

# Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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## I/A Court H.R. Protecting Rights

### THE INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS CELEBRATED THE BEGINNING OF JUDICIAL YEAR 2024



*San José, Costa Rica, January 31, 2024.* - The Opening Ceremony of Inter-American Judicial Year 2024 was held on Monday, January 29, along with the symbolic introduction of the new Directive Table, consisting of the President, Judge Nancy Hernández López, from Costa Rica, and Vice-President, Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch, from Brazil, for the 2024-2025 period.

The President of the Court thanked the Judges for their trust in electing her to preside the Court: "I assume this honor with commitment and responsibility."

In her speech the President mentioned the significant impact of the Inter-American Court's decisions throughout its history, noting that since its first years the Court "significantly contributed to the transition from dictatorships to democracies." Moreover, the Court has made visible and protected persons and groups in vulnerable situations by "establishing standards for girls, boys, adolescents, women, the elderly, indigenous and tribe peoples, disabled persons, afro-descendants, LGTBI individuals, inmates, victims of forced displacement, journalists and people in a situation of poverty."

President Hernández López referred to various myths surrounding the work of the Inter-American Court and human rights. The first is the statement that there is a dichotomy between security and freedom, the President ensures that "it is completely legitimate for States to deal

with individuals acting outside of the law directly and in a timely manner. However, restrictive measures must be proportionate and must not infringe on human rights. Only the moral superiority of the rule of law can resolve these cases. The State cannot get its hands dirty or act as an ordinary criminal.”

Among other myths, the President also spoke of the statement “human rights are for others, they do not concern all of us”, since it provides “an erroneous and dangerous perspective that undermines the basic principles of human dignity and equality inherent to the idea of human rights.”

Regarding the institutional challenges faced by the Court, President Hernández López indicated that “it is imperative to work on decreasing the terms for processing, cases cannot remain before the Inter-American Commission for such a long time. The average processing time for a case is 10 to 12 years. This affects the victims, the State and access to justice.”

She also referred to the Court's budget, stating that “of the three existing Regional Courts on Human Rights in the world, it has the lowest budget despite the great impact of its decisions,” thus strengthening the need to provide the Court with a budget that allows it to work “in a foreseeable manner and according to the needs of the region.”

In addition, it highlighted the need for full-time Judges during the next years, implementing a Digital File System, and strengthening the relationship between judges and judicial operators. Regarding the latter she stated that “we hope to begin 2024 with an important initiative to improve this relationship that will allow for sharing experiences and tools, learning from one another and seeking joint solutions to the problems in the region.”

To see President Hernández López’s full speech please click [here](#).

The Ceremony was attended by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Chaves Robles; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arnoldo André Tinoco; the President of the Legislative Assembly, Rodrigo Arias; the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Orlando Aguirre; the President of the Supreme Electoral Court, Eugenia Zamora; as well as the Presidents of the Four Chambers, Justices of the Judicial Branch of Costa Rica; top authorities from Costa Rican institutions, diplomatic representatives and representatives of international organizations in the country.

A delegation of authorities from Brazil also attended the event, including the Present of the Federal Supreme Court, Luís Roberto Barroso; the Prosecutor General, Paulo Gonet Branco; the Minister President of the Superior Court of Justice, Maria Thereza de Assis Moura; Attorney General of the Union, Jorge Messias; and the Minister of the Superior Electoral Court, André Ramos Tavares.

From Mexico, the Minister President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Norma Piña Hernández, also participated in the event.

The President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Chaves Robles, congratulated the new directive table and stated that “since it was founded, this organization has been supported and will undoubtedly continue to have the full support of Costa Rica.”

To see the President of the Republic’s full speech please click [here](#).

The Minister and President of the Supreme Federal Court of the Federal Republic of Brazil, Luís Roberto Barroso, gave the keynote speech on “Technological revolution, digital platforms and artificial intelligence.”

To watch the keynote speech by Minister President Luís Roberto Barroso please click [here](#).

This press release was drafted by the Registrar's Office of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; it is solely responsible for this document.

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