



Communique Committee of Experts

Committee of Experts presents *amicus curiae* on the case of Guzmán Albarracín et al. V. Ecuador

Washington DC, March 5, 2020. On February 12, 2020, the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) presented an *amicus curiae* brief to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court H.R.) to contribute to the analysis of the *Guzmán Albarracín et al. v. Ecuador* case. In particular, the brief looks at the obligations arising from the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention).

The main arguments presented by the Committee of Experts are based on the fact that the Convention establishes the right of all women and girls to a life free from violence, both in the public and private spheres, and the right to be educated free of stereotyped patterns and social practices of subordination. The Committee carried out an analysis of the impact that gender stereotypes, sexual violence, consent and subordination relationships had in this case, as well as an analysis of internal criminal and administrative procedures.

The Committee of Experts also considered that Paola Guzmán's death was a femicide suicide, because it was a consequence of the sexual violence to which she had been subjected. In this regard, article 8 of the [Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate the Gender-Based Killing of Women and Girls \(Femicide/Femicide\)](#) establishes that *femicide suicide* by induction or aid is a form of femicide that occurs when a man induces or forces a woman to commit suicide, or helps her to commit it. It will be considered an aggravating circumstance if suicide was “*preceded by any form of gender violence by the aggressor against the victim*” and/or if “*the aggressor has taken advantage of a pre-existing or existing relationship with the victim.*”

The Committee determined the existence of a link between gender stereotypes, discrimination and structural violence against women and girls, and the invisibility of the violence of which Paola Guzmán was a victim, which made it impossible to access justice in the specific case and contributed to the revictimization of Paola and her relatives.

The Committee concluded that is necessary for the State of Ecuador to reopen the investigation from a gender perspective and act with the highest international standards under parameters of reinforced due diligence, since in this case the victim was a girl child. In this regard, the Committee reiterated that the State and the competent authorities have a duty to take measures to prevent and punish violence against women, calling for the investigation into this case to result in the prosecution and adequate punishment of the people responsible.

The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention. It is composed of independent experts, appointed by each of the States Party from among their nationals, who exercise their functions in their personal capacity.