

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights



The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is charged with promoting, monitoring, and protecting human rights in the independent States of the Americas that are members of the Organization of American States (OAS). It interprets regional human rights standards including the [American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man](#) and [American Convention on Human Rights](#), including through its decisions on individual complaints. Its counterpart, the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#), complements the Commission's work and has a more limited mandate.

The Commission is based in Washington, District of Columbia, United States where it often holds ordinary sessions. However, the Commission may decide to meet elsewhere, pursuant to the vote of an absolute majority of its members and with the consent or at the invitation of the State concerned. It holds two regular periods of sessions per year and as many special sessions as it deems necessary. Civil society organizations may participate in the Commission's public sessions.

Members of the Organization of American States:

All 35 independent States of the Americas belong to the OAS and have ratified the [OAS Charter](#). Those are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These States are all subject to the Commission's oversight.

The Commission's Activities:

- Decide and, in certain circumstances, publish [reports](#) on individual complaints of human rights violations ("[petitions](#)") lodged against OAS Member States, including on admissibility, merits, and friendly settlements
- Refer cases to the Inter-American Court, in limited circumstances
- Hold [hearings](#) on petitions and on specific thematic areas of concern
- Publish [annual reports](#), [thematic reports](#), and [country reports](#)
- Adopt "[precautionary measures](#)," asking a State to prevent imminent, irreparable harm to an individual or group
- Establish "[thematic rapporteurships](#)," to monitor specific human rights concerns
- Conduct fact-finding and promotional missions in OAS Member States

Basic Instruments:

The following is a partial list of the IACHR's most relevant procedural and substantive instruments:

- Statute of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([text](#))
- Rules of Procedure of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([text](#))
- American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man ([text](#))
- American Convention on Human Rights ([text](#))

To learn more about the Inter-American Commission and human rights protection in the Americas, visit IJRC's resources on the [Inter-American Human Rights System](#), [Research Aids](#), and [Country Factsheets](#).