

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 OPENS ITS 167th REGULAR SESSION AT THE SUPREME FEDERAL COURT



Brasilia, May 20, 2024. - On Monday, the full session of the Supreme Federal Court (STF) hosted the opening of the 167th Regular Session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court H.R.). In the opening ceremony, the President of the STF, Minister Luís Roberto Barroso, and the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judge Nancy Hernández, highlighted the importance of the protection of the environment and democracy to guarantee the fundamental rights of citizens.

In her opening speech Judge Nancy Hernández conveyed her solidarity with the people of *Río Grande do Sul* affected by the floods. She remarked that “this Regular Session will focus on two matters: the call to care for our planet and democratic resilience, and the role of judges in that context.”

The President of the STF observed that one of the greatest challenges faced by humanity nowadays is the protection of the environment. “Climate change and global warming are changing life on earth.” Barroso also pointed out the difficulties in addressing this problem, such as the

failure to recognize that humankind's actions are causing climate change. "Another difficulty is that the matter cannot be resolved solely through local solutions. No country by itself can solve the problem."

The Vice-President of the Court, Rodrigo Mudrovitsch, indicated that the Court will analyze the responsibility of States for the situation of environmental emergency and climate change. "It is symptomatic that we are conducting this debate in Brazil at a time when we are going through one of the greatest tragedies in our history," referring to the situation in R o Grande do Sul.

Climate change is no longer a future projection or a matter of statistics and scientific speculations. "It is a harsh reality of our present time that requires us to reflect and gives us the responsibility, as members of the inter-American justice system, to contribute to creating a rapid and effective response to an urgent problem."

Democracy

Judge Nancy Hern andez stated that preserving democracy, which is "a pillar of all human rights," has been at risk due to polarization, the spread of false news and discrediting of its institutions. "Democracy does not stand on air, we must all take care of it, and it is not an easy task." She praised the work of judges in preserving democracy. She hopes that the activities of the I/A Court H.R. in Brazil "will contribute to continuing the work to strengthen democracy and human rights."

Minister Lu s Roberto Barroso also mentioned the priority of the rights of inmates. He called to mind the ruling of ADPF 347, in which the Supreme Federal Court declared the Brazilian prison system unconstitutional due to massive human rights violations. Lastly, Minister Barroso commented on social inclusion, tackling poverty and combating inequality. "Criminal activity, which has become one of the key problems in Latin America, is another issue related to this phenomenon."

The session was attended by Ambassador Denis Fontes de Souza Pinto Mauro Vieira of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beto Simonetti, President of the Federal Council of the Order of Attorneys of Brazil (OAB) and Jorge Messias, Attorney General of the Union.

International Seminar



Later, the International Seminar: Challenges and impact of the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights was held. It was opened by the President of the Inter-American

Court, Judge Nancy Hernández López, and the Vice President, Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch; accompanied by the President of the Supreme Federal Court of Brazil, Justice Luís Roberto Barroso. They addressed the challenges to freedom of expression and judicial independence in a weakened democratic system.

Then, two panels with experts were held. The first was called "Freedom of Expression: New developments, challenges and impact" and the second "Judicial Independence and Democracy: New developments, challenges and impact."

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights will be in Brasilia until May 24, with events at the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the Superior Labor Court (TST). After that, the Inter-American Court will go to Manaus, from May 27 to May 29.

The full program of the international seminar can be accessed here:

<https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/167POS-Brasil/seminario.html>

We would like to the cooperation of Spain and Sweden, whose financial support is key to hosting this Regular Session in Brazil.



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