Inter-American human rights system users’ understanding of the IACHR mandate and of Inter-American human rights standards.

Throughout 2018, the Commission continued to strengthen collaboration with Central America through the Project on Democracy and Human Rights in the Northern Triangle, in particular, with respect to standards on



forced displacement. Progress was made on the implementation of the Special Plan for Collaboration with the Caribbean. Collaboration with academia and civil society was also strengthened.

Accordingly, all of the programs made progress and, thus, the conclusion can be reached that implementation of this strategic objective has been satisfactory.

P9: Expanding the Program for Training and Promotion of Human Rights-Based Thought and Culture

➤ Promotion and training on the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS)

The IACHR has geared promotional and training activities toward Inter-American human rights standards, which have been created through the system's doctrine and legal precedents. The purpose of this is to provide deeper insight and promote greater understanding among members of civil society, networks of social actors and the Member States about the scope thereof, and to the extent that it is pertinent, about application and incorporation thereof into decisions, legal frameworks and public policies with a human rights-based approach.

Over the course of 2018, promotional and training activities on the IAHRs were strengthened throughout the hemisphere. It is of note that that, in general terms, a total of 5,695 people took part in such activities on the topic of the system.

In the context of training activities on the whole, in 2018, the following professional development activities must be highlighted:

- **International Course on Public Human Rights Policies IACHR/IPPDH:** The International Course on Public Human Rights Policies, jointly sponsored by the IACHR and the IPPDH. Its purpose was to build and strengthen the capacity of relevant actors of the Americans on a human rights-based approach to public policies. This training course was attended by 109 people from 22 countries of the Hemisphere and was given by both IPPDH and IACHR instructors. The working subjects were democracy, development and human rights, public policies with a human rights-based focus, regional systems and the Inter-American protection system, equality and non-discrimination and information production.
- **Trainings of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua:** During the second half of 2018, it should be noted that **ten training days** were provided to civil society, students and social movements on the subjects of the IACHR mechanisms and Inter-American human rights system standards, which took place in Nicaragua in the context of the activities carried out by **MESENI**. A total of **273 persons were trained** at these activities.
- **Specialized professional development on Transitional Justice:** The workshop was held in the context of technical cooperation activities to strengthen States' capacities in the justice sector, and was given in collaboration with the Coordinating Commission of the Justice sector of El Salvador and through the Executive Technical Unit (UTE). The training event is part of the "Regional Human Rights and Democracy Project," which is being implemented jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and has funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The objective of the Project is to help increase knowledge and awareness about the Inter-American human rights system and its



standards among key local actors in charge of protecting and defending human rights in the States of the Northern Triangle of Central America. The training workshop was given in four consecutive modules beginning in August 2018 and more than 70 public officials of El Salvador's justice sector participated in it.

- **Annual Seminar for CARICOM countries on the Inter-American Human Rights System, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Friendly Settlements and Follow-up on Recommendations:** it is a joint project between the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and George Washington University Law School (GWULS). The seminar focused on introducing diplomatic staff and public officials to the major instruments and standards of the Inter-American human rights system; and it provided an opportunity for dialogue and cooperation between the IACHR and CARICOM countries. This year, for the first time, training was given on the friendly settlement mechanism.
- **IACHR Regional Training Workshop on the Inter-American Human Rights Protection System, its Standards and Work Mechanisms:** In the context of the Democracy and Human Rights project, a training workshop was held for civil society of the countries encompassed in the project. The workshop was conducted at the PADF headquarters in Washington, D.C. from October 15 to 19, 2018, with the participation of 14 individuals from civil society organizations of the countries of the Northern Triangle (7 women, 7 men): El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, as well as Mexico.
- **The right to freedom of expression and an approach to Digital Rights:** The training event was held at the IACHR headquarters in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the Center for the Studies on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, from October 22 to 25, 2018. It was attended by 15 people (8 men, 7 women) from organizations devoted to human rights defense and promotion in the digital environment.
- **Course on the Inter-American and International Human Rights Protection System for civil society:** the training workshop was given with the support and collaboration of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights - IIDH, of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Foundation, American University -Washington College of Law and the Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice of the University of Texas. The course was attended by 29 representatives of civil society and Specialists of the IACHR presented on the petition and case system, precautionary measures, promotional activities and public policies and on the work of the Rapporteurships that make up the IACHR, among other topics.
- **Workshop on "Procedural aspects of the Friendly Settlement Mechanism:"** the workshop was given to 26 public officials (21 women and 3 men) from Brazil. The objective of the training was to build State capacity for Friendly Settlement processes before the IACHR.

➤ Second Inter-American Human Rights System Forum

For the second time, the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IA Court of HR) sponsored their own event to spur and encourage debate on the present and future of human rights in the region, the effectiveness of the system, the need to increase Member States' compliance with IACHR recommendations and the judgments of the IA Court of HR, and other key issues on the human rights agenda in the Americas.

➤ Promotional activities of the rapporteurships

In 2018, the IACHR held or was invited to participate in a high number of promotional activities and events. In general terms, it must be noted that the IACHR carried out a total of 169 promotional activities in order to disseminate the standards of the Inter-American human rights system (IAHRS) and build the capacity of public officials and of organizations and networks of social actors to act in defense of the human rights, in at least 19



countries of the region, 4 OAS observer States and other States, with an estimated coverage of more than 5,000 individuals and an average of 14 events per month. Many of these activities were carried out with other actors, and were made possible by the collaboration with civil society organizations, regional and international institutions and States. The activities took place in Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Senegal, China, Spain, Switzerland, France, Germany and Thailand.

➤ Campaigns for disseminating standards

Throughout 2018, the IACHR undertook campaigns to disseminate the Inter-American human rights standards in order to promote greater understanding of and insight into their scope and for their application and incorporation into decisions and legal frameworks and public policies with a human rights-based approach.

In order to publicize the Thematic Report [“Poverty and Human Rights”](#) an [Interactive Multimedia Site](#), listing the principal conclusions and recommendations of the report, in Spanish, English and Portuguese, was created and launched. The component parts of the campaign reflected the report’s conclusions with an approach based on the intersectional nature of poverty encompassing such factors as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability and childhood and adolescence. Additionally, the approach made it a priority to present persons living in situations of poverty as agents of their own destiny, conveying the need to make them a part of building the solution to the problem.

The campaign had a total of 4.8 million views. (This means the total number of times someone viewed IACHR publications on social media, including several publications viewed several times by the same person. This figure also includes the total number of views that the IACHR had on its publications posted on Facebook and Twitter). It also generated 150,000 interactions (the total number of responses, comments and shares for the publications on Facebook; and on Twitter, the number of times marked as favorites, re-tweeted, responded to, and times that an IACHR tweet was cited; an interaction means that the person felt motivated enough to take an action, including voicing dissent or a criticism).

The campaign on poverty and human rights over Facebook tallied 3.5 views, on 58 publications. Of that total number, 1.7 million were focused on one publication that examined the interplay between poverty and women’s sexual and reproductive rights [‘For women to be able to exit poverty, they must be able to control how many children they have’](#)). While on Twitter, 131 pieces were posted as part of this campaign, the number of views reaching 1.3 million, where the most viewed piece was a design based on the cover art, whose caption read: [‘Most women prosecuted for having abortions are young marginalized women affected by poverty’](#), with 65,000 views.

The IACHR also carried out a campaign to disseminate the conclusions and recommendations of the Report on [“Children and Adolescents in the United States Adult Criminal Justice System”](#), both in Spanish and English. The total number of views for the campaign in the two languages combined was 2.8 million. The Spanish language campaign had a total of 1.5 million views, with 1.1 million on Twitter and a half a million on Facebook, on 143 publications, generating 31,339 interactions. The English language campaign had 1.3 million views, with 445,000 of those views on Facebook and 844,000 on Twitter.

The IACHR also increased its presence on social media in order to raise awareness about different topical situations in the region. One such situation is in Nicaragua, with the IACHR voicing its positions and disseminating its decisions and activities with respect to that country through its Twitter account. The total scope of this coverage on the Nicaragua situation was 3.1 million.



Likewise, in 2018 the IACHR made greater use of audiovisual materials, specifically videos, in order to raise awareness about a variety of issues relating to human rights and to publicize its activities, such as country visits, working visits, public hearings, courses, among other ones. For example, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons (LGBTI) produced informational videos about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and corporal diversity, which were viewed a half a million times. Additionally, the “We Have Rights” (*Tenemos derechos*) campaign, consisting of four videos, was viewed 61,000 times.

Dissemination campaigns about the periods of sessions and hearings on a variety of human rights issues were also carried out in the OAS member countries. As to the 167th Period of Sessions, which took place in Colombia, the campaign ran from February 14 to April 30, and reached 2.7 million viewers. With regard to the 168th Session, held in the Dominican Republic, the campaign ran from May 3 to 11, and reached 2.1 million, including the promotional event, which was held in conjunction with the Session, launching the updated report on the impact of the friendly settlement process. The 169th Period of Sessions, held in Boulder, Colorado, had a reach of 3.4 million over social media, with 45,280 interactions with a total of 490 publications. All public hearings were webcast live, and the videos are available on YouTube.

P10: Program for Assistance and Collaboration with the Caribbean and Central America

The IACHR has been implementing an impact strategy pursuant to its mandates to move forward in providing technical cooperation in the area of development and human rights with the States of the Caribbean and Central America, as well as to carry out special projects with emphasis on the crosscutting pillars of the Strategic Plan. In this context, the following detailed information is provided:

➤ Project on Democracy and Human Rights in the Northern Triangle

Jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), since 2016 the IACHR has been implementing the Regional Project of “Democracy and Human Rights,” in which a promotional activity plan has been drawn up based on three pillars: i) training human rights ombudspersons and public officials, ii) training for civil society organizations, that engage in litigating activities, iii) promotion of Inter-American standards for human mobility.

The project is intended to strengthen public institutions with a human rights-based approach in the countries of the Northern Triangle: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Over the first half of 2018, training aimed at public officials of the countries of the Northern Triangle was conducted. There were two training blocks in each of the three States of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, one for technical officials of the offices of ombudspersons for human rights (national human rights protection systems) on the subject of the mechanisms of the Inter-American human rights system, as well as the norms and standards thereof, and another block for public officials on the norms and standards of the human rights of migrants, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, displaced and other persons in the context of human mobility.

In the context of the project and over the course of the year, the report titled: “Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle. Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies” was prepared and approved. Another publication was also drawn up: Practical guidelines on public policies for internal displacement.

A questionnaire was sent out by the IACHR in December 2017, and the responses given by the three States of the region (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), as well as those provided by social organizations and academic centers of the three countries of the region, were organized for analysis. A total of three responses



were received from organizations and academic centers of El Salvador, 2 responses from organizations and academic centers of Guatemala, and 2 responses from social organizations of Honduras.

In addition, a regional consultation on internal displacement was organized and held on February 22, 2018, in Guatemala City and was attended by public officials from the 3 Northern Triangle countries and representatives of civil society organizations and international agencies.

It must also be noted that the drafting of the IACHR's First Compendium of Jurisprudence regarding the guarantees of equality and non-discrimination was completed and progress has been made on the translation thereof.

In November, the "Second Gathering of National Human Rights Institutions" was held in Guatemala City. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for exchange of best practices, challenges and analysis for national human rights institutions and was attended by the Human Rights Ombudspersons of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia, and representatives of the institutions of Honduras, Mexico and Chile. In this regard, progress was made in the signing of a Declaration of Commitment between the IACHR and the institutions on technical cooperation and the creation of a Points of Contact Mechanism. Said instrument has been signed thus far by the national human rights institutions of Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Additionally, in July the First Regional Forum "Exchange of experiences on international standards and best practices regarding internal displacement, protection of human rights defenders and LGBTI populations in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico" took place in Honduras. The purpose of the Forum, in which 200 persons participated, including representatives of different State institutions, members of civil society, academia and the general public, was to exchange ideas, experiences and information about the human rights situation of LGBTI persons and communities; human rights defenders and about different aspects of human mobility and internal displacement in the Northern Triangle countries. The event was attended by civil society organizations, academia and the general public.

Also in the context of the aforementioned project, a weeklong training workshop was held on the Inter-American human rights protection system and work mechanisms for civil society of the countries encompassed in the project. For further details, see the promotion and training section.

A new component of the Transitional Justice Project

In the context of the abovementioned project of Democracy and Human Rights, the State of El Salvador, through the Technical Executive Unit of the Justice Sector, requested technical support from the IACHR to promote capacity-building of the Justice Sector in El Salvador, in carrying out processes of transitional justice in that country.

It should be mentioned that said request was made in the context of the Supreme Court's Chamber for Constitutionality Matters finding the Amnesty Law unconstitutional in 2016. Thus, in collaboration with the PADF, the IACHR has worked to add an annual component on transitional justice to the original Project of Democracy and Human Rights. As part of this component of the project, the Commission carried out an unprecedented training workshop in four consecutive modules from August to November (lasting four consecutive months). During this training, given to 70 participants of El Salvador's justice sector, several different important issues pertaining to transitional justice were addressed by IACHR specialists and international experts. Other activities are being planned for the next period.



➤ **Advisory Service for Caribbean Affairs**

In this section, it is important to note that there has been significant progress in the implementation of the Collaboration Plan with the Caribbean. One of the objectives of the work plan is to develop and maintain a database of civil society organizations, human rights defenders and relevant persons in the CARICOM sub-region. An initial version of this database has already been set up and is being used to take in information about how to optimize cooperation between civil society and the IACHR. Another objective of the work plan is to establish an inventory of State and/or quasi-state institutions in the CARICOM sub-region, which handle human rights, for example the Department of the Attorney General, the Department of the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the judiciary, the police, the ombudsperson's office, public defenders and others. This database is being put together using requests for information sent to the offices and agencies of the States of the region.

In this context, meetings were held with the CARICOM Ambassadors group to present said Plan, as well as to explore whether a CARICOM State could host a regular session of the IACHR in 2019. During the period, there was discussion about the annual human rights seminar of 2018. It was proposed that the seminar should mainly focus on one of the Commission's tools, friendly settlement proceedings, which was actually done in the end, as explained below.

On October 9 and 10, 2018, the annual Human Rights Seminar was held one more time. The seminar is a joint project between the IACHR and the George Washington University Law School (GWULS). The purpose of the seminar is to expose diplomatic staff and public officials to the main instruments and standards of the Inter-American human rights system; and to provide an opportunity for dialogue and cooperation between the IACHR and the CARICOM countries. This year, training was given for the first time ever on the friendly settlement mechanism. Nine public and diplomatic officials of the permanent missions to the OAS participated.

P11: Program for Technical Cooperation on Public Institutions and Policies with a Human Rights Approach

Through this program, activities were carried out in 2018 to expand and strengthen relations with OAS Member States, facilitate technical assistance and cooperation on human rights for any State entities that so requested and for the OAS political organs. Concretely, progress was made in establishing diplomatic-institutional dialogue groups, in cooperating in order to strengthen State institutions on human rights and national human rights plans, in coordinating with national justice systems, Public Prosecutor's Offices and Ombudsman's offices and in creating closer ties to national and autonomous human rights institutions.

➤ **Technical Cooperation with States and Public Policies**

In the context of this objective, the IACHR made progress over the year in both drafting instruments and input for public policy makers and solidifying arrangements to provide technical assistance and support State's institutional strengthening strategies and in establishing ties of cooperation with other institutions.

In this regard, and in the context of the Project of Democracy and Human Rights (IACHR-PADF), a "Practical Manual of Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies on Internal Displacement" has been written. In keeping with the mandate set forth in Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 106 of the OAS Charter, to provide advisory services to States on the subject of human rights, the IACHR has decided to author this manual, the purpose of which is to provide recommendations, to guide States' efforts to formulate



public policies with a human rights-based approach, as well as provide tools to civil society and to internally displaced persons to demand, accompany, impact and monitor State actions. In fact, this Manual represents an initiative of the IACHR to present, in an instructional way, the main recommendations set forth in the Report on Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle of Central America, as they pertain to public policy-making to address this human rights problem.

Likewise, the Report on “Internal Displacement in the Northern Triangle. Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies” was prepared and approved. The purpose of this document is to provide a practical tool to public officials who are charged with fulfilling human rights obligations, as well as representatives of social organizations, that are engaged in the promotion and protection of the rights of internally displaced persons, and demand that States adopt measures and public policies to provide a response to this worrying situation.

Additionally, the Report on Public Policies with a Human Rights Approach, which offers general guidelines for public policy-makers to serve as input to the public officials of the countries of the region, was prepared and approved. This work model will be replicated for other issues and will be tailored to different contexts, thus strengthening the work of the IACHR’s Technical Cooperation and Public Policies Section.

The International Course on Human Rights Policies was also launched and will take place over the second half of 2018 and part of 2019, in partnership with the Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH) of MERCOSUR. The course is given to 100 public officials responsible for the design, management, implementation and evaluation of public policies, members of social organizations and movements, academics and society in general.

Furthermore, in February 2018, a technical cooperation agreement was entered into with the Republic of Colombia to promote the Inter-American human rights system by providing technical assistance to the State in the implementation of the Peace Accord. It should also be noted that the Technical Unit of the Justice Sector of El Salvador requested technical cooperation from the IACHR to deepen knowledge of and dialogue with the Judiciary on the processes of transitional justice in that country.

In this same vein, progress was made in drafting proposals for technical cooperation with different government institutions of the Republics of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, the purpose of which is to support national efforts to promote human rights and formulate public policies with a human rights approach on different topics of mutual interest, including: rights of LGBTI persons, protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, support for implementing National Human Rights Plans and mechanisms of social participation.

Similarly, the State of Chile, through the Secretariat of Human Rights of its Ministry of Justice, invited the IACHR to participate in the “First International Seminar on Human Rights in the Context of the 70 year Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: challenges to the State and Civil Society.” It took place from September 27 and 28. Also, in this context, specialists of the public policies section gave a workshop to state officials on public policies with a human rights approach, in which 31 people took part.

Likewise, the Mexico, through the Council to prevent and eliminate discrimination of Mexico City (COPRED), invited Commissioner Margarette May Macaulay and specialists of the Executive Secretariat to hold a Training Workshop on the cross-cutting nature of standards of non-discrimination and public policies with a human rights approach. The Workshop was held on October 11, and a group of 22 state officials participated.



➤ **Advisory services on human rights to Member States**

One of the functions of the IACHR is to provide advisory services to States on human rights, which it accomplishes, among other ways, by engaging with the political bodies of the OAS: the General Assembly (GA) and the Permanent Council (PC) and its Committees, in particular, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). In this regard, bilateral meetings were set up with chiefs of delegation during the Summit of the Americas in Peru, and at the General Assembly, in Washington; presentations were arranged for the Permanent Council about implementation of the IACHR's Strategic Plan and the work it has done in Nicaragua and Venezuela; petition and case portfolio review meetings with States that so request one were set up, as were meetings with Member State and Observer State representatives.

In this regard, it is important to note the relevance of the IACHR's participation in the sessions of the Permanent Council concerning Nicaragua, as well as the migration crisis stemming from the situation of Venezuela. The IACHR regained a more important role in providing technical input to the decision-making process of the member States before the political organs, after a long hiatus of mostly just preparing and submitting its annual report. This is reflected in the significant increase in presentations given by the IACHR to the political bodies. Six of the total of 23 presentations were given from January to May 2018 and 17 of them, from June to December 2018, the period prior to the country visit to Nicaragua (May 17-21).

In addition, States have shown keen interest in holding meetings to review their respective portfolio of petitions, cases, precautionary measures, friendly settlements and recommendation follow-up. In 2018, a total of 12 meetings were held (50% more than in 2017) with the following States: Canada (April 9); Colombia (April 19 and 20) Ecuador (June 12 and 13); Mexico (June 14 and 15); Paraguay (June 28); Argentina (July 12 and 13 and November 15, for specific cases); Costa Rica (August 28 and 29); Bolivia (October 23 and 25); Brazil (November 28 to 30); Guatemala (November 29 and 30 only to review recommendation follow-up and friendly settlements) and Chile (November 30).

P12: Program on Social Participation and Contribution to Capacity Building for Actions by Social and Academic Organizations and Networks in Defense of Human Rights

➤ **Periodic channels of dialogue with civil society and the academic sector**

Throughout 2018, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expanded and deepened the participation of civil society in all activities it carried out, including public hearings, consultations, training workshops, bilateral and multilateral meetings, among other things.

At its 167th, 168th and 170th Sessions, which were held in Colombia, Dominican Republic and United States, respectively, the IACHR held meetings with Inter-American civil society organizations and with the Coalition of Organizations that act before the Inter-American human rights system, to gather information about the human rights situation in the region and hear their demands. In particular, holding sessions outside of headquarters ensures increased access of civil society organizations from different parts of the region to the IACHR, expanding the role of actors involved in the Inter-American human rights system. In this regard, a total of 535 civil society



organizations participated in the 118 public hearings, which were held during the four Periods of sessions of 2018, pertaining to regional situations and 22 countries of the Americas. Additionally, virtual meetings were held with civil society of Colombia, Nicaragua and Venezuela. During the country and working visits, many meetings with civil society were held as well.

In relation to the petition and case system, and in the context of the plan for procedural backlog reduction, the IACHR conducted a far-reaching process of regional consultation with civil society, whose participation helped to enrich the plan that was ultimately approved. The participatory process of regional consultations also included the States.

As for thematic reports, the IACHR has given high priority to, and fulfilled its commitment, to carry out public consultations in order to gather input and comments from all relevant actors and the public in general.

One of these consultations was held to help prepare the report on Internal displacement in the Northern Triangle: Guidelines for the Formulation of Public Policies; said consultation was responded to by 7 organizations and academic centers of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. To gather input for this same report, a regional consultation was conducted in Guatemala City on February 22, with the participation of civil society, as well as international organizations and State officials from the three countries.

In addition, for the preparation of the Report “Women Journalists: Gender-based discrimination and violence against women journalists because of the practice of their profession,” the IACHR Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression held a consultation event in Bogota, Colombia, in which 23 women participated from all over the region, including representatives of Afro-descendant, indigenous, LGBTI groups, journalist victims of violence, among others. The Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression also received responses from civil society organizations to a consultation questionnaire on the status of recommendations set forth in the Report “Access to information, violence against women and administration of justice,” which were included in the report on the situation of access to information to combat violence against women in the region. Additionally, this Special Rapporteurship kicked off a public consultation in December about the phenomenon of deliberate disinformation and its impact, mostly in electoral contexts. The input gathered in the consultation will be used by the Special Rapporteurship in its efforts to address this issue. Likewise, the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression and the IACHR conducted a process of consultation with justice operators, civil society experts to review existing regional standards relating to anti-corruption efforts from a human rights perspective, which culminated in the adoption of Resolution 1/18 on Corruption and Human Rights.

For its part, the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights (ESCR) received responses from civil society to a questionnaire seeking input for the preparation of the report on States’ international obligations relating to ensuring and protecting human rights in the sphere of business.

The IACHR also continued to work in 2018 to build the capacity of civil society, as well as of public officials, through workshops and promotional activities, which were carried out in 26 countries of the region, in the context of the program for training and promotion of thought and culture on human rights under the Strategic Plan. At these activities, a total of 5,695 people participated in discussion on variety of human rights topics. In Nicaragua alone, 273 people from civil society and social movements, as well as students, were trained over ten days of work.



Lastly, another important result in 2018 was the public consultation on the work agenda of the Unit on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UDPD), which was held in June, in Lima, Peru. With the completion of this consultation process, we can now report that all of the thematic units created in the context of the Strategic Plan underwent a consultation activity with the users of the system to prepare their work agenda. Further information on this activity is available under Program 5.

➤ **Specialized academic network in the Inter-American system: agreements with academic research centers on the IACHRS**

During the year, a total of 21 inter-institutional agreements were signed, including 8 agreements with universities. The complete list of institutions is as follows: Office of the Chief Oversight Officer of Colombia (Procuraduría General de República); Comisión Ejecutiva de Atención a Víctimas de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Executive Commission for Victim Assistance of the United Mexican States); Benito Juárez University of Oaxaca; Universidad Metropolitana; Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Guatemala; National Council of the Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor of Brazil; Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor of Brazil; University of Oklahoma Law School; National Council against Discrimination of México (CONAPRED); Public Prosecutor's Office of Chile; Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina; Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Colombia; International Land Coalition; National University of Cordoba Law School; University of Los Angeles; Brown University; Office of Public Labor Prosecutor of Brazil; Catholic University of Peru; Institute for Social Responsibility and Human Rights (IRRESODH); Save the Children and REDLAMYC.

In the context of these agreements, the Fellowship Program and the Associate Staff Program, as well as training, promotion and academic research programs, are being expanded.

➤ **Associate Staff Program in the IACHR**

One of the Secretariat's priorities has been negotiating the institutional agreements that make it possible for the IACHR to receive fellowship beneficiaries or associate staff from various institutions, universities or entities. This exchange contributes to the dissemination of the IACHR's mechanisms and, at the same time, bolsters the staff of the Executive Secretariat.

During the reporting period, 7 professionals joined the Executive Secretariat under the Associate Staff Program:

- 3 professionals from the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office of Oaxaca.
- 2 professionals from the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office of União de Brazil, who joined the Special Rapporteurship on ESCR
- 1 professional from the Public Labor Prosecutor's Office of Brazil.
- 1 professional from the Office of the Public Defender of the City of Buenos Aires

One innovative initiative made significant progress during the reporting period. Under a memorandum of understanding entered into by the IACHR and the Red Eclesial Pan Amazónica (REPAM), preparation and publication is underway of a thematic report on the situation of human rights of indigenous peoples of the Amazon region. This initiative has the support of researchers of the network of Jesuit Universities in Latin America (AUSJAL) to collaborate in the process of gathering and sorting out available information about the rights of indigenous people in the Pan Amazonian countries.



OE4

To Promote the universalization of the Inter-American Human Rights System through coordinated initiatives with the Inter-American Court and to cooperate with other international, regional, and sub-regional human rights agencies and mechanisms.

Results achieved

- Progressing in the universalization of the Inter-American Human Rights System
- Expanding collaboration with United Nations offices, through exchange programs, signing a Roadmap with UN Special Procedures and IACHR participation for the first time ever at the UN Human Rights Council.
- Strengthening collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Expanding collaboration with Mercosur's Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH)
- Starting collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- Implementing the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas with the United Nations Human Rights Office (OUNHCHR)
- Strengthening institutional cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

In 2018, the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance was ratified by Antigua and Barbuda; the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, was ratified by Uruguay; and El Salvador acceded to the Inter-American Convention on Protecting of the Human Rights of Older Adults.

Additionally, the IACHR made significant strides forward in working out collaboration programs with the United Nations and the African System, as well as launching or deepening initiatives with regional and sub-region agencies. Likewise, institutional cooperation with the IA Court of HR continued to be strengthened as the second edition of the Forum on the Inter-American Human Rights System was jointly hosted.

While challenges with respect to universal acceptance of the system remain, considering the significance of the progress, the conclusion can be drawn that implementation of the Objective has been highly satisfactory.



P13: Cooperation and Coordination Program with the Universal Human Rights System and other international agencies

➤ Expanding and strengthening collaboration with the United Nations

In 2018, the IACHR deepened its collaboration with the United Nations human rights system on a variety of fronts. On the one hand, it continued to follow several practices that had previously been put into place: it submitted input to the Universal Periodic Review of Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Uruguay; it hosted United Nations special rapporteurs to participate in hearings at its 167th, 169th and 170th Periods of Sessions; and it held meetings with UN agencies in Colombia and the Dominican Republic to gather information on their efforts in these countries. Over the period, 25 joint releases with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, or with special UN system mechanisms, were issued. Collaboration with the on-the-ground offices of the OUNHCHR was instrumental in the implementation of the Defender Mechanism (see Program 15), in conducting the country visit to Honduras and in monitoring the situation in Nicaragua on the ground by MESENI (see Program 21).

On the other hand, innovative collaboration initiatives were also implemented. The IACHR held two parallel events in the context of the 37th and 38th Sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council to present its reports on Venezuela and Nicaragua. The events were heavily attended by the missions in Geneva and the civil society organizations, who were participating in the sessions. The first exchange between the IACHR and the Geneva Office of the UNHCHR staff took place, focusing on sharing experiences in processing and examining individual cases and petitions. The IACHR sent a representative of the Executive Secretariat to take part in the first training program on regional mechanisms, in order to share experiences and identify opportunities for collaboration and synergy between the systems.

In early September, the IACHR participated for the first time at the session of the United Nations Human Rights Council as an observer, representing the OAS, to present remarks on the situations in Nicaragua and Venezuela, and the idea is for the practice to continue at future sessions.

In December, the IACHR also carried out, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a Regional Consultation with Civil Society on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Related Intolerance. The consultation took place on December 8, in the context of the 170th Period of Sessions, in Washington, D.C, and brought together representatives of civil society and independent State bodies to discuss the major challenges they face on the subject matter and define strategies for collaboration with the regional and universal human rights mechanisms. This is the first of a series of regional consultations that will be carried out until the world meeting of regional mechanisms in 2019.

It is noteworthy that in December the IACHR [signed a Roadmap to enhance collaboration with UN Special Procedures](#). This is the result of dialogue and engagement that has taken place over the years between the two systems and was made official in February 2018, when a delegation of UN Special Procedures and the IACHR met in the context of the 167th Session of the IACHR, and agreed to establish a framework for cooperation between the two systems. The Roadmap seeks to guide and increase joint initiatives and collaboration between the two systems, including regular exchange of information, joint statements, contributions to thematic reports, participation in consultations, joint visits and follow-up on recommendations.



P14: Program of Coordination and Complementarity with Regional Systems and Sub-Regional Mechanisms in the Area of Human Rights

➤ Greater collaboration with the African Commission

The IACHR and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [have signed an agreement to build strategic cooperation](#) at a meeting held in March 2018. The cooperation will involve information exchange, collaboration in establishing norms, regular consultations, among other activities. The focal points of each organization are drafting a Memorandum of Understanding and a roadmap for signature.

The meeting was held in the context of an exchange activity on regional human rights standards: an [inter-regional meeting on human rights with a sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics perspective](#). The members of the Inter-American Commission and its Special Rapporteurships were joined by five members of the African Commission and nine UN human rights experts for a three-day dialogue about norms, best practices, challenges, and identified potential areas of collaboration between the systems.

The meeting had three general objectives: to share best practices and challenges, identify fields of collaboration and reaffirm the commitment of the experts of the United Nations human rights and the Inter-American and African regional human rights systems to eradicate sexual orientation- and gender identity-based violence and discrimination. All of the experts concurred that working to ensure that all persons enjoy a life free of said violence and discrimination must continue to be a priority.

➤ Expanding collaboration with the IPPDH

The IACHR followed-up on the collaboration that had begun in 2017 with the IPPDH on the human rights of older adults, holding a panel discussion on best practices, releasing a report and launching a photo exhibit (see Program 9). This collaboration has been instrumental in furthering the work of the Unit on the Rights of Older Adults, created in 2017, as well as moving forward in building relationships with civil society and States on the topic.

Additionally, both institutions deepened their collaboration on training by jointly holding the **international course on Public Policies on Human Rights**, with the IACHR. The course was given to 100 participants, with space reserved for public officials responsible for the design, management, implementation and evaluation of public policies, members of social organizations and movements, academics and society in general.

➤ Starting collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

With the participation of its Special Rapporteurship on ESCER and in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Americas, the IACHR held the First Meeting of Experts on Indigenous Health in the Americas. This initiative is expected to continue by setting up systematic collaboration on the subject matter.



➤ **Participating in the General Assembly of the Club de Madrid**

In the context of the World Leadership Alliance of the Club de Madrid, held in Lisbon from October 16 to 17, its General Assembly invited the IACHR Executive Secretariat to give a short presentation on the general situation of human rights in Nicaragua and Venezuela. It is the first time that the IACHR has participated in this space, formed by independent political leaders, who seek to strengthen democratic leadership and build institutional capacity, so as to confront global challenges.

P15: Mechanism of Protection for Human Rights Defenders in the Americas (with the OHCHR)

➤ **Progress in the implementation of the Mechanism**

After the achievements of 2017 with respect to the design and public consultations about the work agenda, the Mechanism was launched in 2018. In March, the first meeting of the focal points of the joint mechanism was held in Bogota, with the presence of the focal point of the IACHR and of the Offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Central America, South America, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, to discuss implementation of the mechanism.

At this meeting, the offices of the OUNHCHR and the IACHR agreed to expand joint actions to move forward in effectively implementing the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas. Accordingly, progress was made in consolidating the joint action mechanism with specific action proposals along five priority lines of action: 1) joint studies, 2) monitoring and protection, 3) advocacy, 4) promotion and 5) technical assistance.

In order to accomplish these actions, it was agreed to periodically exchange information between both bodies for joint analysis of issues and situations of special concern, as well as to achieve effective and timely protection of at-risk defenders. A diagnostic assessment draft was also introduced on the situation of human rights defenders in the Americas (2012-2017), which serves as input for the joint actions to be carried out.

Throughout the current year, both bodies carried out a series of joint actions such as: issuing joint pronouncements on situations of mutual concern (with respect to Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, and regional situations), joint participation in monitoring and promotional activities and increased exchange of information and analysis regarding the human rights situation of human rights defenders in the region, including important information about precautionary measures. The activities that were carried out include: a seminar and a forum on standards in relation to human rights defenders in Honduras; participation of the representative of the OUNHCHR in Honduras during the IACHR country visit; a meeting of experts on best practices in protection, prevention and investigation of crimes against human rights defenders; preparatory activities for two reports that are intended for joint publication; as well as a consultation of experts. In December, a meeting was held of the focal points to assess results and agree on a timetable of actions for the first half of 2019.



P16: Program for the Universalization and Coordination of the IAHRs with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

➤ Universalization of the Inter-American Human Rights System

The IACHR welcomes the following forward steps toward universalization of the Inter-American human rights system during 2018: Antigua and Barbuda ratified the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance; [El Salvador acceded to the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Rights of Older Adults](#); and Uruguay ratified the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

➤ Institutional Cooperation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

On September 1, 2018, the plenary IA Court of HR and the IACHR held their annual meeting. At said meeting, they agreed to create a working group made up of judges and commissioners, as well as executive secretaries, to ensure the proper functioning of the Inter-American system.

On December 10, in the city of Bogota, Colombia, the Second Edition of the Forum of the Inter-American Human Rights System was held. The idea behind this joint initiative is to spark and encourage debate on the present and future of human rights in the region, the effectiveness of the system, the need to increase the rate of compliance with the recommendations of the IACHR and the judgments of the IA Court of HR by the Member States, and other key issues on the human rights agenda in the Americas. Participating in the Forum were States, civil society, international agencies, universities, social and union movements, and the general public.



OE5

To guarantee the human resources, infrastructure, technology, and budget necessary for full implementation of the mandate and functions of the IACHR by means of results-based institutional management for efficient, effective, and measurable institutional development.

Results achieved

- Collectively drafting the plan for the improvement of the workplace environment in process of implementation.
- Increasing geographic representation on the staff of the IACHR Executive Secretariat.
- Implementing the Financial Sustainability Plan.
- Expanding public presence of the IACHR in the countries of the region.
- Increasing budget from the Regular Fund and specific funds.
- Strengthening communication capacity of the IACHR
- Implementing Technology Innovation.

The IACHR has been able to sustain the results, which it achieved in 2017, in the area of institutional management, and make progress in the area of institutional communication and institutional strengthening. Even though results have been incremental in the area of technology and systems, additional resources need to be raised in order to meet the objectives of Program 18.

The IACHR has received the first of three equal budget increases from the regular fund and has managed to increase the donor base from 24 to 28 States and organizations, diversifying and increasing the specific funds it received by 12%.

P17: Institutional Management and Development Program

➤ Strengthening the organizational structure

During this period, the competitive application process continued, in order to fill 11 new positions of the structure of the Executive Secretariat approved in 2017. Likewise, throughout the three Sessions of Internships, that are coordinated by the Department of Human Resources OAS/GS, a total of 104 interns joined the IACHR Executive Secretariat, and were divided up into 3 groups. Through the support of different institutions, the IACHR/ES received five fellowship holders during the year. Additionally, thanks to the support of different



institutions, during 2018, the IACHR/ES received seven of its staff members from the Ministry of the Public Defender of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (1 employee), from the Office of the Ombudsman of Recife/PE of Brazil (DPU) (2 employees), from the Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office of Oaxaca (3 employees) and from the Public Labor Prosecutor’s Office of Brazil (1 employee).

➤ **Implementing the collectively drafted work environment plan.**

The Work Environment Committee, a group made up of employees and consultants of the IACHR Executive Secretariat, formalized its structure with a work plan drawn up in 2017. Four subcommittees were formed address the following topics: CPR (Results-based Contracts) consultancy mechanism; responsibility and accountability; discrimination, equality and diversity; and competitive job openings. Each subcommittee examined its topics and submitted recommendations to the Office of the Executive Secretary along with recommendations to improve the work environment of the Executive Secretariat.

Achievements include implementation of the “Open-Door Policy” and hiring a consultant specifically to deal with competitive job opening processes. The Committee in turn drafted the Manual on proper office conduct (*Manual de Convivencia*), which was submitted for consultation to the Executive Secretary staff in August 2018.

Another achievement was increasing diversity in the representation of nationalities on the IACHR Executive Secretariat staff. While in 2017 the staff was made up of 18 different nationalities, by December 2018 the number of countries represented on the ES staff was 22. In 2018, employees of the following four nationalities joined the Executive Secretariat, which had not been represented up until that time: Canada, Ecuador, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Table of number of employees by nationality OAS/GS

Nationality entering GS/OAS	Women	Men	Total	%
Argentina	9	3	12	11%
Barbados		1	1	1%
Bolivia	4		4	4%
Brazil	8	9	17	15%
Canada	1		1	1%
Chile	4	1	5	4%
Colombia	13	1	14	12%
Costa Rica	2		2	2%
Ecuador		1	1	1%
El Salvador	1		1	1%
Spain		1	1	1%
Guatemala	1	1	2	2%
Italia		1	1	1%
Mexico	7	5	12	11%
Panama		2	2	2%



Paraguay		1	1	1%
Peru	8	5	13	12%
Saint Lucia	1		1	1%
Uruguay	3	1	4	4%
USA	10	2	12	11%
Venezuela	5		5	4%
Trinidad and Tobago	1		1	1%
Total	78	35	113	100%

➤ **Expanding IACHR’s public presence in the region through roaming sessions**

Throughout 2018, the IACHR has conducted four periods of sessions in different locations of the region, thus facilitating engagement with civil society and the States. The periods of sessions held in 2018 are listed in the table below:

Period of Sessions	Location	Date	Number of public hearings	Working meetings
167 th	Bogota, Colombia	February 22 to March 2, 2018	30	18
168 th	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	May 3 to 11, 2018	30	21
169 th	Boulder, Colorado, United States	September 30 to October 5, 2018	37	31
170 th	Washington, DC, United States	December 3 to 7, 2018	21	29



Two years after the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan was first implemented, the IACHR has successfully increased its public presence throughout the region, having held its sessions in 7 different countries.

➤ **Accountability to donors**

In 2018, the IACHR Executive Secretariat prepared and submitted 26 midterm or final narrative reports, relating to 19 projects funded by the following 13 donors: UNHCHR, Germany Avina/Cammina, Canada, United States, Spanish Fund, France, Netherlands, Ireland, PADF, Switzerland, European Union and World Vision.



➤ **Building the IACHR's communications capacity**

Over this period the IACHR continued to train journalists offering tools and knowledge to help improve the quality and quantity of coverage of human rights issues and, especially, the activities and reports of the IACHR. In March, a course was held at headquarters, which was attended by Latin American media correspondents in Washington, D.C, who are assigned to covering the IACHR as part of their duties. Additionally, training was given to Colombian journalists in the context of the 167th Period of Sessions, which was held in Bogota in February and March, and in the Dominican Republic during the Period of Sessions, that took place in Santo Domingo in May.

Improvements were made to the IACHR Website. A [new section was created on the Webpage listing all actions taken by the IACHR with regard to Nicaragua](#), which boasts thus far more than 5,000 views, and is updated on a daily basis. Likewise, a new section was created about the Special Follow-up Mechanism on the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA). This section supplements the section previously posted by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI-Ayotzinapa). During this period, a multimedia interactive microsite on poverty and human rights was prepared and launched (see Program 9).

The IACHR Website had 3.4 million views in 2018. The percentage of users by country was broken down as follows: 19% from Mexico; 11% from Colombia; 9% from the United States; 9% from Nicaragua; 8% from Argentina; 6% from Brazil; 6% from Peru; 5% from Guatemala; 4% from Ecuador; and 3% from Chile; with lower proportions from other countries. (Source: Google Analytics). After the homepage in Spanish, which was viewed 408,000 times, the second most viewed page was the mandate description with 132,000 views; the American Declaration with 91,000; the IACHR internship page, with 74,000; the petitions and cases portal with 68,000; and the homepage in English, with 62,000. The most viewed press release was [113/18](#), reporting the preliminary observations on the working visit to Nicaragua, issued on May 21, 2018, which drew 61,600 views. Over the reporting period, a total of 276 press releases were issued, which represents a 24% increase over 2017.

The IACHR continues to use social networks to publicize its work and raise awareness about Inter-American standards. In 2018, the IACHR had coverage on Twitter of 69.5 million impressions, according to Twitter Analytics; while on Facebook, the coverage of IACHR publications for the reporting period surpassed 15 million, according to Facebook Insights. On Twitter, the IACHR added more than 124,000 new followers over 2018 and closed out the period with a total of 441,621 followers on the account @cidh on Twitter (at the start of 2018, it was 317,000), which is a 39% increase in followers for the reporting period. As for Facebook, the number of followers of the page increased by 11% from 469,816 to 525,606 over the period under consideration. The IACHR has begun to use Twitter Live and Facebook Live more often to provide live broadcasts of press conferences, report releases and other events. This experience has yielded positive results, because the rates of with the live broadcasts and, also with the videos which remain available, are four times higher than the viewing rates of publications with photos, links or text alone. By analyzing this data, we are able to positively assess the strategy of using these multimedia mechanisms to reach a wider audience of the population of the entire region with the IACHR's messages.

Twitter is playing an increasingly more leading role as the IACHR's tool of digital communication par excellence, with the highest growth rate of followers of all the communications media used by the IACHR. The growth on Twitter is linked to a practice the IACHR began in 2017 of using this platform to publicize its position about certain current events and topical issues, without necessarily issuing a press release. Over this period, for example, the IACHR made its position clear via Twitter about the ruling of the Peruvian Supreme Court to vacate the pardon of former president Alberto Fujimori (reach of 106,019 for that tweet and total reach of 303,971 for



4 tweets relating to Alberto Fujimori); violence during protests in Haiti (total reach 11,332 of 1 tweet); the Migrant Caravan (13 tweets, total reach 178,876); approval of the Comprehensive Law for Trans Persons in Uruguay (1 tweet, total reach 19,945); release and expatriation of precautionary measure beneficiary Lorent Saleh in Venezuela (2 tweets, total reach 77,821); among other examples. In several instances, press articles cite the use of these tweets, which shows that the account is followed by the media to obtain information about the IACHR beyond press releases.

Other factors contributed to the growing impact of the IACHR Twitter account. One factor is increased multimedia use, such as live broadcasts of press conferences and the use of photographs and videos. We have seen that photographs, as well as live video broadcasts, posted on Twitter have been used by the media. For example, live broadcast via Twitter of the IACHR President's concluding press conference on the visit to Nicaragua had 2,000 live connections, but the La Prensa of Nicaragua later took it and posted the video on its digital portal, where it was viewed more than 23,000 times.

Increased use of photographs and videos for communications purposes at the IACHR was the result of hiring communications staff for coverage of periods of sessions, the country visit to Brazil and working visits to Colombia and Costa Rica. This yielded a highly positive result, because the mass media was able to use these images for their respective coverage. Likewise, the use of photographs on Twitter was a factor that led to greater reach, for example, with 1.4 million total reach for tweets about the Brazil visit.

The Flickr platform, where all IACHR photos are posted, has seen greater movement and also posted a 5% increase in followers. This platform is viewed by the press to download high-resolution photos, and the use of IACHR photographs by newspapers to illustrate articles is on the rise.

Throughout 2018, the IACHR conducted dissemination campaigns on Inter-American human rights standards in order to promote a greater understanding of and deeper insight into their scope and for them to be applied and incorporated into decisions, legal frameworks and public policies with a human rights-based approach. In this regard, dissemination drives were carried out for the thematic reports "Poverty and Human Rights" and "Children and Adolescents in the United States Adult Criminal Justice System." These drives reached 4.8 and 2.8 million people, respectively. Similarly, the IACHR carried out a follow-up campaign on the situation in Nicaragua, posting the IACHR's positions over its Twitter account and publicizing the Commission's decisions and activities with respect to that country. This coverage reached 3.1 million people.

Likewise, in 2018 the IACHR increased the use of audiovisual materials, specifically videos, to raise awareness about a variety of human rights issues and to publicize activities such as country visits, working visits, public hearings, courses, among other ones. For example, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons (LGBTI) produced educational videos on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and corporal diversity, which reached a half a million people. Similarly, the campaign "We Have Rights (*Tenemos Derechos*), consisting of four videos, reached 61,000 people.

In addition, dissemination campaigns were carried out with regard to the periods of sessions and hearings on a variety of human rights issues in the OAS member countries. As for the 167th Period of Sessions, which took place in Colombia, the campaign ran from February 14 to April 30, reaching a total of 2.7 million people. Regarding the 168th Period of Sessions, held in the Dominican Republic, the campaign ran from May 3 to 11 and reached 2.1 million individuals, including the promotional activities conducted in the context of the launching of the updated report on the impact of the friendly settlement process. The 169th Period of Sessions held in Boulder, Colorado, reached a total of 3.4 million people through social media, with 45,280 interactions with a total of 490 publications. All public hearings were broadcast live and the videos are available on YouTube.



P18: Program of Technological Innovation Applied to Human Rights

➤ Defining System requirements

Steps have been taken toward implementation of two new computerized systems: the System for Monitoring Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE) and a prototype electronic voting system. An analysis was conducted of the technical requirements for implementation of the Inter-American SIMORE, a support tool to enhance the IACHR's recommendation follow-up strategy (see Program 21). Likewise, efforts were made towards information gathering, functional analysis and design of an internal voting system to optimize IACHR discussion and decision-making processes. A prototype information management system is being built to demonstrate the advantages, scope, functionality and operability the system would have.

Over the period of this report, an automated system was brought online to collect information, thus making it possible for intake of hearing requests for 3 periods of sessions, nominations for two fellowships and participation in a public consultation about the Unit on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

➤ Implementing technological innovation

The first totally digital period of sessions was implemented at the 167th session. The Commission was able to access all documents submitted for its deliberation and examination through portable equipment. Additionally, an electronic voting system was designed to facilitate discussion and decision-making for the Commission and Executive Secretariat.

Steps were also taken to install two additional collaboration tools for videoconferencing. With this type of technological platform the IACHR's sphere of action expands by holding virtual meetings with different actors throughout the region.

In addition, the Technology and Systems Unit (UTS) of the IACHR Executive Secretariat is examining the technical requirements and providing technological advisory service for the study on prompt implementation of the System for Monitoring Recommendations (SIMORE).

➤ Upgrading and updating existing tools

The Comprehensive Digital Restructuring Plan was implemented so that electronic information storage spaces and information systems could be updated and compatible with the new organizational structure of the IACHR. The Document Management System (DMS), the Petitions and Cases Management System (PCMS), the digital information storage units and institutional email accounts were all updated and enhanced.

In addition, the UTS is taking steps toward implementation of a new module on the Individual Petition System Portal, which is specific to requests for Precautionary Measures.

Based on the feedback from the users of the Individual Petition System Portal, Member States and Civil Society, new features have been introduced into the system thus making user interaction easier.



P19: Financial Sustainability Plan

➤ Increase in regular fund financing

The first of three equal annual increases to be disbursed over three consecutive years began in January 2018 and, in 2020, will have doubled the budget allocated to the IACHR Executive Secretariat. The 2018 budget from the Regular Fund approved for the IACHR totals USD \$6,772,025. This increase made it possible to fill new positions created by consolidating the administrative structure and other new positions through competitive selection processes.

In 2018, the Executive Secretariat worked with the Member States on submitting a proposed 2019 Program-Budget to the Permanent Council. The budget approved for 2019, which includes the second of the three equal increases eventually doubling the budget, was set at USD \$ 9,367,400. This proposal was approved at the plenary session of the Special General Assembly on financial issues, which was held on October 30, 2018.

➤ Implementing the Fund-Raising Committee

The Committee met to define the agenda and fund-raising strategy for the Programs of the Strategic Plan and, particularly, for the country visit to Honduras. The Committee came to conclusions on the need to account to the donors and the Member States by submitting advance implementation results of the Strategic Plan in the first year. Two sub-regional meetings were held and a presentation was given to the Permanent Council.

➤ Financial Sustainability with prospects for the diversification of sources

Sustainability Plan execution has moved forward in creating a developing projects bank of the Strategic Plan for fund-raising. Progress has also been made in enhancing the processes of accountability to donors, not only at the level of results of the Strategic Plan, but also on the content of the specific reports on project execution, for which strengthening project follow-up and monitoring has been essential (see Program 17). The IACHR has also been working on expanding and diversifying its donor base, exploring and making overtures to other sources, such as cooperation channeling agencies and some corporate foundations.

In this regard, over the course of 2018, the IACHR Executive Secretariat wrote 22 conceptual papers and funding project proposals to submit to donors. Most of these proposals were approved by the donors and are in the execution phase.

In 2018, an accountability meeting was organized with member and observer States to present the results of the implementation of the first year of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and discuss the challenges ahead. In addition, a donor meeting was held to raise resources to provide support to projects relating to the human rights situation in Nicaragua. A trip to meet with European observer States was also conducted, where project proposals were presented.



As a result of the activities carried out in 2018, the IACHR has been able to increase specific funds by 5% over the preceding year, to a total of USD \$6,698,995, the highest amount ever in its history.

The IACHR has been able, as well, to diversify sources of funding, by increasing the number of donors from 24 in 2017 to 28 in 2018. The IACHR also notes among donors renewed confidence of Member and Observer States, regaining the support of States such as Ecuador and the Dominican Republic and Observer States such as Germany, Italy and Luxembourg, after several years of not contributing.

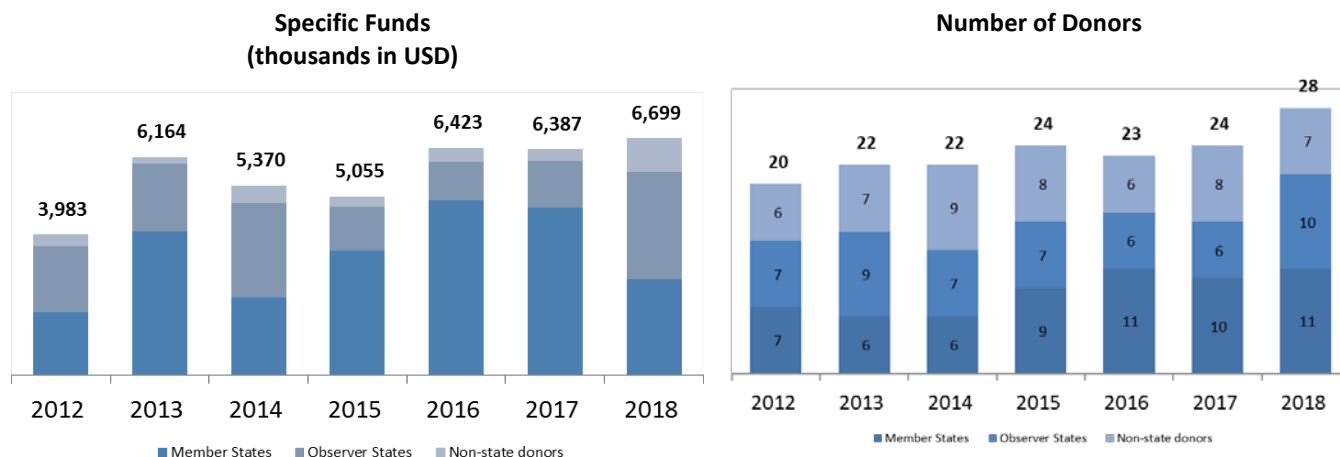


Table of Specific Funds received by Donor

Member States	Amount (USD)	Project/Use
Argentina	37,500	“Support for IACHR 2017-2021 Strategic Plan”
Canada	632,275	“Promoting compliance with recommendations and decisions on the rights of women and children issued by the IACHR in the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean.”
Chile	75,000	“Support for IACHR activities and in particular in Nicaragua”
Colombia	338,867	Hosting the 167 th Period of Sessions
Costa Rica	13,333	“Support for IACHR 2017-2021 Strategic Plan”
Ecuador	202,111	“Follow-up on MC309/18. Freedom of Expression”
Mexico	950,000	“Implementation of MESA”
Panamá	49,985	“Support for IACHR 2017-2021 Strategic Plan”
Peru	39,297	“Support for IACHR activities and in particular in Nicaragua”
Dominican Republic	362,933	Hosting 168 th Period of Sessions
Uruguay	9,000	“Support to SRFE and SRESCER”
Subtotal Member States	2,710,301	
Permanent Observers		
Germany	232,214	“Implementing the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Nicaragua (GIEI)”



Spain	444,686	“Promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights in the Inter-American human rights system - Phase I (Emphasis on the subject of business and human rights)” “Promoting the use of the friendly settlement mechanism before the IACHR for the protection of human rights in the Americas –phase II”.
France	48,933	“Support for activities of the IACHR Executive Secretariat and SRESCER”
Ireland	56,125	“Access to international justice through attention to petitions lodged with the IACHR, for discriminated persons in the hemisphere”
Italy	80,000	“Implementing the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Nicaragua (GIEI)”
Luxembourg	113,930	“Implementing MESENI”
Netherlands	56,798	“Supporting the IACHR with implementation of its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.”
Sweden	308,863	“Strengthening Freedom of Expression in the Americas”
Switzerland	939,900	“Strengthening Governance and Human Rights in Central America”
European Union	763,251	“Implementing the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Nicaragua (GIEI)” and MESENI”
Subtotal Permanent Observers	3,044,701	
Institutions and other		
Aldeas Infantiles SOS	5,000	“Implementing MESENI”
Freedom House	192,553	“Implementing the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts in Nicaragua (GIEI)”
Fundación ARCUS	50,000	“Protecting and Promoting the human rights of LGTBI persons”
Google	110,000	“Strengthening Freedom of Expression in the Americas”
Ford Foundation	16,860	“Strengthening Freedom of Expression in the Americas”
Pan American Development Foundation	455,422	“Promoting and protecting human rights in the Northern Triangle of Central America”
United Nations High Commissioner	114,158	“Fellowship on International Protection and internal displacement and support for institution building”
Subtotal Institutions and other	943,993	
Total Specific Funds	6,698,995	

P20: Center for System User Attention

The Center for User Attention (CAU) has been created within the organic structure of the IACHR, assigned to the Center for Support, Information Management and User Attention Section, under the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Executive Secretariat. In 2018, progress was made in launching the Center with the completion of the competitive selection process, in which the first staff member of the area, in addition to 1 administrative



support employee were selected and hired. The first actions implemented by the CAU included coordinating the efforts needed to provide effective and continual telephone assistance to the users of the system.

In order to continue strengthening said function, the CAU has been developing a user assistance manual, for which it has drawn up several forms in the four official OAS languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese). This was done primarily to facilitate the filing of petitions and requests for precautionary measures or reports in the language of the user and in a simple format that meets their needs. Because of the high volume of documentation that the IACHR receives in the different activities it engages in (i.e. periods of sessions and observation visits), the CAU has implemented the use of intake sheets for the identification and orderly transfer of the documentation received by the IACHR and its referral to the appropriate areas or sections.



P21

Special Program to Monitor IACHR Recommendations

Results achieved

- Operationalization of the “Recommendation Monitoring Section” with new products and procedures;
- Approving the Plan of Action of Program 21;
- Preparing diagnostic assessment document on process of follow-up on recommendation issued by the IACHR in its different mechanisms;
- Proactive strategy to follow-up on published cases: increasing working meetings, portfolio meetings with States, meetings with petitioners;
- Preparing and approving the proposal for the rewriting of Chapter II.D and Chapter V in the context of the redesigning of the Annual Report;
- Approving the index of the Follow-up Report on compliance with recommendations set forth in published merits reports on discrimination and violence against women and children;
- First phase of implementation of the Inter-American System for Monitoring IACHR Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE) under way – Completing preparation of data base;
- Releasing the balance and final report of the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA);
- Holding two working group meetings on implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic;
- Increased response of States to the Annual Report by more than 200%;
- Setting up and releasing results of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI);
- Implementing the Special Recommendation Monitoring Mechanism for the Northern Triangle of Central America;
- Issuing **37 follow up press releases**;
- Conducting **8 official and 9 technical follow-up visits** in 2018;
- Carrying out **15 promotional activities** of training and colloquies on recommendation monitoring; and
- OAS General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights recognizes the efforts of the IACHR to put into operation a digital recommendation monitoring system in the context of its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and urges it to continue developing its capacities to follow-up on its recommendations (AG/DOC.5641/18).



The IACHR has taken important steps in creating and putting into operation the Recommendation Monitoring Section in order to make the Inter-American human rights system more effective. In this regard, efforts have been made in developing and enhancing the IACHR's recommendation monitoring methodologies; the number of recommendation monitoring actions has been increased with a view to building consensus-based roadmaps toward compliance with recommendations. Likewise, the IACHR has made a fundamental commitment to the consolidation and creation of the Special Recommendation Monitoring Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA) – adopted in relation to Mexico, the Working Group for Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI). The special monitoring mechanisms facilitate a more holistic analysis of the IACHR's decisions and recommendations, help to publicize the case or situation, provide systematic periodic follow-up on the issue/country leading to more thorough and focused monitoring by the IACHR and, thus, improved acceptance of the results. Additionally, the IACHR is developing its Inter-American System for Monitoring Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE), which will have a database of all recommendations issued by the IACHR's different mechanisms, to OAS Member States. The importance of this system has been recognized by the organization itself in the context of its General Assembly.

➤ Operationalizing the IACHR Recommendation Monitoring Section

In 2018, the IACHR Executive Secretariat put into operation the new Recommendation Monitoring Section (SSR), which was created as part of the IACHR restructuring. The area has the functions of “coordinating the follow up on recommendations issued by the IACHR from its different instruments and tools.” As for actions undertaken by the new Section, it is important to note the following results:

- Defining the functions and powers of the new Section, assigning staff. The section currently has a coordinator, two specialized human rights law attorneys and a fellowship holder, in addition to special mechanism teams.
- The Section worked on putting the information into order to generate different products. By way of example, we can mention:
 - a) Preparing the **IACHR Recommendation Base** of published thematic, country, Chapter IV.B and merits reports;
 - b) Creating the case **Portfolio** of published merits reports (article. 51);
 - c) Preparing **Country sheets** listing the level of compliance with the recommendations in published reports on the merits (article. 51);
 - d) Harmonizing **reparation categories** in the petition and case system; and definition for recommended measures in the monitoring system;
 - e) Preparing a **Concept note** on the “Limits and potential of the IACHR process of recommendation monitoring;
 - f) Systematizing dialogues on follow-up at the 1st Forum of the IAHRs (2017);
 - g) Preparing an internal document assessing the process of follow-up on recommendations issued by the IACHR in its different mechanisms;
 - h) Preparing the recommendation monitoring **Memos** of Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.



- Approving at the OAS the Draft “Promoting compliance with the decisions and recommendations issued by the IACHR” (**Plan of Action of Special Program 21 of the Strategic Plan**), which provides for fund-raising for IACHR initiatives on recommendation monitoring.
- Preparing **thematic studies**:
 - 1) Preparing a thematic study on compliance with recommendations connected to the **35 death penalty cases with published merits reports**, which accounts for one third of the total number of published merits reports that are in the monitoring stage.
 - 2) Preparing a thematic study on compliance with the recommendations connected to the **12 cases where the right to life or the safety of women and girls has been infringed**, and are in the stage recommendation monitoring.
- Holding a **colloquy on the process of monitoring the recommendations of the IACHR**, on May 7, during the 168th Period of Sessions in the Dominican Republic.
- **Colloquy** on “Inter-American Standards: Impact and effectiveness of the IAHRs” between the IACHR, the Inter-American Court, Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission and the Max Planck Institute of Heidelberg, in Mexico City, on August 31.
- **Meeting of Experts** in Washington, D.C. in September.
- **Colloquy: Implementation of Recommendations and orders of international bodies in individual cases: looking at the future** coordinated with the *Human Rights Law Implementation Project* on December 2, 2018, in Washington D.C., during the 170th Period of Sessions.
- **Presentation of the documentary film “Home Truth”** about the story of Jessica Lenahan and her struggle for justice that gave rise to the landmark case of domestic violence at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on December 3, 2018, in Washington, D.C, during the 170th Period of Sessions.
- In the context of forming partnerships with academic networks, a **Declaration of Understanding** was signed with the **Max Planck Institute of Public Comparative Law and International Law (Heidelberg)** and the IACHR participated in the “5th International Seminar on Supervision, Compliance and Impact of the Inter-American Human Rights System” in Heidelberg, on July 13 and 14.
- The Commission has also been working with the Project of creating **IACHR jurisprudence sheets** connected to merits and friendly settlement reports, in collaboration with the **Institute for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Peru (IDEHPUCP)**.
- Preparing the Recommendations **monitoring Webpage**.
- Likewise, we note the outreach and collaboration with **National Human Rights Institutions and Human Rights Ombudsman’s Offices** for the process of follow-up on Country Reports in 2018, in training courses of human rights ombudspersons, and laying out a roadmap for collaboration on monitoring.



➤ **Follow-up on cases with published merits reports (Article 51)**

With respect to follow-up on compliance with the recommendations issued in cases with published reports on the merits (Article 51), follow-up was carried out on case files of 103 cases in this stage. Following a **proactive strategy** of case oversight, contact was made with petitioners and States in order to follow-up on the published merits reports.

The main results of this more proactive case follow-up strategy were:

- Holding **15 working to follow-up on published merits reports (Article 51)** in 2018 in the context of the IACHR periods of sessions. In 2017, 3 meetings were held (**increase of 434%**).
- Rewriting the request for information template letter, including drawing up a procedure for how the parties are to submit the information.
- **Sending 115 letters to States** requesting information on compliance with the recommendations of published reports on the merits. Based on the responses, the letters were forwarded to the petitioners for their annual submission of information.
- Contact with States and petitioners to introduce the new Recommendation Monitoring Section and information on the Annual Report.
- **Increasing response to the Annual Report** by more than 200% State response (2018=61 cases; 2017=2-) and almost 150% increase in response from petitioners (2018 = 47; 2017 = 20). It is important to note an increased level of case response from the United States and the Caribbean this year.
- Holding **7 portfolio meetings** with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru.
- Holding **bilateral meetings with 20 petitioners** (face to face and by video-conferences).
- 2 follow-up press releases on the Case of Roberto Moreno Ramos (EEUU).
- Creating **case indicators**.
- Training seminar for CARICOM countries on case monitoring.

It was also proposed and approved to **rewrite Chapter II.D on individual case follow-up of the IACHR Annual Report. The memorandum with the proposal** approved by the IACHR includes: new classification criteria, suggestion to classify the compliance level on a recommendation by recommendation basis, to underscore the challenges and progress of the year, drawing up individualized case *follow-up sheets*.

Some relevant statistics:

- **103 cases** in follow-up (out of a total of 112 published)
- **22 countries** with merits reports in follow-up
- **12.5 years:** average time in follow-up stage

➤ **Inter-American SIMORE**

In keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Paraguay for the exchange of experiences and reciprocal technical cooperation to create the Inter-American System for Monitoring IACHR Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE), the **2018 Work Plan** was agreed to.

In 2018, training was given to the IACHR team and it was verified that the technical requirements for installing the system were met. The **Workshop to present the System tools** and training of the IACHR focal points took place from June 25 to 27 in Washington, and was attended by **more than 50 people**, including the participation



of ten OAS State missions in the presentation of the system. On that occasion, the State of Paraguay delivered the source code of the IACHR system.

In the context of implementation of the plan, a *“Comparative study document of templates for information indexing — Recommendation Monitoring Systems”* was prepared in order to draft the proposal of the recommendation indexing base in SIMORE.

Inter-American SIMORE is based on the tool developed by Paraguay to systematically sort out international human rights recommendations issued to the country and enables public access to information about actions taken by the State, linked to compliance and implementation on these actions. The system features a civil society participation tool. In 2018, the IACHR built the database of recommendations of the IACHR and worked with Paraguay on developing and testing the prototype of the Inter-American System for Monitoring IACHR Recommendations (Inter-American SIMORE). The plan is to launch the system in 2019.

It is worth noting that in the framework of the **2018 OAS General Assembly, the Resolution on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was approved**. This Resolution recognizes the efforts of the IACHR to put into operation a digital system to monitor recommendations under its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and urges the Commission to continue to build its capacity to follow up on its recommendations (AG/DOC.5641/18).

In September, the Recommendation Monitoring Section (SSR) held a **Webinar with the Red-DESC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay**. The purpose of the webinar was to provide an opportunity to civil society organizations, who belong to the ESCER network Red-DESC to learn about SIMORE Plus of Paraguay, learn about the proposed Inter-American SIMORE, and make suggestions on how to enhance follow-up on implementation of the recommendations of the Commission and ensure that a new tool will be the most useful possible. Around 15 people representing 10 organizations participated in the webinar. In addition, the SSR held meetings with academic organizations and members of civil society to discuss the proposed criteria and search fields for Inter-American SIMORE.

Additionally, the IACHR engaged in dialogue and meetings to learn about the **national recommendation systems of other States** in order to find out the best practices of the region, exchange experiences with respect to recommendation systems and explore the possibility that the IACHR recommendations be incorporated into these systems, as in the case of **Bolivia’s SIPLUS**.

➤ IACHR recommendation database

Additionally, as part of the System’s development stage under the Plan of Action of the Strategic Plan, the IACHR systematized the recommendations database by defining common categories, the lifting method and designed a **proposed search criteria and recommendation classification system**. Recommendations issued in the different IACHR mechanisms and instruments were gathered, and were broken down as follows:

- **4113 Recommendations were gathered:**
 - 1766 thematic report recommendations;
 - 432 published merits report recommendations;
 - 1421 country report recommendations;
 - 494 Chapter IV.B report recommendations.



➤ Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case – MESA – Mexico

The presence of the Mechanism on the ground through its official visits helped to provide for spaces of dialogue between the parties involved, in particular, the family members, which facilitated information exchange. These gatherings were spaces of respectful, frank and open discussion.

Over the first half of 2018, the IACHR approved the second work period of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case (MESA) and presented its [Balance Report](#), which explained the follow-up on the recommendations of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) and of the precautionary measure, that was granted by the Commission on behalf of the students of the “Raúl Isidro Burgos” rural school of Ayotzinapa (MC 409-14).

On November 28, the Commission presented the Final Report [Informe Final](#) ([available in Spanish](#)) of the Work Plan of its Special Follow-up Mechanism for the Ayotzinapa Case, in the context of its seventh official visit to Mexico, which was conducted on November 26, 2018. The report recounts the Mexican State’s efforts to uncover the whereabouts of the missing students through search operations; the investigation to get to the bottom of the events; victim and family member assistance and the measures of non-repetition, as a consequence of the gruesome events that took place on the nights of September 26 and 17, 2014 in Iguala, Guerrero.

Some results:

- [Balance Report](#) in June 2018
- **MESA’s Final Report** ([available in Spanish](#)) presented to the State and the families in Mexico City November 26, 2018. Both reports present substantive forward steps in lines of investigation, search, victim assistance and measures of non-repetition.
- Preparing nearly 467,000 pages in 618 volumes.
- **7 official visits and 5 technical visits** in two years.
- **5 public hearings** about MESA
- **Dialogue between the parties.** The presence of the Mechanism enabled spaces of dialogue between the parties involved, in particular, family members, facilitating information exchange.
- **Complying with a timetable** by the State.
- **Carrying out investigative steps** by the State at the suggestion of the Mechanism in order to move forward in the investigations.
- **General Law on Disappearances of Persons** – January 2018. It provides for important tools for investigations based on human rights standards, as well as creating a **National Mechanism for the Search of Disappeared Persons** and emphasizes important aspects of victim assistance and care.



➤ Creating the Working Group on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic



The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights announced in its 2017 Annual Report the creation of the Working Group on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic to follow-up on recommendations and commitments pertaining to acquisition of nationality, migration, policies to combat all forms of discrimination and policies on women's rights and gender equality. On February 27, the Hearing on Compliance Measures of the decisions of the Inter-American Human Rights System in the Dominican Republic was held during the 167th Period of Sessions.

The [first Working Group meeting](#) was held on July 24 and 25, 2018 in Washington. As part of this gathering, a working meeting was held between representatives of the State and civil society about migration, women, gender, equality and discrimination and nationality. The IACHR prepared a questionnaire prior to the Working Group meeting and sent it to the State and civil society in order to gather up-to-date information about the situation of human rights and public policy implementation regarding the issues of concern to the Working Group. This first Working Group meeting has been an important opportunity to continue to jointly work to follow up on the IACHR's recommendations and update the information on implementation of human rights policies.

On November 20 and 21, 2018, the [Second Working Meeting](#) on Implementation of Human Rights Policies in the Dominican Republic met in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In the wake of this Second Working Group, the IACHR underscored the creation and consolidation of this space of participation of civil society alongside State authorities to address proposals to deal with the topics at issue.

The Working Group is set up as a **complementary tool** to the process of follow-up on the recommendations about the situation of human rights in the Dominican Republic.

➤ **Setting up the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI)**

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights set up the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) and dispatched a technical team, which arrived in Managua on June 24, 2018.

The purpose of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) is to follow-up on the recommendations issued by the IACHR as a result of its country visit, as well as in the [Preliminary Observations](#) and the Report ["Gross Human Rights Violations in the Context of Social Protests in Nicaragua."](#) Likewise, MESENI is monitoring compliance with the precautionary measures granted in this context to persons whose lives and personal integrity are at great risk and it is continuing to monitor the situation of human rights in Nicaragua, as provided for under the IACHR mandate. MESENI also provided assistance to the Verification and Security Commission, which was instituted in the National Dialogue Agreement, on June 15 and 16. MESENI also helped set up the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) for Nicaragua. In addition, MESENI is engaged in efforts to build capacity and provide training to Nicaraguan civil society on international human rights standards.

Since its arrival in Managua, MESENI has taken stock of the human rights situation in the country and consolidated the data recorded, examined and published by the IACHR about Nicaragua. MESENI is conducting technical monitoring, wherein it examines and compares different sources of the same information, in particular, the figures and reports gathered by civil society human rights defender organizations, public information sources and, to the extent that it is provided, information documented by the State.

➤ **Some Results:**

- Holding **9 technical meetings** on the ground with the highest level State authorities to follow-up on recommendations



- Sending **80 requests for information** (diplomatic notes) to follow up on human rights violations
- Issuing **27 press releases** about the human rights situation in Nicaragua since MESENI was set up
- Holding **3 public hearings** in the context of the 169th and 170th Periods of Sessions of the IACHR.
- Organizing **4 working visits** in the context of MESENI: one visit of the Country Rapporteur in July; one visit of the Rapporteur on Persons Deprived of Liberty to Nicaragua in September; one visit of the President of the Commission to Managua, Nicaragua in October; and one visit of the IACHR Rapporteur on Migrants to Costa Rica in October.
- Carrying out **6 technical visits** in the context of MESENI
- **Follow-up on compliance with the precautionary measures** granted in this context to persons whose lives and physical integrity is at high risk. As of December 31, the Commission has granted **29 precautionary measure resolutions** protecting 137 direct beneficiaries.
- Providing **assistance and accompaniment to the Verification and Security Commission (CVS), which was instituted in the Agreement for National Dialogue.**
 - Carrying out **3 observation and accompaniment missions** with the CVS to the tanks of Jinotepe and Juigalpa, and Masaya.
 - **Achieving the release of 65 detained persons** in the context of CVS actions with the assistance and accompaniment of MESENI.
- Participating in **meetings** with members designated by the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy and with members designated by the Government.
- Building civil society capacity: **9 trainings** in Managua and Matagalpa, training a total of **273 persons**; and **1** in Costa Rica.
- The IACHR's actions for Nicaragua, mainly conducting the country visit in May, have been instrumental to **make known to the international community** the situation of gross human rights violations in the country as of the protests of April 18.
- Since MESENI was set up, the IACHR submitted information on 3 occasions to the **OAS Permanent Council** and its Working Group on the situation in Nicaragua during 2018.
 - July 11, 2018. Remarks of Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Paulo Abrão, to the OAS Permanent Council, Washington, D.C. ([Speech available in Spanish](#))
 - October 19, 2018. Remarks of Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Paulo Abrão, to the OAS Permanent Council, Washington, D.C. ([Speech available in Spanish](#))
 - October 27, 2018. Participation of Commissioner Esmeralda Arosemena, Vice President of the IACHR, in the special session of the OAS Permanent Council to report on the human rights situation in Nicaragua. ([Speech available in Spanish](#))

On December 19, the State of Nicaragua announced its decision to temporarily suspend the presence of MESENI in the country as well as IACHR visits to Nicaragua, beginning on that date. The IACHR announced that MESENI will continue performing its duties from headquarters in Washington, D.C. For this purpose, it has remained in permanent contact with civil society organizations, social movements, State actors and the victims of human rights violations.



➤ **Special Recommendation Monitoring Mechanism for the Northern Triangle of Central America**

The IACHR has been working to set up the organizational structure of the mechanism to follow-up on the recommendations it issued to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador by establishing recommendation monitoring dialogue committees or tables with different actors, based on visits. In October, the IACHR/ES kicked off the planning process to implement the Mechanism. In November and December, draft proposals for the action plan were sent to the permanent missions of Guatemala and Honduras and a first meeting was held with the Ambassador of El Salvador to the OAS.

➤ **Presentation of relevant issues to the OAS Permanent Council:**

- Submitting reports on the Situation of Human Rights in Nicaragua to the OAS Permanent Council.
- Giving a presentation about the recommendations to address discrimination and violence against women and girls in the region to the OAS Permanent Council.

➤ **Completing the Training Module for Recommendation Monitoring and carrying out the training.**

In 2018, a training module on monitoring was added to training courses sponsored by the IACHR. In this regard, the IACHR has participated in **15 promotional and training activities** and training meetings for State officials, human rights ombudspersons, social leaders and civil society of the region.

In addition, the IACHR has been strengthening its coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the National Institutions Network for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the American Continent on this subject matter in order to coordinate actions and exchange best practices on recommendation monitoring.

The achievements for the reporting period are substantive and, therefore, it can be concluded that implementation of this Special Program has been highly satisfactory.



Conclusions

Based on the progress reflected in this report, the conclusion can be drawn that, for each strategic objective, important results have been achieved, and provide continuity to the structural progress achieved in the first stage of implementation of the IACHR's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

Under SO1, there has been a sustained impact of the structural measures implemented in 2017. The significant increase in the pace of analysis and review of petitions and cases registered in 2017 has given rise, in 2018, to an increase as well, as a result of new measures, contributing significantly to a reduction in the procedural backlog. It is important to underscore the substantive increase in demand for precautionary measures in the region, stemming partly from the worsening situation of human rights in some countries and partly from the IACHR's capacity to become present in these contexts, with Nicaragua standing as a case in point. The fact that examination of requests for precautionary measures is up to date, despite the major increase in number, attests to the important achievement to ensure timeliness of the IACHR's response in the framework of this emergency mechanism. The significant progress in implementation of the reparation measures provided for in friendly settlement agreements, attests to the importance of this mechanism for the protection of human rights.

Under SO2, we highlight the lasting results of the methodological integration of geographic and thematic monitoring, which has helped to enrich the standards and boost production of reports. Another important point to stress was the activation of the RIRCU in response to the serious human rights crisis in Nicaragua, ensuring timely, consistent and effective action, through the different mechanisms and work procedures of the IACHR.

Under SO3, we can note the continuity of actions focused on Central America and the Caribbean, boosting training and technical cooperation efforts, as well as establishing closer ties with relevant actors in the area of human rights. It is also an important achievement to have moved forward in the training on and dissemination of Inter-American standards, as well as continuity of actions of consultation and dialogue with civil society. Additionally, the increased support to States in technical cooperation through the OAS political organs must be noted.

Under SO4, substantive gains have been made in cooperation with United Nations agencies, with regional and sub-regional human rights mechanisms. This is apparent in the initial stages of implementation of the joint Mechanism with the OUNHCHR for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

Under SO5, Important structural progress from 2017 continued. With the implementation of the first stage of the staggered application of the budget increase from the Regular Fund, the IACHR has set into motion the competitive selection process to perform essential functions and to be able to expand the coverage of its basic staff and cover operational expenditures. With its new, more integrated and horizontal administrative structure, the IACHR has successfully expanded results to all of its teams and its capacity for response. The financial sustainability plan has yielded positive results by increasing the number of donors and amount of specific funds contributed. Lastly, the practice of roaming sessions throughout the region continued, promoting closer ties with many actors of the region and the Commission and the democratization of access to the Inter-American human rights system.



It can be concluded that, over the course of 2018, the IACHR has posted positive results in the structural measures it instituted in 2017, expanding its capacity of response and relevance to important human rights challenges in the region. In 2018, all programs of the Strategic Plan substantially improved their results, generating a more effective IACHR in the use of different tools and, mainly, in the balanced use of its three fundamental mandates: the petition and case system, monitoring the human rights situation and technical cooperation for the users of the Inter-American human rights system.