

Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

I/A Court H.R._PR-45/2021 English

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I/A Court H.R. Protecting Rights

VENEZUELA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION OF TWO PEOPLE BASED ON DISCRIMINATION ACCORDING TO AGE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

San José, Costa Rica, July 19, 2021.- In the Judgment of the Case of Guerrero, Molina et al. v. Venezuela, notified today, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela responsible for the death of Jimmy Rafael Guerrero Meléndez, who was extrajudicially executed by police officers based on discrimination according to age and socioeconomic status; as well as for the murder of his relative, Ramón Antonio Molina Pérez.

The Court found that Venezuela had violated i) the rights to life, personal integrity, personal liberty, Judicial Guarantees and Protection, to the detriment of Jimmy Rafael Guerrero Meléndez; ii) the right to life, to the detriment of Ramón Antonio Molina Pérez, and iii) the rights to personal integrity and to judicial guarantees and judicial protection, to the detriment of the families of Mr. Guerrero and Mr. Molina.

The official summary of the Judgment can be accessed [here](#), and the Judgment's full text can be accessed [here](#).

On March 30, 2003, Jimmy Guerrero and his relative, Ramón Molina, were extrajudicially executed by police officers in Falcón State. The former victim, who was 26 years old at the time of his death, had previously been the victim of harassment, illegal and arbitrary detention, and acts of torture at the hands of the police.

During one of the episodes in which Jimmy Guerrero was tortured and arbitrarily detained by the police, the officers called him a "criminal" and a "dangerous" person. In its Judgment, the Court found that the acts committed against Jimmy Guerrero were based on the assumption made by the police officers that a young man living in poverty was dangerous.

The Court also established that after the murder, the police officers acted with extreme cruelty toward Mr. Guerrero's body, something that is thought to be an expression of police violence against young men living in poverty and of the fact that the aggressors were convinced they would go unpunished.

Indeed, the Court found that the State failed to comply with its obligations derived from the rights to Judicial Guarantees and Protection due to its failure to investigate the facts committed against Jimmy Guerrero prior to his death. It reached the same conclusion with regard to how the investigations into the events that led to the deaths of Mr. Guerrero and Mr. Molina played out, failing to establish the corresponding responsibilities after more than 14 years.

The State recognized its international responsibility and committed to complying with the corresponding comprehensive reparations.

The Court ordered several measures of reparation.

The composition of the Court for issuing this Judgment was as follows: Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito, President (Costa Rica); Judge Patricio Pazmiño Freire, Vice President; (Ecuador), Judge Eduardo Vio Grossi (Chile); Judge Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor (Mexico); Judge Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni (Argentina), and Judge Ricardo Pérez Manrique (Uruguay). For reasons of force majeure, Judge Humberto Antonio Sierra Porto (Colombia) did not participate in the deliberation of this Judgment.

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