

Colombia

Colombia is a Member State of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the United Nations (UN), and has human rights obligations at both the regional and universal levels.

Regional: Inter-American System



As a Member of OAS, Colombia is held to the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and its human rights policies and practices are monitored by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Commission may decide [complaints](#) against the State and may also hold [hearings](#) or issue [reports](#) on the human rights situation there. Colombia has accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which may issue binding [judgments](#) concerning alleged abuses.

Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by Colombia to the [Inter-American human rights system](#). Several complaints have concerned Colombia’s internal armed conflict. For example, in *Manuel Cepeda Vargas v. Colombia*, the Commission found that Colombia was responsible for the extrajudicial killing of Senator Cepeda Vargas and for the failure to take necessary measures to protect his life and to punish the masterminds of the crime, which occurred in the context of systemic violence against activists and therefore constituted a crime against humanity. See IACHR, Report No. 62/08, Case 12.531, [Manuel Cepeda Vargas](#) (Colombia), July 25, 2008.

The Court has heard multiple cases addressing enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of civilians and has found that Colombia violated its obligation to diligently investigate and punish those responsible. See, e.g., I/A Court H.R., [Case of the Pueblo Bello Massacre v. Colombia](#). Merits, Reparations and Costs. Judgment of January 31, 2006. Series C No. 140.

The Commission and Court have also issued [precautionary measures](#) and [provisional measures](#) to protect people in urgent situations of risk in Colombia.

Colombia has ratified the following **regional human rights treaties**:

- Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (“Protocol of San Salvador”)
- Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (“Convention of Belem do Pará”)
- Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons
- Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

United Nations System

As a UN Member State, Colombia is subject to the oversight of various [UN human rights bodies](#), including the [Human Rights Council](#) and its [Universal Periodic Review](#) and thematic [special procedures](#). As a party to specific universal human rights treaties, Colombia's policies and practices are monitored by UN [treaty bodies](#). It has accepted the complaints procedure of two treaty bodies.

Colombia has ratified the following **UN human rights treaties**:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW)

Colombia has submitted a reservation, derogation, declaration or understanding that modifies its obligations under the following treaties: [ICCPR](#), [CMW](#), and [CRC](#).

Colombia has also ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aimed at abolishing the death penalty, and optional protocols to the CRC addressing children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Colombia has a duty to submit **State reports** to each UN treaty body associated with the treaties Colombia has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis, and describe the steps taken to implement the treaty provisions.

Colombia has ratified the [optional protocols](#) allowing individual **complaints** against the State alleging violations of the ICCPR and CEDAW. Colombia has accepted the CAT and CED **inquiry procedures**, allowing those treaty bodies to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations.

On March 17, 2003, Colombia extended a **standing invitation** to UN special procedures, which means they are welcome to conduct visits in Colombia. For example, the Independent Expert on minority issues went on a mission to Colombia in February 2010 and published a [report](#) in January 2011.

For more information on Colombia's engagement with [UN human rights bodies](#), visit <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/COIndex.aspx>.

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