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- **Follow our activities in Facebook.**

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**Honoring the work of former President Jimmy Carter**

**Panama City.** March 14, a ceremony was held to honor the work of President Jimmy Carter of the United States. It was organized jointly by the Electoral Tribunal of Panama and the IIHR to recognize Mr. Carter’s commitment to human rights, democracy, solidarity, the peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the world and the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. High electoral authorities, former presidents of Panama, members of the diplomatic corps and interested public, attended the event. José Thompson, Executive Director and Director of its Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), conveyed the greetings of Claudio Grossman, President of the Institute. During his remarks Mr. Thompson presented a Certificate to Mr. Carter of Honor to ex president Carter, “a leading political figure and an exceptional human being who is an inspiration to the institutions that I now represent,” as a “token of our appreciation for his integrity, commitment and his decisive action in making democracy and human rights a reality in our continent and beyond. He also emphasized Mr. Carter’s role in promoting the American Convention on Human Rights, which has become an obligatory instrument, essential for the development of the inter-American system for the protection of human rights and the human being.”

Read the speeches of James Carter and José Thompson, [here](#). Visit our photo gallery at ([galería de fotos](#))

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## The presence of the IIHR in South America

**Montevideo, Uruguay.** On March 5, the IIHR representatives for South America, Soledad García Muñoz, attended the ceremony that awarded the “Monsignor [Leonidas Proaño](#) International Prize for Defenders of the Peace, Justice and Human Rights,” to the President of Uruguay, José Mujica and to the Chilean defender of human rights, Angela Jeria de Bachelet. Sonia Picado, IIHR Honorary President In 1992, received the prize, which was established by the Latin American Association for Human Rights (ALDHU) to honor the Ecuadorian bishop who promoted the rights of indigenous and impoverished populations.

On that same day, Ms. Garcia Muñoz also attended a lecture by former President Ernesto Samper of Colombia. Later, accompanied by María Elena Martínez, member of the IIHR Board of Directors and Ambassador John Biehl, she informed Mr. Samper of the work of the Institute in education and human rights.

On March 6 and 14, Ms. García Muñoz attended the homages that, on the occasion of the International Women’s Day, were paid by the Uruguayan Post Office and the State telephone company to the Uruguayan women who have stood out in different fields. On March 6, HispanTV covered a story on the meeting of experts of the Inter-American Commission of Women in which the coordinator of the Regional Office emphasized the importance of the public policies directed to women so that they might have better access to education, health and politics, among others.

On March 12, the IIHR representative met with the Secretary of the Feminine Bicameral Bench of the Uruguayan Parliament, Marisa Marmissolle, accompanied by Ferran Civil Bellmunt, an intern at Sciences Po, Grenoble, France, to promote an inter-institutional approach and identify joint activities. Mr. Bellmunt recently joined a team to draft a report on the political situation of women in Uruguay, with respect to the so-called “law on quotas” in the forthcoming national elections on October 26.

*Visit the Web page Bancada Bicameral Femenina del Parlamento uruguayo [here](#) and see the photographs and extended notes of the different events in <https://es-es.facebook.com/iidhsuramerica>.*

*The press release is [here](#) and in Youtube, [here](#).*

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## The IIHR signs a cooperation agreement with the Ombudsman Office

**Bogotá, Colombia.** On March 7, the IIHR Executive Director, José Thompson, signed an agreement for inter-institutional cooperation with the Colombian Ombudsman Office, represented by its Director, Jorge Armando Otálora Gómez.

This agreement will strengthen the collaboration between both parties to promote and protect the human rights of Colombians both within and outside their country. It will lead to the joint design and elaboration of training projects and programs, research on the subject of human rights and international humanitarian law and publications.

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## A UNIORE mission observes the second round of the elections in El Salvador

**San Salvador, El Salvador.** On March 9, an observation mission of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE), formed to attend the invitation of this country’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal, observed the second round of the Salvadoran presidential elections. The mission was comprised of electoral judges and staff from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Uruguay and Venezuela. Sofía Vincenzi and Mónica Barrantes participated on behalf of IIHR/CAPEL and the Executive Secretariat of UNIORE. In addition to visiting different voting centers from

the moment that they opened until their closing and the counting of ballots, the mission presented a preliminary report to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which included the new procedures established for the vote abroad and the domestic vote, as well as the use of screens to facilitate the vote of the physically handicapped in order to assure the secret ballot.

*Visit the [Electoral network](#) [Red Electoral](#) and the [photo gallery](#)*

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### [A UNIORE mission observes Colombian legislative elections](#)

**Bogotá, Colombia.** On March 9, voters in Colombia elected members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, 102 and 166 offices respectively. In the first case, 100 Senators are elected by popular vote in the national territory and two represent the indigenous communities by special sub-divisions, while 161 Representatives are elected by special territorial sub-divisions and the five remaining through special sub-divisions: two Representatives for the Afro-descendent communities, one for the indigenous people and two in representation of Colombian residents abroad.

In addition, according to the Constitution, an election took place for five Representatives to the Andean Parliament by direct suffrage and it was also possible to vote for the designation of the presidential candidate who will represent the Green Party (Partido Verde) in the presidential elections on May 25. The IIHR/CAPEL, the Executive Secretariat of the Association of Electoral Bodies of South America (Protocol of Quito) and the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies (UNIORE), collaborated with the National Electoral Council and the National Registry of Civil Status of Colombia in the organization of the international mission that observed the elections. Representatives of the electoral bodies of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, and Uruguay comprised the mission.

José Thompson, IIHR Executive Director, and Evelyn Fernández represented IIHR/CAPEL. On this occasion, they had the opportunity of working jointly with the delegations of Spanish institutions.

The four-day program included meeting with President Juan Manuel Santos and the Minister of Interior, Aurelio Iragorri Valencia. The observers also attended a forum where high electoral Colombian authorities discussed topics such as the pre-electoral guarantees of the National Electoral Council (CNE), financing of political parties and transparent accounts, the organization of the electoral process and biometry and an explanation on the electoral organization of Colombia and its history during the past 65 years.

*Visit the [Electoral Network](#)*

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### [Exchange of electoral experiences between Latin American and Arab countries](#)

**Mexico City.** During the period March 11-14, a Dialogue on the Administration of Elections and Conflict Resolution was held. Exchange of experiences between Latin America and countries of the Arab Spring, aiming toward strengthening electoral institutions through an exchange of knowledge and experiences on their administrative and jurisdictional powers and conflict resolution. On March 11, IIHR Executive Director and director of CAPEL, José Thompson, participated in the first session, on the “Establishment of a scenario for a comparative exchange” in which he spoke on the differences on administrative and judicial duties, as well as organizational models and a comparative perspective in Latin America.

The event, convened by the Federal Electoral Institute and the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Power of the Federation, together with the country's office of the United Nations Development Program, brought together representatives of the electoral bodies of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia together with their colleagues from Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and Spain.

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### [The IIHR continues to promote education in human rights](#)

**Montevideo, Uruguay.** On March 12, the coordinator of the IIHR Regional Office for South America met with Roberto Caballero, personal secretary to the Defense Minister in order to continue with the negotiations for the institutional support in the preparation of a manual to train the armed forces in human rights.

On March 13, the regional representative and the consultant Ana Piñero shared their opinions and documents with representatives of the Institute for Public Policy of the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), as part of a technical assistance for research on human rights education in the member countries of Mercosur. This assistance was requested at the XXIII Meeting of High Authorities on Human Rights and the Foreign Affairs Ministries of Mercosur and Associated States. The institutional representative suggested extending the consultations to civil society and to informal education. On the same day, Ms. García Muñoz met with the Minister of Interior of Uruguay, Eduardo Bonomi, within the framework of institutional cooperation with this office; also present were José Luis García Acuña and Ana Balbis of the Community Police of Uruguay. The Coordinator also received the visit of Pablo Turielle, of the "La Muralla" Foundation, who informed her on the projects of social inclusion directed to boys and girls, adolescents and persons with special needs in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty through the teaching of the value of sports and its practice. This effort will shortly have its own headquarters, which Mr. Turielle has placed at the disposal of the Institute at the same time he expressed his interest in counting on IIHR support in the work on human rights education.

On March 14, Ms. García Muñoz met with Sandra Honoré, special representative of the UN Secretary General and head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and took advantage to initiate a relationship with the National School of Peace with the aim of cooperating in the preparation of an event on gender and women's rights.

*Visit the webpage of "La Muralla" [here](#)*

*Photographs and extended notes on the different events [here](https://es-es.facebook.com/iidhsuramerica): <https://es-es.facebook.com/iidhsuramerica>*

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### [Honoris causa degree to Elizabeth Odio Benito](#)

**Heredia, Costa Rica.** The University Council of the National University (UNA) granted an *Honoris Causa* degree to Elizabeth Odio Benito, member of the IIHR General Assembly. Among the reasons expressed by the UNA for this well-earned award, which recognizes her contribution to the promotion and defense of human rights and to the Costa Rican feminist movement, her distinguished performance in several political positions was emphasized, among them Vice-President of Costa Rica, professor of the University of Costa Rica Law School, author of the country's most important prison reform as well as her term as a judge on the International Criminal Court, UN special rapporteur for the elimination of all discrimination based on religion or beliefs and promoter of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

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## IIHR and UARIV prepare commemoration with victims of conflict

**Bogotá, Colombia.** During the month of March, the IIHR and participating Sub-Department of the Unit for Victims' Attention and Integral Reparation (UARIV) held 32 workshops on training and support to victims' groups. During these activities, which took place throughout the country, consideration was given to the positions and proposals on the construction for peace, which will be presented in the open sessions of the "National Day in Memory and Solidarity with Victims of Armed Conflict" on April 9. On that day, the representatives of the victims throughout Colombia will propose an agreement of social justice for the construction of peace. This agreement should include a review of the problem of land and rural investment, an employment policy and productive projects at a local level, the role of the army and the police and the recovery of economic, social and cultural rights. In the opinion of the general coordinator of the National Participation of the Victims of Conflict, Jorge Vásquez, without an agreement of this nature "peace will remain lame if the victims of conflict continue to be immersed in poverty and exclusion...."

The Sub-department of Participation of the UARIV, headed by Gabriel Bustamante and his team, jointly with the representation of the IIHR, composed of Juan Navarrete, Adriana Piquero and consultants accompanied the process.

Read the complete report [here](#), and the press release of the UARIV [here](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

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## Conference on the "Rights of the Victims"

**Bogotá, Colombia.** On March 15, the IIDH, the Universidad Libre and the Presidency of the Republic, through the School of the Unit for the Attention and Reparations of Victims, held a conference on "The Rights of the Victims" that was addressed by Ms. Paula Gaviria, the Unit's Director.

The event is part of the course on Dynamics of the sponsored by the Gerardo Molina Chair of the Universidad Libre with the technical assistance of the IIHR. The program includes the study of post-conflict in successful peace processes, transitional justice and the basis of the new State and a peaceful society.

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## Donation of institutional publications to the indigenous population of Bribri

**Salitre, Buenos Aires de Puntarenas, Costa Rica.** On February 15, in the indigenous territory of Salitre, a "Bribri Technical Exchange on the Construction of the U Sule", sacred space in the form of a cone shaped house that represents their vision of the cosmos. Men and women leaders of the Salitre's Kaneblo Bribripa Association and a representation of the Council of Elders of Cabara participated in this event.

The activity lent itself for the donation of human rights materials on education in human rights and indigenous rights published by the IIHR through Amílcar Castañeda Cortez, responsible of the Technical Local Management for Native Peoples of the Extension Management of the State University Distance (Universidad Estatal a Distancia-UNED), who indicated that the books would be of great use to strengthen educational efforts with the diverse indigenous organizations of southern Costa Rica.

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[Announcement to participate in the international conference on electoral studies](#)

**Mexico City; San José, Costa Rica.** The XXV National Conference and the Fifth one on International Electoral Studies “Electoral Integrity and Equality in Latin America” will take place in San José from November 11 to 14, 2014. The event is organized by the IIDH/CAPEL, the Mexican Society of Electoral Studies, the Institute of Formation and Studies on Democracy of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica and the School of Political Science, the post-graduate Central American Program on Political Science and the Center for Research and Political Studies of the University of Costa Rica (UCR). We hereby invite researchers and academics, electoral staff and members of political parties and citizens in general to participate in this event.

Find the complete announcement [here](#)

To register visit the SOMMEE Webpage: <https://somee.org.mx/Congreso/index.php?a=mesa>

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