

The portrait of María Elena Moyano of Peru joins the Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas at the OAS

- *With this recognition, María Elena Moyano becomes the first Afro-descendant woman to be included in the space that honors those who have shaped the continent's history.*
- *Her inclusion brings the number of women whose struggles for justice, equity, and human rights have been immortalized in this hemispheric gallery to ten.*

Washington, D.C., April 23, 2025. The portrait of María Elena Moyano, an Afro-Peruvian social leader and symbol of the fight against terrorism, was unveiled today at the Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas of the Organization of American States (OAS), during a ceremony held at the OAS main building.

The ceremony featured the participation of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro; the Chair of the OAS Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Benoni Belli; the Permanent Representative of Peru to the OAS, Ambassador José Luis Sardón; the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), Alejandra Mora Mora; the Director of the Art Museum of the Americas, Adriana Ospina; as well as Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of the OAS Member States.

During the event, Ambassador Sardón recalled that María Elena Moyano was an emblematic figure in the defense of human rights in Peru. “She was a martyr in the fight against terrorism. She was born in 1958 in the city of Barranco and grew up in Villa El Salvador, a community that, during the 1980s, became a symbol of organization and hope in the face of terrorism,” he stated.

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro emphasized that Moyano's legacy transcends national borders. “Today, she is remembered as a woman of hope and action. Her life teaches us that true revolution lies in building strong communities, defending human rights, and persistently fighting for social justice. Even in the most difficult times, her legacy shows that hope and action can prevail,” he said.

CIM Executive Secretary Alejandra Mora Mora highlighted the importance of making visible the leadership of women who have transformed the history of the Americas. “María Elena Moyano embodied a grassroots, communal, and resistant leadership that reminds us that transformative power also resides in the territories.”

“May Ms. Moyano inspire us, make us proud, and motivate us to continue fighting for a more just and equitable world. Because every time a woman loses her life because of her struggles, she is reborn in all others. And by being part of this gallery, in some way, she does not die, she and what she stood for live on forever,” said Mora.

The Gallery of Heroines and Heroes of the Americas was renamed in March 2024 by the OAS Permanent Council to recognize the fundamental role of women in the history of the hemisphere.

The Gallery currently includes the portraits of Eva Perón (Argentina); Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes (Brazil); Angela Acuña Braun (Costa Rica); Matilde Hidalgo de Procel (Ecuador); Dalia Xóchitl Sandoval López (El Salvador); Dolores Bedoya (Guatemala); Elvia Carrillo Puerto (Mexico); Clara González (Panama); Doris Stevens (United States); and now María Elena Moyano (Peru).

***INFORMATION FOR JOURNALISTS**

About the CIM/OAS

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) is the main hemispheric forum dedicated to promoting and protecting women’s human rights and gender equality. Founded in 1928, the CIM has been a pioneer in identifying the barriers women face in social, economic, and political life and developing policies and programs to overcome these obstacles. The CIM collaborates with OAS Member States, civil society organizations, and other key actors to advance the gender equality agenda in the Americas.

Press contacts:

Alexander Rivera (arivera@oas.org) / Gina Labanca (glabanca@oas.org)