

IIDH

Instituto Interamericano
de Derechos Humanos

IIHR in the Americas

Bi-weekly Newsletter of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights

No. 254 – April 1-30, 2014

Contents:

- **International mission observes second round of election.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **IIHR signs agreement with DNCD.** *Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.*
- **Seminar on human rights and youth.** *Montevideo, Uruguay.*
- **Visit of the delegation of the Kuna indigenous people.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **Second UNIORE advance mission visits Panama.** *Panama City.*
- **Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état in Brazil.** *Porto Alegre, Brazil.*
- **Course on “Women involved in Peacekeeping.”** *Montevideo, Uruguay.*
- **Third session of the diploma course in human rights.** *Guanajuato, Mexico.*
- **Political participation of women.** *Montevideo, Uruguay.*
- **Mission of the Executive Director to the Dominican Republic.** *Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.*
- **IIHR participates in the course “Human Rights and the Use of Force.”** *Bogotá, Colombia.*
- **Research on violence begins in collaboration with the ICRC.** *San Salvador, El Salvador.*
- **Support to the process of integral reparation for the victims of the conflict in Colombia continues.** *Bogotá, Colombia.*
- **Showing of the documentary on migration and forced disappearances.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **Training reinitiated for Salvadoran teachers in Education in Human Rights.** *San Salvador, El Salvador.*
- **IIHR present at the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Convention of Belém do Pará.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **President of IIHR re-elected as Chairperson of CAT.** *Geneva, Switzerland.*
- **Introductory workshop for distance learning on Education in Human Rights.** *San Salvador, El Salvador.*
- **Invitation to the awarding of Doctor honoris causa to Elizabeth Odio Benito.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **Applications to the XXXII Interdisciplinary Course in Human Rights now being received.** *San José, Costa Rica.*
- **Follow our activities on Facebook.**

International mission observes second round of election

San José, Costa Rica. On April 6, an international mission of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean and the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies observed the second round of the presidential election in Costa Rica. Invited by the Supreme Tribunal of Elections, the mission was organized in collaboration with CAPEL, as Executive Secretariat of the associations and was comprised of members and staff of electoral tribunals of Chile, Colombia, Dominican

Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico and St. Lucia. Also participating were José Thompson, IIHR Executive Director and Director of CAPEL, Sofia Vincenzi, CAPEL Program Officer, and Tasheena Obando.

As part of the program, on April 5 representatives of the two competing political parties informed the observers of the special context of the election and the state of the political parties. On election day, the observers visited different provinces to observe the process from the opening of the polls until the counting of votes. The day concluded with an evaluation and with witnessing the transmission of the results. This was an historic election in that for the first time the winning candidate received a million votes (78%).

[Gallery of photographs](#)

[IIHR signs agreement with DNCD](#)

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. On April 23, the IIHR and the National Office for Drug Control (DNCD, for its initials in Spanish), represented by its Executive Director, José Thompson, and its President, Major General Julio César Souffront Velázquez, respectively, signed a cooperative agreement to give human rights training to the DNCD staff. Judge Kenya Scarlett Romero, a former IIHR student, attended the signing.

The agreement calls for the Institute to develop a series of training activities, such as workshops, seminars and a course that would enable the participants to obtain a broad understanding of the functions of anti-drug agents and to respect and dignity of the citizens. The course, which will also be conducted virtually, will run from June 2014 until April 2015 and will be for 30 participants, two of whom will receive scholarships to the next IIHR Interdisciplinary Course, which will be held in October 2014.

Read more on the Internet [here](#)

[Seminar on human rights and youth](#)

Montevideo, Uruguay. From March 31 to April 4 and under the auspices of the IIHR, staff and specialists from 15 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean attended the Second Ibero-American Seminar on Human Rights and Youth. Interns Sandra Ampuero (University of Stockholm) and Ferrán Civil Bellmunt (Grenoble Institute of Political Studies) as well as the Coordinator of the Regional Office, Soledad García Muñoz represented the Institute.

On April 3, the Coordinator lectured on gender and youth in which she presented a video of illustrious women, gave an historical and conceptual survey of the theory of gender and signaled the advances in the human rights of women internationally. She also pointed out that this year a quota system will be applied for the first time in the elections in Uruguay.

Read more on the Internet, [here](#) and [here](#)

[Visit of the delegation of the Kuna indigenous people](#)

San José, Costa Rica. On April 2, a group of Kuna leaders and authorities visited the IIHR after the public hearing at the Inter-American Court in the *Kuna Indigenous*

People of Madungandí and Emberá Indigenous People of Bayano and their Members vs. Panama case.

Larissa Segura and Luis Hernández received the visitors and showed them the collection of IIHR publications, from which they selected the most pertinent as a donation. In thanking the IIHR, the Cacique General of the Comarca Kuna of Madungandí expressed his intention to establish a library with publications on human and indigenous rights at the Kuna headquarters, which the donated books will serve as a starting point.

[Gallery of photographs](#)

See the video of the hearing, [here](#)

[Second advanced mission of UNIORE visits Panama](#)

Panama City. At the request of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama and as a follow-up to the agreements taken in the framework of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Bodies, an advanced mission visited Panama on April 2-3 to review the process of the general elections to be held on May 4. During the visit, the members of the mission met with the candidates to the mayoralty of Panama City and representatives of civil society, the mass media and the business world in order to learn first-hand the context of the process.

The mission was comprised of Marino Mendoza, judge of the electoral tribunal of the Dominican Republic; Juan Pablo Pozo, advisor of that of Ecuador; Olga Castro of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico; José Thompson, IIHR Executive Director and Director of CAPEL, and Sofía Vincenzi, program officer of CAPEL.

[Galleery of photographs](#)

[Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the *coup d'état* in Brazil](#)

Porto Alegre, Brazil. During the period April 3-5, the Coordinator of the IIHR Regional Office for South America, Soledad García Muñoz, was invited to “Democracy Week,” organized by the State of Río Grande do Sul to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *coup d'état* in Brazil.

In addition to donating various IIHR specialized publications to the “Acervo Gaúcho da Luta das Mulheres contra a Ditadura», created by the Secretariat of State for Women’s Policies, the Coordinator participated in a panel on “Dictatorship, Democracy and Gender,” together with Celí Pinto of the Truth Commission of Rio Grande do Sul; Lilian Celiberti, a Uruguayan activist, and Licia Pérez, of Brazil, of the Movement for Amnesty. The panel was moderated by Ariane Leitão of the aforementioned Secretariat. The object of the debate was to place the perspective of gender as a central issue in the examination of human rights violations in the past and a more profound study of present-day democracy.

More information [here](#) y [here](#)

[Course on “Women Involved in Peacekeeping Operations”](#)

Montevideo, Uruguay. On April 11, María Elena Martínez, a member of the IIHR Executive Council, gave the closing lecture at the course on “Women Involved in Peacekeeping Operations.” Sponsored by the IIHR and the UN at the Uruguayan

National School for Peacekeeping Operations. Ms. Martínez, in sharing her experiences on women in the armed forces, underlined the importance of an awareness of human rights in the contacts of those forces with the civilian population because of the latter's vulnerability.

She also stated that the peace missions have to be "well prepared in human rights," a matter in which there should be training for the armed forces and emphasized the obligations of the State, particularly that of due diligence, which includes the obligation to prevent, investigate, punish and make reparation for human rights violations. Her conference was followed by a round of questions that, for example, touched on role of the Public Defender with respect to the Uruguayan Armed Forces.

[Third session of the diploma course on human rights](#)

Guanajuato, Mexico. Since March 15 the IIHR and the University of Guanajuato have been developing the "Course on Human Rights with Special Reference to the Performance of Municipal and Local Authorities with respect to Human Rights Organizations," organized and coordinated by both institutions. As part of the academic program, Jorge Padilla, responsible for the IIHR program on Education in Human Rights, was responsible for the part devoted to the study of the international systems of protection of human rights and State responsibility. The meeting was held April 11-12 at the university. The course will conclude on May 24.

[Gallery of photographs](#)

[Political participation of women](#)

Montevideo, Uruguay. On April 23, interns of the IIHR Regional Office for South America, Ferrán Civil Bellmunt (Grenoble Institute of Political Studies) and Alba Vespurinas (University of Alcalá de Henares, Spain) attended a conference on "The Political Participation of Women," hosted by Roberto Varela Fariña, Ambassador of Spain in Uruguay, and at which legislators from Uruguay and Spain attended.

Read more on the Internet, [here](#)

[Mission of the Executive Director to the Dominican Republic](#)

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. On April 22-23, the Executive Director, José Thompson, signed an agreement with the DNCD (see above note) and met with Luis Reyes, Vice Minister of Education, to continue with the promotion of the Inter-American Covenant of Human Rights Education and other projects in that field. He also spoke to the Ombudsman, Zoila Martínez, on matters of technical assistance and institutional strengthening in addition to the possibility of joint actions with Ombudsmen of the region to exchange information and good practices. With the President of the Supreme Court and of the Council of the Judiciary, Mariano German Mejía, they analyzed several matters related to human rights and the possibilities of working together to strengthen the institution. Finally, Mr. Thompson met with Jacinto Moronta, Sub-Director of the National School of the Judiciary (ENJ) and Mariloy Díaz, head of Training. They agreed that the IIHR would donate publications to improve the collection of the library of the ENJ and would furnish information on the Ibero-American Network of Judicial Schools so that advantage could be taken of its training programs for the judges of Ibero-America.

This mission was prepared with the aid of Kelvin Jiménez and Judge Kenya Romero,

both former students of the Institute.

Visit the page of the ENJ at www.enj.org

IIHR participates in the course “Human Rights and the Use of Force”

Bogotá, Colombia. From April 27 to May 2, Sergio Arboleda University sponsored the “Human Rights and the Use of Force” course for more than 150 police of the National Police.

IIHR was in charge of four classes: the first and second on “Principles of Proportionality and Necessity in the Use of Force” and “The UN and the Control of the Use of Force in the Member States,” were given by Juan Navarrete Monasterio, IIHR Representative in Colombia. The other two topics “The Concept of Citizen Security and Public Order” and “Functions of the Police from the Perspective of Gender and Non-Discrimination,” were given by Carlos Mendieta Andino, advisor at the IIHR Office and responsible for the IIHR program Security and Human Rights.

Research on violence begins in collaboration with the ICRC

San Salvador, El Salvador. A series of meetings was held on April 23, 24, 28 and 29 to agree on research on the violence that affects schools in high-risk zones in that country. The initiative is a joint project of the IIHR and the International Committee of the Red Cross and has the support and participation of the Ministry of Education.

The meetings represented a first approach for the high schools and educational centers involved; established a team that will be the counterpart of the Ministry and analyzed the options, conditions and provisions necessary for the fieldwork in those zones. They also reviewed the external support that will be needed to apply the instruments used to collect the information.

Support for the process of full reparation to the victims of the conflict in Colombia continues

Bogotá, Colombia. The Agreement of Association 1021 with the Unit for Attention and Integral Reparation for Victims of the Conflict has been the framework of various activities that are part of the working plan for 2014. The first of these, was a meeting on April 23-25 with the victims belonging to the LGBT population of Medellín, Antioquia in which 16 persons from throughout the country participated. The goals were to formulate a plan of action and to achieve recognition of their participation in the ongoing process of reparation.

There was a special meeting on April 28 of the 53 delegates to the National Group for Effective Participation of Victims. The Attorney General, Alejandro Ordóñez, received their concerns with respect to compliance of Law 1448 by the State institutions. On the following day, the “Guide of co-nationals” was publicly launched for those people displaced in the exterior and in the border areas.

Finally, on April 30 there was a “Forum on Employability” with 75 coordinators of the Committees of Transitional Justice who were delegated by the Groups of Effective Participation of Victims throughout the country. Among the issues dealt with were their lack of opportunities and the means that the State is providing to assure them guarantees in this field.

[Showing of the documentary on migration and forced disappearance](#)

San José, Costa Rica. The documentary "Snakes and Ladders: The Disappeared" from Tres Gatos Films was shown on April 25 in an activity organized by the IIHR with the support of the International Office of Migration (IOM). The documentary deals with the disappearances of migrants during their transit through Mexico from psychological, social and institutional perspectives. Interviews with different persons, among them specialists and relatives of the victims, give a portrait of the panorama of migration, drug traffic and violence.

After the showing, there was a forum with the participation of the Mexican producers of Tres Gatos Films, Keisdo Shimabukuro, Luis Ernesto Nava and Omar Iturbe, the Mexican producers of Tres Gatos Films; José Thompson, IIHR Executive Director, and Sofía Salas Monge, a lawyer who coordinates the Unit of Human Trafficking and Attention to Vulnerable Migrants of the IOM regional office. It was followed by a rich exchange with the public, comprised of university students, representatives of the diplomatic corps, IIHR staff members and persons interested in the question of migration.

[Gallery of photographs](#)

Learn more about the film [Serpientes y Escaleras: Desaparecidos](#) in Facebook

[Training reinitiated for Salvadoran teachers in EDH](#)

San Salvador, El Salvador. As part of the IIHR program for training in human rights education for Salvadoran teachers, a workshop on human rights and education in human rights was held April 25-26 at the Training Center of the Ministry of Education, located in Santa Tecla. The first group of teachers of the 2014 program was comprised of 42 teachers of primary and secondary schools from a majority of the departments.

The program was conducted by Byron Barillas of the IIHR in coordination with María Leticia Marinero, the counterpart of the Ministry for this program. The activity included expositions, group work, diverse exercises and intense debates on the substance in light of the experiences of the teachers in the context of their country.

[Gallery of photographs](#)

[IIHR participates in the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Convention of Belém do Pará](#)

San José, Costa Rica. The National Meeting of Women "From Words to Action: We Demand Our Right to Live Without Fear" was held April 25 and 26 as part of the activities commemorating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). Sandra León Coto, Rector of the Universidad Nacional; María Isabel Chamorro, Minister of the Condition of Women; Pilar Álvarez Laso, representative of the UN, and Ana Isabel Garita Vílchez, Minister of Justice and Peace, inaugurated this forum to learn about and promote human rights and to debate and formulate proposals to confront and eradicate violence against women.

During the second day of the event, some of the demands of Costa Rican women were presented to the public authorities and to President-elect Luis Guillermo Solís. The women who attended the meeting, coming from Talamanca, Limón, Barra del Colorado, Guanacaste, the Southern zone and the provinces surrounding San José, were chosen at meetings held throughout the country. Even those deprived of the liberty chose

their delegates, although they did not participate in the final meeting. The Institute has joined forces in this initiative, together with State universities, public institutions and Costa Rican NGOs.

[Gallery of photographs](#)

[President of the IIHR re-elected as Chairperson of CAT](#)

Geneva, Switzerland. At its recent meeting to examine compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Committee against Torture (CAT) on April 28 re-elected Professor Claudio Grossman, as its Chairperson. Prof. Grossman is the President of the IIHR Executive Council and has also been President of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies. He has been a member of CAT since 2003 and its Chairperson since 2008.

[Introductory workshop for distance learning on EDH](#)

San Salvador, El Salvador. On April 28 Byron Barillas, IIHR specialist, conducted the introductory workshop for distance learning on “EDH techniques, resources and materials.” At this preliminary activity, the participants received a full explanation about the course and made preparations to take the pertinent decisions on the development of this activity for which they had a tutor assigned by the IIHR. In addition, a summary was made of the debate on EDH from previous discussions and there was group work on the exercise “Suggestion box,” which was left as a task for the final workshop of this first group.

[Invitation to the awarding of Doctor *honoris causa* to Elizabeth Odio Benito](#)

San José, Costa Rica. The University Council of the Universidad Nacional has decided to award Elizabeth Odio Benito, a member of the IIHR General Assembly, the degree of Doctor *honoris causa*. The ceremony will take place May 21 at 6:00 pm in the Melico Salazar Theatre.

Among the motives given by the University that warranted this merited homage, which recognizes her contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and to the feminine movement in Costa Rica, are her distinguished work in diverse public posts, among them Vice President of the Republic, having been the first woman professor at the Law School of the University of Costa Rica and as Minister of Justice, the author of the most important penitentiary reform in the history of the country, not to mention her international positions as Judge of the International Criminal Court, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and promoter of the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention against Torture.

[Invitation](#)

[Applications to the XXXII Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights now being received](#)

San José, Costa Rica. The deadline for applications from persons interested in participating in the XXXIII Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights “Building the Road Map towards the Recognition and Appreciation of Diversities” is July 25, 2014. The Course will be held October 13-24 in San José, Costa Rica. Among the

issues dealt with will be:

- from the rule of non-discrimination to an appreciation of diversity;
- migrant populations and the enjoyment of human rights;
- the progressive construction of the rights of women;
- the rights of disabled persons: from international norms to national practice;
- challenges of diversities for the full realization of political rights, and,
- the role of justice in recognizing diversities.

Send comments to the following address: c.interdisciplinario@iidh.ed.cr
The application form is available [here](#)



[Follow our activities on Facebook](#)

Inter-American Institute of Human Rights – Official page
<https://www.facebook.com/IIDHpaginaoficial>

Regional Office of the IIDH for South America
<https://www.facebook.com/iidhsuramerica?fref=ts>

Information and Documentation Center

The information contained in this Newsletter may be used, provided the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights is credited as its source. All previous issues of IIHR in the Americas and the IIHR Newsletter are available in our digital archive, which may be accessed at the IIHR Web site (<http://www.iidh.ed.cr/>)

© Inter-American Institute of Human Rights