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Interview with the President of the Global Campus of Human Rights Veronica Gomez



The Press Office of the Global Campus of Human Rights had the opportunity to interview the President of the Global Campus of Human Rights, Veronica Gomez, about her role as a Judge of the Inter-American

Court of Human Rights.

In 2019 the Global Campus Council elected Veronica Gomez as President (2019-2023). For more than a decade, she has been Director for Education of the International Centre for Political Studies at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (CIEP-UNSAM) in Buenos Aires, home of the Master's in Human Rights and Democracy for Latin America and the Caribbean and of other non-degree training courses offered by Global Campus Latin America and the Caribbean.

Throughout her career as an international lawyer, Veronica Gomez has focused on the international protection of human rights and - in particular — the Inter-American System. In early 2021 Argentina, her country of origin, submitted her nomination to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, with the support of civil society and academia. Finally, in November 2021 the member states of the Organization of American States elected her as Judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, for the period 2022-2027.

As she completes her first six months as member of this regional human rights Court, Veronica Gomez shares some thoughts about the Inter-American System, the international protection of human rights and the importance of education.

How does the Inter-American Court work?

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights is an autonomous legal institution established in 1979 to interpret and apply the American Convention on Human Rights (1969) and other inter-American human rights instruments. This Court has contentious and advisory jurisdiction. It also has the power to issue provisional measures to protect persons from irreparable harm in urgent cases. It is composed of seven judges elected by the state parties to the American Convention, in their individual capacity and who cannot participate in matters relating to the State of their nationality. The seat of the Court is in San José, Costa Rica, but the Court also holds sessions in the States parties to the American Convention and can carry out observations in their territory as required by the exercise of its contentious jurisdiction or the determination of urgent measures.

Which are the main contributions of the Inter-America Court to the international protection of human rights?

Among the most recent contributions of the Inter-American Court, it is worth highlighting the pronouncements on the justiciability of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights; the intersectional approach in the interpretation of international obligations, particularly in relation to poverty; the development of the right to equality before the law in the area of gender identity; the scope of State responsibility in connection with the conduct of non-state actors; the recognition of the human right to a healthy environment; and more recently the reinforced supervision of protective measures as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Historically the Court has made important contributions to the definition of state responsibility for the crime of forced disappearances as well as to the development of mechanisms to prevent irreparable damage to the lives and integrity of individuals, members of human rights organisations, communities, and indigenous peoples.

Which are the main challenges facing the Inter-American System?

Scientific evidence shows that we have before us an unavoidable agenda *vis-à-vis* the environmental crisis, climate change and its impact on the survival and quality of life of people and communities. The protection of the environment, economic, social and cultural rights, the impact of new technologies, and

the protection of children require a holistic approach to the interpretation of international human rights law. The contributions for the next five years will be crucial in this regard.

We face these challenges in a context where contemporary analysts question the extent to which international law and its institutions are up to the task of addressing the structural socio-economic inequalities identified as the root causes of poverty and many of the most serious human rights violations, as well as their capacity to prevent conflict. At the same time, the voices that periodically oppose multilateral supervision have grown louder.

It is therefore vital to nurture an active dialogue with States, civil society and the private sector to find long term solutions for these challenges. The Inter-American Court plays a role in this dialogue by promoting human rights standards in the field of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean.

How do you foresee your own contribution to the work of the Court?

The continuous development of standards in areas related to the interpretation of the scope of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights must be considered a priority. This work requires addressing the pending challenges in terms of structural inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ensuring the legitimacy of the Court must also be a priority. The authority of international courts – and in particular of human rights courts – depends on their legitimacy vis-à-vis victims, civil society, national human rights institutions, and the States subject to their jurisdiction. This contribution requires special attention to the transparency of the procedures, the evaluation of the evidence, the Court's on-site verification tasks, the clarity, speed and timeliness of the rulings, the supervision of compliance and communication, in general. These priorities must be accompanied by genuine contributions to the institutional strengthening of the Court, and the promotion of standards not only in Latin America but also in the English-speaking Caribbean, Haiti and Suriname.

Do you have a message for our readers?

It is important to continue working in human rights education at all levels: schools, universities, post-graduate and doctoral degrees, as well as non-degree trainings for officials in all jurisdictions. It is also important to enhance interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches in the study of human rights challenges and the building of prevention and redress mechanisms. Education has a central role in the prevention of human rights violations and the understanding of future challenges.

For more information contact our [Press Office](#)

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