



# Communique Committee of Experts

## **Committee of Experts of MESECVI raises its concern over cases of disappearance and femicide of women in the Atacama region of Chile**

Washington, DC, May 2, 2025. [The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Belém do Pará Convention"](#) (MESECVI) expresses its deep concern regarding the situation faced by women in the Atacama region of Chile, where since 2018, cases of disappearance and femicide of women and girls have been reported in a context marked by lack of protection, barriers to access to justice, and consequent impunity.

The information received by the Committee of Experts (CEVI) refers to the cases of Tanya Aciaras, Sussy Montalván, Marina Cabrera, Catalina Álvarez and Thiare Elguera<sup>1</sup>. These cases reflect a concerning pattern of disappearance followed by femicidal violence against women and girls in situations of profound social disadvantage, aggravated by delays and gaps in judicial proceedings, the use of gender stereotypes by justice operators, obstacles to access to justice and the silence of the State in the face of these events.

In January 2025, the CEVI addressed a letter to the authorities of the State of Chile expressing its concern about the treatment of these cases and calling for the acceleration of judicial proceedings, ensuring that the families of the victims are duly informed, in accordance with the obligations established by the Convention of Belém do Pará and international women's human rights law.

This Committee thanks the State authorities for sending complementary information, which presents actions undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, in coordination with other State entities, to attend the families of the victims and feminist organizations in Atacama, and to address the situation of gender-based violence in that region of the country.

However, in light of information received by the Committee indicating the lack of substantive progress in the investigations, the persistence of barriers and the climate of insecurity faced

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.elciudadano.com/justicia/desapariciones-de-ninas-y-jovenes-en-atacama-familias-y-organizaciones-feministas-denuncian-impunidad-y-negligencia/08/19/>

by women in the region and the victims' families, the CEVI issues this public statement expressing its deep concern.

The Experts have also learned of allegations by the women victims' entourage that their legitimate right to protest has been violated through threats and reprisals allegedly carried out by public agents<sup>2</sup>.

The CEVI recalls that, as a State Party to the Belém do Pará Convention, the State of Chile is committed to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women. This includes, according to Article 7 of the treaty, guaranteeing fair and effective legal proceedings, with protection measures, timely access to justice and comprehensive reparation. The aforementioned article also establishes the State's duty to refrain from all forms of violence and to ensure that its authorities and agents act in accordance with this obligation.

Since the case of *González et al. v. Mexico* (Campo Algodonero) ruling, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has been consistent in affirming the duty of the State to ensure due diligence in cases of violence against women in contexts similar to that of the women of Campo Algodonero and Atacama. In particular, it has underscored the international responsibility of the State in the face of the silence of the authorities in the investigation, punishment and reparation of acts of gender-based violence against women in conditions of vulnerability, especially girls and women who may be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Similarly, in its [General Recommendation No. 2 on missing women and girls in the hemisphere](#), the Committee of Experts identifies these disappearances as serious forms of gender-based violence that oblige the State to act with enhanced due diligence, whether the acts are committed by private individuals or by State agents. It also establishes their connection with trafficking in persons and organized crime, emphasizing the special vulnerability that affects girls, women in structural and multidimensional poverty, and women because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Furthermore, in its recent [General Recommendation No. 6](#), the Committee addresses the impact of the use of gender stereotypes in the justice system in cases of violence against women. In this regard, the CEVI has received information that some of the cases mentioned may have been hindered by the use of these prejudices by justice operators.

Therefore, this Committee calls for enhanced due diligence, accelerating the investigations and judicial proceedings, and ensuring that the victims' families and entourage are duly informed of the progress made. It also recommends that the authorities, State security agents and justice operators act in accordance with international human rights standards to guarantee effective access to justice for women victims of violence and their families. Finally, this

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.indh.cl/indh-de-atacama-estudia-acciones-legales-tras-recopilar-antecedentes-entre-las-personas-lesionadas-durante-marcha-por-tanya-aciares-pena/>

Committee urges the State authorities to adopt priority measures to protect the rights of women in the context of violence reported in the Atacama region.

The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, through its Committee of Experts, makes itself available to the State of Chile for any technical support they may require in this matter.

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*The Committee of Experts is the technical body of the MESECVI, responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation process of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It is made up of independent Experts, appointed by each of the States Parties from among their nationals, who perform their duties in a personal capacity.*