



# Beijing + 30 in Latin America and the Caribbean: Women's Rights Between Progress and Setbacks



Con el apoyo de:





**Beijing + 30 in Latin  
America and the Caribbean:**  
Women's Rights Between  
Progress and Setbacks

March 2026

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**Beijing + 30 in Latin  
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Women's Rights Between  
Progress and Setbacks

# List of acronyms

**AIDA (Bolivia)** — Comprehensive Adolescent Care (AIDA: Atención Integral de Adolescentes)

**CAIMUS (Guatemala)** — Comprehensive Support Center for Women Survivors of Violence (Centro de Apoyo Integral para Mujeres Sobrevivientes de Violencia)

**CEDAW** — Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**CIHUAT-Niña (El Salvador)** — Comprehensive Care Center for Girls and Adolescent Survivors of Sexual Violence (Centro Integral de Atención a Niñas y Adolescentes Víctimas de Violencia Sexual)

**CICIG (Guatemala)** — International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala)

**CLADEM** — Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (Comité de América Latina y del Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres)

**CONAPREVI (Guatemala)** — National Coordinating Body for the Prevention of Intrafamily Violence and Violence against Women (Coordinadora Nacional para la Prevención de la Violencia Intrafamiliar y Contra las Mujeres)

**CRC/CDN** — Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño)

**CSE/ESI** — Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Educación Sexual Integral)

**DEAM (Brazil)** — Specialized Women's Police Stations (Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento à Mulher).

**DIGESTYC (El Salvador)** — General Coordination of Statistics and Census (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos)

**EAP/PEA** — Economically Active Population (Población Económicamente Activa)

**ECLAC/CEPAL** — Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe)

**ENADID (Mexico)** — National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica)

**ENDES/INEI (Peru)** — Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES), National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) (Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Familiar del Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática)

**ENDIREH (Mexico)** — National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares)

**ENDSSR (Paraguay)** — National Sexual and Reproductive Health Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva)

**ENESVMN (Honduras)** — National Specialized Survey on Violence against Women and Girls aged 15 and over (Encuesta Nacional Especializada sobre la Violencia contra las Mujeres y Niñas de 15 años y más)

**EU** — European Union

**GIPC (Paraguay)** — Inter-Institutional Cabinet for the Prevention of Violence against Women (Gabinete Interinstitucional para la Prevención de la Violencia contra las Mujeres)

**IADB/BID** — Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo)

**IGSS (Guatemala)** — Guatemalan Social Security Institute (Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social)

**ILO/OIT** — International Labour Organization (Organización Internacional del Trabajo)

**INEGI (Mexico)** — National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía)

**ISDEMU (El Salvador)** — Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer)

**IWFM** — Initiative for Women’s Justice and Peace.

**JEP (Colombia)** — Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz)

**JNE (Peru)** — National Jury of Elections (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones)

**LEIV (El Salvador)** — Comprehensive Special Law for a Life Free from Violence for Women (Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres)

**LEPP (Guatemala)** — Electoral Law and Law on Political Parties (Ley Electoral y de Partidos Políticos)

**LGAMVLV (Mexico)** — General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free from Violence (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia)

**LGBTQIAPN+** — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Travesti, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Non-binary, and other identities and orientations

**MESECVI** — Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention

**MG (Bolivia)** — Ministry of Government (Ministerio de Gobierno)

**MMR/RMM** — Maternal Mortality Ratio (Razón de Mortalidad Materna)

**MSPAS (Guatemala)** — Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social)

**NOM-046-SSA2-2005 (Mexico)** — Mexican Official Standard NOM-046-SSA2-2005 (Norma Oficial Mexicana 046-SSA2-2005)

**OBSCD (Bolivia)** — Bolivian Observatory on Civil Security and the Fight against Drugs (Observatorio Boliviano de Seguridad Ciudadana y Lucha Contra las Drogas)

**ONPE (Peru)** — National Office of Electoral Processes (Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales)

**ORMUSA** — Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas por la Paz)

**PAHO/OPS** — Pan American Health Organization (Organización Panamericana de la Salud)

**PAE-SSR (Mexico)** — Specific Action Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health (Programa de Acción Específico de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva)

**PAN (Colombia)** — National Action Plan (Plan de Acción Nacional)

**PAPSIVI (Colombia)** — Psychosocial Care and Comprehensive Health Program for Victims (Programa de Atención Psicosocial y Salud Integral a Víctimas)

**PEO (Guatemala)** — Equal Opportunities Plan (Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades)

**PIPASEVM (Mexico)** — Comprehensive Program to Prevent, Address, Punish, and Eradicate Violence against Women (Programa Integral para Prevenir, Atender, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres)

**PLANNOVI (Guatemala)** — National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women (Plan Nacional para la Prevención y Erradicación de la Violencia contra las Mujeres)

**PNCUPA (Paraguay)** — Paraguay National Care Policy (Política Nacional de Cuidados del Paraguay)

**PNPDIM (Guatemala)** — National Policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women (Política Nacional de Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres)

**SCJN (Mexico)** — Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación)

**SEPREM (Guatemala)** — Presidential Secretariat for Women (Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer)

**SIGADENAH (Honduras)** — Information System for Managing Services for the Rights of Children, Adolescents, and the Family (Sistema de Información para la Gestión de la Atención de Derechos de la Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia)

**SNIS-VE (Bolivia)** — National Health Information and Epidemiological Surveillance System (Sistema Nacional de Información en Salud y Vigilancia Epidemiológica)

**SRH** — Sexual and reproductive health

**SRHR** — Sexual and reproductive health and rights

**UNDP/PNUD** — United Nations Development Programme (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo)

**UNFPA** — United Nations Population Fund

**UNICEF** — United Nations Children’s Fund

**UN Women** — United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

**VACS** — Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (Encuesta de Violencia contra la Niñez y la Juventud)

**WEF** — World Economic Forum

**WHO/OMS** — World Health Organization (Organización Mundial de la Salud)

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# Introduction



**THIS TECHNICAL-ANALYTICAL REPORT** assesses the trajectory of ten countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region in promoting gender equality and women’s rights over the period 1995–2025, taking as its central reference framework the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Cairo Programme of Action (1994). These international mechanisms established a comprehensive agenda for the empowerment of women, addressing critical areas such as violence, health, education, economy, and political participation.

This report is produced within the framework of the “Programa Paridad,” a collaboration between the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women’s Rights (CLADEM) and Diakonia, with support from the Swedish Government. Its main objective is to present a regional perspective on the progress and setbacks in women’s rights in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Paraguay. For the elaboration of this report, information was collected on key data related to progress in guaranteeing women’s rights, including the adoption of laws and policies aimed at preventing and eradicating gender-based violence, statistics related to unsafe abortions, legal abortion services and healthcare for women, participation in institutional spaces of power, economic autonomy, and care work. Data collection was conducted by Ana Lima (Brazil, Paraguay, Panama, Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala), Blanca Capacho (Women and Armed Conflicts), Estela De Armas (Brazil, Paraguay, Panama, Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala), Daniela Rosendo (Wom-

en and Economy), Katherine Jaime de la Cruz (Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala), and Patricia Brañez (Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia). The information was consolidated in this report by Tamara Amoroso Gonsalves, under the supervision of the CLADEM Regional team, comprising Lucía Macoc, Project Assistant; Milena Páramo Bernal, CLADEM Regional Coordinator until November 2025; and Maria Guadalupe Ramos, designated Regional Coordinator.

The analysis is structured on the basis of official statistical data collected from each country, as well as the recurrent recommendations of international bodies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Women (the United Nations entity dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Taking into consideration CLADEM’s key role in monitoring the implementation of international treaties related to gender-based issues — a field in which CLADEM has long-standing leadership in the region — the reviews conducted by international mechanisms were also analyzed, particularly those of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI). The methodology adopted focused on organizing this information into country-specific data files, which served as the basis for more comprehensive country reports. This information was subsequently organized and synthesized in the present report in order to highlight the main achievements and challenges in meet-



ing these standards in the countries covered by the study. It should be noted that the thematic areas of women and the economy and women and armed conflicts were developed through specific studies. In the latter case, a tailored methodology was employed, which included interviews with key women involved in peacebuilding and peace processes in Colombia.

This study identified a number of relevant methodological limitations. Although the research team employed a common methodology for data collection, the comparative analysis of the countries included in the report highlights that one of the main chal-

lenges in monitoring the commitments undertaken under the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action is the limited availability, quality, and comparability of official data. The Beijing Platform for Action explicitly establishes States' obligation to develop and strengthen systems for generating, analyzing, and applying sex-disaggregated data. It also calls for the establishment of official mechanisms to monitor and assess progress and setbacks in gender equality. In a complementary manner, the Cairo Programme of Action emphasizes the systematic collection and analysis of demographic and health data as a fundamental basis

for the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies aimed at the protection and development of sexual and reproductive rights. However, the initial objective of producing comparative analyses over the course of the report was hindered by the heterogeneity of data sources, changes in the categories used, the institutional fragmentation of information systems, and the dispersion of administrative records. These difficulties are not confined to a single country but are reproduced transversally across the region, affecting the analysis of key areas such as violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, economic autonomy, and political participation. The absence of consistent time series, the lack of disaggregation by age, territory, ethnic affiliation or other relevant variables, as well as interruptions in data generation, limit the ability to assess progress, setbacks, and persistent gaps. In this sense, the difficulty in producing systematic, periodic, and comparable data constitutes a key finding of this report and indicates partial non-compliance with commitments under the Beijing Declaration (particularly Strategic Objective H) and the Cairo Programme of Action regarding data generation, monitoring and accountability as fundamental conditions for the design of rights-based public policies.

However, throughout the research process it was possible to compile a significant amount of data from official sources, institutional reports, and national information systems of the countries analyzed. Nevertheless, the ability to establish consistent regional comparisons was limited by substantial differences in the methods used for data collection, classification, and systematization, both across coun-

tries and within the same country over the period studied. Changes in operational definitions, the use of non-standardized categories, modifications to data-recording tools, and the use of multiple criteria for measuring similar indicators affect data comparability, even when the data are relevant and abundant at the national level. Consequently, the availability and amount of information do not always translate into robust comparative analyses, reinforcing the need to move toward more articulated and accurate regional frameworks for the generation, harmonization, and standardization of gender-responsive data.

Additionally, the time span analyzed — which covers approximately thirty years, from the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action to the present — comprehends profoundly diverse political, institutional, and social contexts across the region, including periods of democratic consolidation, structural reforms, institutional crises, and democratic erosion or backsliding. These variations directly affect how States produce, organize, update, and disseminate public information, as well as the continuity, coverage, and quality of statistical systems. In addition, the research was conducted within a limited time frame of only a few months, which posed the methodological challenge of analyzing a significant amount of data, combined with the complexity of heterogeneous national realities, within a short period of time. This led to the prioritization of concise and comparative analyses that provided an overall regional perspective without exhausting the analytical depth that a more extensive, long-term approach would require.

# National frameworks and regional outlook: democratic transitions and authoritarianisms over the last 30 years

**THIRTY YEARS AFTER** the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the regional gender equality agenda is situated within a political context marked by incomplete democratic transitions<sup>1</sup> (CLADEM, 2025; Avritzer et al., 2025) and the resurgence of authoritarian processes. In the 1990s, most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the Beijing Conference after having only recently restored democracy, following periods of dictatorial or authoritarian rule, and while their institutions remained fragile and subject to recurring political, economic, and social crises. At the same time, several States were undergoing specific transitions linked to peace negotiations and the closure of armed conflicts, such as Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Meanwhile, other countries were experiencing constituent processes or extensive constitutional reforms, including Colombia (1991), Paraguay (1992), Peru (1993), Venezuela (1999), and Brazil (1988). This inaugural moment thus combined formal democratization with high levels of institutional instability, territorial uncertainty, and disputes over

the new political arrangements (ECLAC, 2019; ECLAC, 2023).

Within this regional context, the subsequent decades recorded a progressive expansion of civil rights anchored in the democratic horizon established in the 1990s. By the end of that decade, most countries had recognized women's civil and political rights at the legislative level and had created conditions for their increased presence in higher education, the labor market, and public life. The implementation of affirmative action measures, including electoral quota laws (typically set at around 30%), marked a significant political shift. Although these measures often operated as ceilings, they contributed to increasing women's parliamentary representation and to the incorporation of their gender agendas into state debates (UN Women, 2021, p. 12). In general terms, the post-dictatorial period consolidated a shared democratic baseline from which feminist struggles influenced the reconfiguration of policies, institutions, and political practices. That consolidation did not yet entail the full implementation of the regulatory frameworks that had been achieved.

<sup>1</sup> Here we refer to established democracies that formally operate according to democratic rules, but fail to expand basic human rights and to include the entire population of the countries, a typical scenario in Latin America and the Caribbean.



During the first decades of the twenty-first century, the regional political landscape went through a phase of relative democratic expansion — especially in the Southern Cone — associated with the cycle of progressive governments known as “marea rosa” (pink tide). Within this framework, significant legal and political advances were observed in human rights and women’s rights — including gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights, the recognition of diversity, and equality-related institutional frameworks. These advances were driven by the sustained advocacy of feminist and LGBTQIAPN+ movements (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Travesti, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Non-binary, and others). This cycle was not limited to a single ideological orientation, but it found particularly favorable conditions where governments expanded social policies and strengthened state mechanisms for the advancement of women. During these years, the region experienced a “democratic spring” that broadened the repertoire of rights, reinforcing the centrality of gender equality in official agendas.

However, in parallel and increasingly since 2009, we also identified the consolidation of conservative, far-right, and fundamentalist political forces that articulated projects of authoritarian backsliding in different countries. Such political forces gained parliamentary representation, reshaped public debates through “anti-gender” and “anti-rights” campaigns, and, in some cases, gained access to the executive branch through electoral means. Once inserted into the national government, they promoted measures that concentrated power, restricted civil participation, and attempted to undermine the previous achievements of women’s and human rights movements. As a political impact, there was a regional radicalization of polarization between progressive projects and conservative resurgences, which increased conflict and eroded citizens’ confidence in the democratic institutional framework.

From a comparative regional perspective, this recent process reinforces a trend already visible across national cases: democracy became the dominant formal rule, but its social legitimacy and institutional density were uneven. Rising polarization and declining trust in democratic regimes opened space for authoritarian narratives in a region still marked by historical memories of military coups and autocratic and violent governments. This panorama confirms that the transitions of the past thirty years were not linear: phases of democratic strengthening coexisted with moments of institutional decline, amid persistent disputes over the meaning of democracy, the expansion of civil rights, and the distribution of political power.

**Bolivia** consolidated its democratic recovery initiated in 1982 and, over subsequent decades, channeled this institutional reopening into social policies with a progressive expansion of rights, particularly with strong involvement from women's organizations. The adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 translated into gradual advances, especially regarding women's political participation, the fight against violence, and the protection of sexual and reproductive rights. A later milestone was the rise of the "Movement for Socialism" (MAS) with Evo Morales in 2006, which led to the convening of a Constituent Assembly and the adoption of a new Constitution in 2009. This process, shaped by the active participation of diverse social and women's movements, incorporated broad constitutional guarantees for women, diverse gender identities, and Indigenous and rural communities. In sum, the Bolivian cycle reflects a democratic trajectory with moments of institutional deepening and expansion of civil rights.

**Brazil** ended its military dictatorship in 1985 and consolidated democracy with the 1988 Constitution. In the 1990s, economic stability coexisted with structural inequality. The democratic phase was strengthened with the election of Lula in 2002, whose government prioritized poverty reduction, although gaps related to race and gender were not eliminated. Under Dilma Rousseff (2010), the improvement of social policies continued, but political tensions grew: the protests of 2013–2014 and the impeachment of 2016 gave rise to a period interpreted by multiple actors as a democratic rupture. Subsequently, the rise of the far right with Bolsonaro (2019–2022) intensified conservative narratives and practices

that strained democratic institutions, including destabilizing campaigns after the 2022 elections and an attempted coup. Lula's return in 2023 occurred in a polarized context with weakened institutions. Brazil thus reflects an institutionally democratic system disrupted by cycles of authoritarian harms and disputes over political counterweights.

Between 1995 and 2025, **Colombia** has been formally established as a representative and participatory constitutional democracy, grounded in its 1991 Constitution, which defines the country as a democratic, pluralist, and territorially decentralized social state. Its institutional design combines electoral repre-



sentation with mechanisms of popular participation and non-compulsory suffrage, whose legitimacy is grounded in citizens' free choice. In this context, despite increased popular participation in 2022, high levels of democratic distrust persisted through 2025 (Registraduría, 2022; Radio Colombia, 2025). This process unfolds across an extensive and ethnoculturally diverse territory, characterized by multiple administrative regimes and the recognition of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and Roma peoples. This diversity is shaped by historical inequalities that result in unequal realization of civil rights. The prolonged internal armed conflict — with critical peaks between 1988 and 2002 and a relative decline without definitive closure — has structurally limited participation and access to rights in large areas of the country. In this context, governments oscillated between securitization policies (Uribe), attempts at negotiation and peace (Santos), and renewed social tensions (Duque), until the inflection represented by Petro in 2022, with an agenda of social and inclusive democratization. Thus, despite electoral constancy and constitutional stability, Colombian democracy has been heavily impacted by war, territorial fragmentation, and weak institutional legitimacy.

**Peru** experienced an authoritarian shift in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 1995, Alberto Fujimori was elected president and, on April 5, 1992, dissolved Congress. Through Decree Law No. 25684, he called for elections to form the Democratic Constituent Congress, which was composed of 80 members. A referendum held on October 31, 1993 approved Peru's Constitution. In November 2000, Congress declared Fujimori's presidential vacancy, marking the end of the dictatorial period.

Between 2001 and 2005, a constitutional democracy was reestablished through the transitional government of Paniagua and Toledo, with elections organized by autonomous electoral bodies. In 2016, Peru faced a sustained political crisis: disagreements between presidents and a fragmented Congress had led to vacancies, resignations, and successive presidential changes, including the cases of Kuczynski, Vizcarra, Merino, Sagasti, Castillo, and Boluarte. In November 2020, the removal of Martín Vizcarra and the succession by Manuel Merino triggered massive protests; repression and two deaths led to Merino's resignation after only five days. Many observers viewed the resignation as an act that eroded the democratic legitimacy of Congress.

Although the 1990s are formally part of the “democratic era”, in **Honduras** we observe a weakening of governance. The 2009 coup against Manuel Zelaya fractured institutional structures and inaugurated a new cycle, with challenges to the legitimacy of subsequent governments. Various analyses describe the regime as electoral authoritarianism or a severely weakened democracy (Araujo, 2025; Domínguez Avila, 2023). The election of Xiomara Castro in 2022 enabled a shift toward moderate leftist policies, in a context marked by corruption, drug trafficking, widespread poverty, and socio-environmental conflicts. Honduras navigates a fragile democracy, with institutional ruptures and electoral authoritarianism coexisting alongside recent attempts at political reconstruction.

**Guatemala** emerges from a 36-year internal armed conflict, concluded with the 1996 Peace Accords that initiated democratic reconstruction. Nev-

ertheless, implementation was partial, and the following decades were marked by instability, corruption, impunity, and institutional capture. The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG, 2007–2019) represented a significant anti-corruption effort until its dissolution. Between 2020 and 2025, institutional crises and challenges to the judicial and electoral systems intensified, alongside the growing protagonism of feminist, Indigenous, and youth organizations. Bernardo Arévalo's assumption of office in 2024 raised expectations of democratic recovery in the face of conservative resistance. Guatemala's transition has thus evolved from postwar conditions toward a fragile democracy, marked by elite disputes and persistent inequality.

After the 1992 Peace Accords, **El Salvador** transitioned to a formal democracy with alternation in power and a multi-party system, although constrained by social violence, poverty, and inequality. Since 2019, the government of Nayib Bukele has concentrated power in the executive branch, weakened institutional counterweights, and adopted militarized security policies: while homicide rates have declined, a repressive environment has taken hold, generating ongoing allegations of human rights violations reported by minority groups with limited political representation. At the same time, mass migration and socio-environmental insecurity continue to shape the national reality. Such dynamics reflect a typical historical pattern in the region: a democratic postwar period followed by authoritarian recentralization supported by security policies.

**Mexico** experienced, over these three decades, the end of the hege-

monic *priismo*<sup>2</sup>, as well as a series of electoral reforms that facilitated alternation in power, consolidating a cycle of competitive democracy. However, since 2006, security policies targeting drug cartels have intensified violence and human rights violations. Between 2012 and 2018, institutional reforms were marked by women playing a more prominent political leadership role. The 2020 pandemic altered state priorities. In 2024, with the beginning of Claudia Sheinbaum's term, the socially driven orientation of the government was maintained, while adjustments were introduced in the area of security. In 2025, secondary legislation aimed at the protection of women was amended. Even so, rights gaps, impunity, and violence persist, resulting in a formal democracy with serious shortcomings in security and justice.

**Paraguay** left behind the Stroessner dictatorship in 1989, yet obstacles to memory and transitional justice persist. Since 1995, the country has experienced successive economic and political crises, including emblematic protests (1999, 2017, 2021) linked to corruption, re-election, and public health governance. The impeachment and removal of Fernando Lugo (2008–2012) marked a rupture within a system historically dominated by the ANR. More recently, a context of conservatism has emerged, characterized by the concentration of partisan power, restrictions on gender-responsive policies, the influence of organized crime, and the passage of legislation without sufficient debate. Paraguay experiences an electoral democracy with regressive features and institutional capture that bring the system closer to authoritarian trends.

**2** | “Hegemonic *Priismo*” refers to the historical period in Mexico when the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) almost completely dominated the political system (approximately from 1929 to 2000) maintaining continuous control of the Presidency, the majority of state governments and the Congress. It is called “hegemonic” because, although there were other parties and elections, the competition was unequal: the PRI had real access to power thanks to its control of institutions, public resources, electoral rules, and corporate networks, which made alternation difficult. In political science, it is often described as a “hegemonic party system”: formal pluralism with the effective domination of a single party (Rodríguez Montañó & Pineda Pablos, 2017)



**Panama** presents the most stable trajectory in the sample: since 1989, it has maintained regular presidential transitions, a multi-party system, and separation of powers. Democratic consolidation in the post-military regime period took shape between 1995 and 2005. Subsequent economic growth strengthened governability, despite ongoing tensions related to corruption. Between 2016 and 2025, challenges related to transparency, social reforms, and pressures from migration and climate agendas persisted, but within a continuous democratic regime. The primary limitation identified is not related to authoritarianism but to social issues: acute inequality and the underrepresentation of women in politics. Panama exemplifies an institutionally solid democracy that remains socially unequal.

At the regional level, therefore, it is observed that democratic change in Latin America and the Caribbean has followed two main pathways: the transition away from dictatorships or wars, and the internal reform of hege-

monic regimes — that is, political systems with formal elections but limited competition and prolonged dominance by a governing force. Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay abandoned dictatorships (military or personalist), and experienced unstable outcomes. Bolivia deepened rights through constitutional reform, while Brazil consolidated a robust democratic framework but later entered cycles of erosion; Paraguay preserved party-based and oligarchic structures that constrained substantive democratization. Guatemala and El Salvador emerged from armed conflicts with fragile formal democracies, while Panama experienced an early transition that has stabilized political alternation since 1989. Peru combined an authoritarian rupture with subsequent institutional restoration amid periods of instability, without a definitive regime rupture, whereas Honduras experienced a coup d'état during the so-called “democratic era.” Mexico, in contrast, underwent transition through the erosion of party hegemony and electoral reforms, without a single foundational rupture.

We also underscore that a shared pattern across the region is the tension between electoral democracy and the weakening of institutional checks and balances. Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, and Paraguay illustrate dynamics of concentration of executive or partisan power, the political weaponization of institutions, and the use of a security/order rationale as a source of legitimation. In Brazil, the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (2016) — often seen as a parliamentary coup — and president Bolsonaro's term (2019–2022), are described as instances of profound erosion; in El Salvador, militarized security policies underpinned recentralization; in Honduras, the 2009 coup opened a period of electoral authoritarianism; and in Paraguay, the prolonged hegemony of the ANR and the passage of laws without adequate debate, point to the same phenomenon. Peru also falls within this group of “unstable democracies,” although more due to fragmentation and successive crises than to a stable authoritarian hegemony.

Another regional constant is the gap between formal institutions and effective rights. Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico exemplify democracies with broad regulatory frameworks in human rights and gender, but with serious implementation gaps. In Colombia, these challenges are closely linked to the protracted armed conflict and the lack of statistical visibility, while in Mexico they are associated with sustained practices of violence and impunity. Panama faces a persistent challenge related to social inequality and the political underrepresentation of women and LGBTQIAPN+ populations. Nevertheless, Panama has not experienced an authoritarian turn, as it operates within a democratic regime that has historically demonstrated a strong capacity to generate stability

and distributional gains in the region. Such cases demonstrate that democracy, in its predominantly formal configuration, does not by itself guarantee inclusion or substantive equity, and that further democratic deepening is essential to address demands for equality and social justice.

We observed that democratic transitions and their trajectories are impacted by social action: in Bolivia, Guatemala, Brazil, and Mexico, women's and feminist organizations serve as engines of substantive democratization, whether by incorporating rights into constitutions, sustaining post-conflict memory, or advancing legal reforms. However, in contexts of regression — Bolsonaro's term in Brazil, conservative Paraguay, and securitized El Salvador — these agendas face institutional constraints or political violence. The region thus reveals an ongoing struggle between the expansion of civil rights and the resurgence of conservatism.

Beyond political divides, cross-cutting problems that shape democratic trajectories emerge. These include persistent inequality in Panama, Paraguay, Guatemala and Brazil; structural violence in Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras; and mass migration, particularly in Mesoamerica. These factors operate as accelerators of democratic instability: they amplify social demands, justify authoritarian responses (for certain social groups), and erode state legitimacy.

From a regional perspective, the last thirty years reveal that democracy has been established as a formal norm in Latin America and the Caribbean, but with very different degrees of institutionalization. The cases range from consolidations accompanied by an expansion of rights (Bolivia), to institution-

al stabilizations with a significant social debt (Panama), competitive democracies permeated by violence (Mexico, Colombia), democracies disrupted by coups or institutional capture (Honduras, Paraguay, Brazil), and post-conflict democracies that remain weak (Guatemala, El Salvador). The pattern observed is clear: political transition does not close off the dispute over power, nor does it guarantee inclusion; rather, it opens a prolonged field of conflict between social democratization and authoritarian resurgence that cyclically re-emerges across the region. In sum, advances in gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean have been profoundly conditioned by democratic trajectories and by cycles of authoritarian erosion that have marked states over the 1995–2025 period. As highlighted in Beijing’s critical areas G (power and decision-making) and I (women’s human

rights), substantive democracy constitutes an enabling condition for women’s political participation and for the effective realization of their rights. However, the report shows that the consolidation of formal democracies has not, by itself, guaranteed institutional stability or the sustained implementation of equality policies, particularly in contexts of power concentration, restrictions on civic space, and “anti-gender” offensives.

In line with the Cairo Programme of Action’s call to strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms, the findings underscore that democratic backsliding has a direct impact on the weakening of gender institutions, the reduction of public funding in this area, and the discontinuity of gender-related policies. This, in turn, reinforces the persistent gap between international commitments and their effective translation into rights for women.

# Violence against women and state responses

**IN LINE WITH** the Strategic Objective D<sup>3</sup> of the Beijing Platform for Action, states in the region have made significant progress in adopting comprehensive normative frameworks, including the criminalization of femicide, the creation of specialized institutions, and the development of projects and intersectoral care networks. Nevertheless, we observe a persistent gap between the development of laws and policies and their effective implementation, which is reflected in high levels of impunity, weaknesses in prevention, fragmented responses, and deep territorial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequalities. In accordance with the Cairo Programme of Action — particularly with regard to

the protection of women's health and reproductive rights — sexual violence emerges as a central factor that directly impacts bodily autonomy and the enjoyment of other fundamental rights. Thus, the persistence of violence reveals structural limits to state capacity to guarantee protection, accountability, and remedy, and underscores the need to strengthen integrated information systems and gender-responsive justice mechanisms, as well as sustained interventions that go beyond the legal sphere and transform the material conditions that reproduce violence. Below, we examine in greater detail how gender-based violence is addressed in each of the countries analyzed.

**3 |** The Strategic Objective D of the Beijing Platform for Action addresses violence against women and girls as one of the twelve critical areas of concern that constitute the roadmap for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide. This objective recognizes that gender-based violence — including domestic, sexual, psychological, economic, and other forms of gender-based abuse — is a serious violation of human rights that undermines women's dignity, health, security, and full participation in society, posing a structural obstacle to gender equality. The Beijing Platform calls upon states, international organizations, and civil society to adopt and implement comprehensive measures, including effective legislation and public policies, survivor support services, prevention campaigns, capacity-building for authorities, and the systematic collection of data, with a view to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. This comprehensive approach seeks both to protect and assist victims and to prevent violence through changes in social norms, institutional structures, and power relations that perpetuate discrimination and gender-based violence.

# Bolivia

In Bolivia, violence — particularly family violence and violence against women — has been recognized as a persistent structural problem over recent decades. The State developed a progressive legislative framework, beginning with Law No. 1674 on Family or Domestic Violence (1994), adopted following the ratification of the Convention of Belém do Pará. It was later strengthened by Law No. 348 (2013), which broadened the approach toward a comprehensive policy of prevention, care, protection, accountability, and remedy, incorporating the crime of femicide and redefining multiple forms of violence.

However, the expansion of the normative framework did not result in an effective reduction in violence. Reports of family violence have remained

at high and relatively stable levels between 2015 and 2022, with a subsequent increase according to official records from 2023, indicating a system that identifies more cases but fails to prevent them. With regard to femicide, trends continue to fluctuate at alarming levels, with no consistent decline despite its specific criminalization.

The substantial gap between normative frameworks and violence-related data can be attributed to multiple operational failures of the state, including the absence of a unified information system, weak implementation of preventive measures, failure to implement emergency mechanisms, insufficient budgets, the lack of specialized courts, insufficient training of justice system actors, and revictimizing institutional practices.

**Table: Reports to the Bolivian Police of family violence offenses**

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total cases	33,522	31,580	32,574	32,038	35,576	29,793	34,439	36,469
Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants)	308.9	286.7	291.3	282.3	309.0	255.1	290.8	303.8

Source: Research team based on data from the Ministry of Government (MG), Observatorio Boliviano de Seguridad Ciudadana y Lucha Contra las Drogas (OBSCD).

**Table: Reports of femicide to the Bolivian Police**

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total cases	76	74	99	107	116	113	108	95

Source: Research team based on data from the Ministry of Government (MG), Observatorio Boliviano de Seguridad Ciudadana y Lucha Contra las Drogas (OBSCD).

# Brazil

Brazil presents a long-standing trajectory of institutionalizing the response to gender-based violence, with continuous normative advances since the 1980s, resulting in a robust legal structure. This includes specialized police stations since 1985 (Specialized Police Stations for the Assistance of Women – Delegacias Especializadas de Atendimento à Mulher, DEAMs); the promulgation of the Convention of Belém do Pará (Decree No. 19,973/1996); mandatory reporting of violence against women in public and private health services (Law No. 10,778/2003); the Maria da Penha Law (Law No. 11,340/2006) as the backbone of comprehensive protection and urgent measures against domestic and family violence; mandatory care for victims of sexual violence (Law No. 12,845/2013); the criminalization of femicide (Law No. 13,104/2015); gender pay equality (Decree No. 11,795/2023); and the National Care Policy (Law No. 15,069/2024). New federal institutions and policies also emerged during this period, including the creation of the Ministry of Women in 2003.<sup>4</sup>

In Brazil, the institutional framework of policies for women has experienced significant advances and setbacks over the past two decades. The body was originally created in 2003 as the National Secretariat for Women's Policies, with ministerial status during Lula's first term, and was granted full ministerial status in 2010.

However, this institutional framework was dismantled in 2016, during the interim government of Michel Temer, when the secretariat was dissolved and

its functions were first transferred to the Ministry of Justice and Civil Rights and later to the Ministry of Human Rights and Family. During Jair Bolsonaro's government, policies directed at women were substantially weakened, in a context of an explicit shift towards a familial and conservative approach, which was reflected in public policies aimed at reinforcing the notion of the traditional family and delegitimizing the feminist agenda of rights and autonomy. This shift had concrete and negative impacts on the rights of women, girls and adolescents, particularly in regard to access to legal abortion in cases of rape, among other setbacks. This process was also reflected in severe budget cuts for fighting violence against women: the budget went from R\$ 100.7 million<sup>5</sup> in 2020 to R\$ 30.6 million<sup>6</sup> in 2021, and dropped to just R\$ 9.1 million<sup>7</sup> in 2022 (Folha de S. Paulo, 2022).

In January 2023, under Lula's government, the Ministry of Women was reinstated as a federal ministry, resuming historical functions and promoting a cross-cutting approach in state planning. Although the budget proposal initially submitted to Congress amounted to R\$ 17.2 million<sup>8</sup> – representing an 83% reduction compared to 2020 – the government allocated a total of R\$ 215.9 billion<sup>9</sup> to 91 budgetary actions benefiting women, distributed across different ministries and not exclusively within the Ministry of Women (Brazil, 2023). In this new cycle, the budget of the Ministry of Women stood at approximately R\$ 117 million<sup>10</sup>, while that of the Ministry of Racial Equality was estimated at

**4** | It was initially created as a Secretariat with ministerial status, dissolved in 2016, with its functions transferred to other ministries and subjected to severe budget cuts. In January 2023, the ministry was reinstated by the Lula administration, regaining its mandates.

**5** | In USD: 18,594,658. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**6** | In USD: 5,650,412. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**7** | In USD: 1,680,351. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**8** | In USD: 3,176,049. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**9** | In USD: 39,866,798,600. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**10** | In USD: 21,604,518. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

R\$ 91.8 million<sup>11</sup> (Ministry of Women, 2023; Ministry of Racial Equality, 2023). This cross-cutting approach was consolidated in the 2024–2027 Multi-Year Plan (PPA), which incorporated the women’s agenda as one of its five cross-cutting strategic areas, covering 45 of the 88 government programs and 21 ministries, with 85 objectives, 191 deliverables, and 75 institutional measures, supported by a budget of R\$ 14.1 billion<sup>12</sup> in the 2024 Annual Budget (UN Women, n.d.).

Despite legal advances, violence remains structural and continues to disproportionately affect Afro-descendant<sup>13</sup>, Indigenous, and rural women, showing an upward trend in recent records. The research highlights the gap between normative frameworks and territorial capacity, evidenced by the uneven implementation of specialized police stations for gender-based violence — with a significant deficit in the Amazon region and rural areas, excessive reliance on exceptional mobile services, and substantial budgetary deterioration during the Jair Bolsonaro administration, followed by partial recovery. State responses, although formally comprehensive, continue to operate with persistent limitations in terms of territorial presence, budget allocation, and political continuity. These constraints directly affect the effective implementation of policies aimed at women, as coverage of the DEAMs (Specialized Police Stations for the Assistance of Women) is unequal and often absent in rural areas, small towns, and the Amazon region, resulting in reports being filed at regular police stations (Inter-American Development Bank [IADB], n.d.). Although mobile police units operating via buses or boats do exist, they are exceptional measures (Governo do Ceará,

**Table: Percentage distribution of records of domestic, sexual, and other forms of violence against women, by type of violence.**

Type of violence	Percentage
Physical violence	56,8%
Psychological and emotional abuse	29,9%
Neglect / abandonment	22,8%
Sexual violence	10,7%
Torture	2,7%
Human trafficking	2,4%
Child labor	1,7%
Abusive litigation	0,2%
Economic violence	0,1%
Others	0,1%

Source: Research team, based on data from the Annual Socioeconomic Report on Women, Brazil, 2023.

2024). Comprehensive care policies include the *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* (2013/2015), which centralizes psychosocial and legal support, shelter, and the *Ligue 180* hotline, all under the *Mulher, Viver sem Violência* program (*Casa da Mulher Brasileira*, 2015). The *Ligue 180* hotline operates as a 24/7 service providing guidance on filing police reports and accessing services, and is complemented by the national 190 emergency line (IADB, n.d.). In February 2024, the *Ligue 180* analytics dashboard was launched, encompassing more than 2,500 services that make up the national support network for women experiencing violence. With regard to shelters, there are 122 Shelter Houses (*Casas Abrigo*) and Temporary Reception Houses (*Casas de Acolhimento Provisório*) nationwide (Federal Senate, 2025). The reinstatement of the Ministry of Women in 2023 represents an advance, although the budget remains reduced compared to previous years.

**11** | In USD: 16,951,237. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**12** | In USD: 2,603,621,400. According to OANDA Corporate note, consulted on 12/16/2025: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=BRL&to=USD&amount=1>

**13** | In Brazil, the Statute of Racial Equality (Law No. 12,288/2010) establishes that the Black population comprises “the set of individuals who self-identify as Black or mixed-race (pardas, in Portuguese), according to the color or race category used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), or who adopt a similar self-identification.” In this report, we use the category “Afro-descendant” to refer to the Black population.

**14** | Law No. 12,318/2010 defines parental alienation and identifies alienating behaviors, including obstructing the exercise of parental authority, preventing contact with the other parent, filing false complaints, or unjustifiably changing the residence of children. It also establishes judicial sanctions, including restrictions on parental rights and mandatory psychological or biopsychosocial follow-up.



In the judicial sphere and within family law, violence against women also takes institutional forms. In Brazil, Law No. 12,318/2010 established the so-called parental alienation<sup>14</sup> as a legal category. This law has been widely used against mothers who report domestic violence or sexual abuse against their children<sup>15</sup>. Despite lacking scientific legitimacy, this pseudo-concept has gained prominence in the courts due to its alignment with persistent gender stereotypes<sup>16</sup>. In practice, its application often occurs in response to mothers' reports of abuse, reframing such allegations as manipulative strategies and undermining women's credibility<sup>17</sup>. This dynamic not only reinforces representations of women as irrational or

high-conflict, but also exposes children to situations of risk by compelling them, through judicial orders, to maintain ties with allegedly abusive fathers<sup>18</sup>. Feminist research has characterized the judicial use of the term parental alienation not as a legitimate diagnostic category, but rather as a form of institutional violence, through which the judicial system reproduces and legitimizes mechanisms of coercive control<sup>19</sup>. Far from reversing this situation, Law No. 14,340/2022 reinforced and institutionalized this framework by formally extending the legal category of parental alienation to the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, thereby deepening the stigmatization of mothers and expanding restrictions on their ability of parenting<sup>20</sup>.

**15** | Velázquez; Wiecko, Ela. La igualdad en la sociedad comienza con la igualdad en la familia; Ananias, Nathalya. El síndrome de alienación parental como infracción a los derechos humanos de los niños; Severi, Fabiana. Parental Alienation Syndrome, Child Abuse, Gender, and Fathers' Rights; Dalgarno et al. 'Swim, swim and die at the beach': family court and perpetrator induced trauma (CPIT) experiences of mothers in Brazil (2023).

**16** | Bruch, Carol S. Parental Alienation Syndrome and Parental Alienation: Getting It Wrong in Child Custody Cases (2001); Ananias, Nathalya; Severi, Fabiana, op. cit.

**17** | Sheehy, Elizabeth & Boyd, Susan B. Penalizing Women's Fear: Intimate Partner Violence and Parental Alienation in Canadian Child Custody Cases (2020).

**18** | Morrison, Frederic; Tisdall, E. Kay M.; Callaghan, Jane E. Manipulation and Domestic Abuse in Contested Contact—Threats to Children's Participation Rights (2020).

**19** | Moreno, Silvia S. Cuando los estereotipos de género limitan derechos fundamentales: el acceso a la justicia de la infancia (2022).

**20** | Law No. 14,340, of May 18, 2022, which amended Law No. 12,318/2010 and the Statute of Children and Adolescents, reinforcing and institutionalizing parental alienation in the Brazilian legal system.

**Table: Key indicators of violence against women in Brazil**

Indicator	Value	Source, year
Women who have experienced domestic violence at some point	40%	UN, 2005
Physical violence (rural)	34%	WHO, 2003
Physical violence (urban)	27%	WHO, 2003
Sexual violence (rural)	14%	WHO, 2003
Sexual violence (urban)	10%	WHO, 2003
Physical and/or sexual violence (rural)	37%	WHO, 2003
Physical and/or sexual violence (urban)	29%	WHO, 2003
Increase in homicides of women (1980-2013)	+252%	FLACSO, 2015
Rate of homicides of women (2013)	4.8 per 100,000	FLACSO, 2015
Increase in reports of domestic violence (2015-2020)	+29.4%	Est. 2015-2020
Victimization in the past 12 months (record high, 2025)	37.5%	Agência Brasil, 2025

**Table: Victimization according to racial characteristics**

Group	Victimization (%)
Black	48,0%
48.0%	45,0%
Afro-Brazilians	45.0%
Brown (mixed)	43.8%
White	36.9%

Source: Research team, based on data from FBSP & Datafolha, 2023.

**Table: Victimization by age group**

Age group	Victimization (%)
16-24 years old	38.5%
25-34 years	48.9%
35-44 years	43.6%
45-59 years	44.2%
60+ years	37.5%

Source: Research team, based on data from FBSP & Datafolha, 2023.

In sum, Brazil has a solid legal framework; however, budgetary constraints, institutional instability, and insufficient territorial coverage persist — particularly in the Amazon region and in rural areas — alongside institutional practices within

the justice system that may reproduce forms of violence against women. These dynamics reproduce and deepen racialized gender inequalities, disproportionately affecting Afro-descendant and Indigenous women.

# Colombia

Colombia's context has been shaped by persistent, multidimensional violence over the past three decades, exacerbated by the long-standing internal armed conflict. This violence has become socially "normalized", with severe impacts on the general population — particularly rural, Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and impoverished communities — and disproportionate impacts on women, girls, and LGBTQIAPN+ individuals. During the internal armed conflict, the civilian population has been subjected to multiple forms of violence, including forced displacement, forced disappearances, threats, sexual violence, and illegal recruitment, as well as massacres, torture, kidnappings, dispossession, and extortion (Grupo Memoria Histórica, 2013). High levels of lethality associated with the conflict were observed between 1996 and 2002, when it reached its most critical phase, followed by a decline from 2003 onward. Accordingly, millions of victims of forced displacement, homicides, disappearances, threats, sexual violence, and recruitment have been recorded, with a critical concentration of deaths between 1995 and 2004.

The Colombian State's response to this situation is contradictory: on the one hand, it has involved the creation of truth and reparation mechanisms, the establishment of victims' registries, and the negotiation of peace agreements; on the other, it has been marked by the persistence of impunity, corruption, political alliances with armed actors (parapolitics), and violence committed by

State agents, including extrajudicial executions. With regard to violence against women, the conflict exacerbates long-standing patterns of discrimination and cruelty, and institutional frameworks show limited effectiveness in curbing femicides and assaults, particularly in territories with insufficient State presence. To address this scenario, Colombia has significantly expanded its protective legal framework, both through enacted legislation and judicial decisions. This framework combines constitutional rights, ratified international treaties, specific laws on gender-based violence, transitional justice norms, and jurisprudential<sup>21</sup> developments that recognize intersectional impacts.

**21** | Constitutional Court of Colombia, Order (Auto) 092 of 2008. It recognizes the disproportionate impact of the armed conflict on displaced women, identifies specific patterns and risks of sexual violence, and orders the State to adopt comprehensive prevention, care, and protection programs with a gender perspective.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Order (Auto) 009 of 2015. It further examines the structural patterns of sexual and gender-based violence in the armed conflict, with particular emphasis on women belonging to Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities, and orders specific measures for prevention, investigation, and remedy with an ethnic and intersectional approach.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Judgment T-772 of 2015. It reaffirms the State's heightened duty of due diligence in investigating and sanctioning sexual violence, and sets out gender-responsive standards for judicial action to prevent revictimization.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Judgment SU-659 of 2015. It consolidates case law on access to justice in cases of gender-based violence, underscoring the obligation of authorities to conduct serious, timely, and effective investigations, and to apply intersectional approaches at all stages of the process.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Judgment T-735 of 2017. It consolidates the application of a gender perspective in the assessment of evidence and in judicial decisions on sexual violence, and strengthens the protection of victims' rights against stereotypes and prejudice.

Court of Justice and Peace (Tribunal de Justicia y Paz), 2014 ruling. It recognizes sexual violence as a systematic practice within the context of the armed conflict and as a grave violation of human rights, incorporating international standards of accountability and remedy.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Judgment T-400 of 2022. It recognizes prejudice-based violence against LGBTQIAPN+ persons, mandates an intersectional approach, and requires tailored measures for protection, investigation, and remedy.

Constitutional Court of Colombia, Judgment T-230 of 2023. It reinforces the application of an intersectional approach and the dynamic burden of proof in cases of gender-based and sexual violence, reiterating that authorities must remove structural barriers that hinder effective access to justice.



**Table: Relevant Legal Framework – Colombia**

<b>Instrument / Category</b>	<b>Relevant content</b>
International mechanisms ratified by Colombia	Law 13 of 1945: approves the UN Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice. Law 51 of 1981: approves the CEDAW. Law 248 of 1995: approves the Convention of Belém do Pará. Law 742 of 2002: approves the Rome Statute (criminalizes sexual violence in conflict contexts). Law 984 of 2005: approves the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW.
Political Constitution of Colombia (1991)	Art. 44: recognizes the primacy of children’s rights and incorporates ratified treaties. Art. 93: establishes the primacy of human rights treaties. Transitory provisions: provide for a truth, justice, and reparation system and prioritize protection for women, girls, and child victims.
Law 418 of 1997 (as amended by Laws 1421/2010 and 2272/2022)	Incorporates intersectional approaches, recognizes historically discriminated groups, and promotes women’s participation in peace processes.
Law 1257 of 2008	Establishes measures for the prevention and punishment of violence against women, programs for displaced women, mechanisms to investigate sexual violence committed by members of the security forces, and institutional strengthening in conflict-affected areas.
Law 1448 of 2011 (Victims' Law)	Provides for assistance and reparation for victims, including in cases of sexual violence, and sets standards on consent, specialized personnel, and psychosocial care.
Law 1482 of 2011	Criminalizes racism and discrimination.
Law 1652 of 2013	Guidelines for interviews and testimony of children who are victims of sexual crimes.
Law 1719 of 2014	Provides for access to justice for victims of sexual violence in the context of conflict; establishes new criminal offenses (forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced abortion, etc.); recognizes sexual violence as a crime against humanity; and sets out measures for protection, health care, reparation, and participation.
Law 1761 of 2015	Defines femicide as a criminal offense and establishes an aggravating circumstance when the victim is a displaced woman.
Law 1820 of 2016	Excludes sexual violence from amnesty and pardon.
Law 1908 of 2018	Strengthens the investigation of criminal organizations; includes threats against human rights defenders.
Law 1957 of 2018 (Statutory Law of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace – JEP)	Establishes procedural rights and protections for victims of sexual violence; incorporates a gender-based approach; and provides for restorative and reparative measures.
Law 2281 of 2023	Creates the Ministry of Equality and Equity.
Final Peace Agreement (2016)	Incorporates a cross-cutting gender approach, recognizes sexual violence, and establishes obligations of truth, justice, and reparation.

Source: Research team.

Nevertheless, there is a structural gap between the legal framework and its implementation: despite the accumulation of legal norms, the situation of women's rights remains grave, and the intensification of the conflict continues to heighten their vulnerability. This gap is explained by the persistence of shortcomings in comprehensive care, the absence of the State in territories dominated by armed actors, the precariousness of local integration policies for displaced women, and the lack of internal appropriation of international commitments. In interviews with community leaders, the interviewed women reported:

*"...despite the large number of existing legal landmarks, the needs of the population victimized by the armed conflict remain unmet... The same gaps persist... sexual violence continues to intensify... and the State's abandonment of its duty to protect the population..." (Interview 1).*

*"...international law is disregarded, despite the fact that States sign it... they (treaties) were ratified, but when it comes to bringing them into the domestic sphere... they remain there... they aren't translated into programs and policies..." (Interview 1).*

Under the 2016 Peace Agreement, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition recognizes sexual violence as a central form of victimization not subject to amnesty, understood both legally and politically as a systematic and intentional practice of the armed conflict. This understanding is consistent with the Constitutional Court's judgements (Autos) 092 of 2008 and 009 of 2015, which identified the disproportionate impacts faced by displaced women as a result of sexual violence that has been historically invisible, underreported, and marked by impunity, with heightened risks during and after displacement. These forms of violence take multiple

shapes, including individual and collective rape, prostitution and sexual slavery, forced pregnancies and abortions, forced reproductive planning, trafficking, associated torture, and subsequent killings. They are further compounded by threats, forced disappearance, homicides, and community displacement, disproportionately affecting girls aged 10 to 14, as well as Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, whose vulnerability is intensified by the intersection of ethnic discrimination, poverty, and rurality. In continuity with this framework, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) opened Macro-Case 11<sup>22</sup> in 2023 on gender-based, sexual and reproductive violence, as well as prejudice-based crimes, following years of delay and as a result of advocacy by women's organizations and civil society. Although by 2025 the case has progressed in the recognition of the victims and with the first voluntary testimonies, structural challenges persist, including underreporting, limitations on the effective participation of victims, insufficient mainstreaming of the gender perspective, the system's temporal constraints, and the State's difficulties in investigating and prosecuting these offences in accordance with patterns of macro-criminality, as required by constitutional and international standards. In parallel, despite the State's obligation to guarantee comprehensive, free, specialized, and differential care — implemented through programs such as the Program for Psychosocial Care and Comprehensive Health for Victims (PAPSIVI – Law 1448 of 2011) — the assessment of its impact remains limited due to the lack of disaggregated data, low rural coverage, and the scarcity of specific records on sexual violence. These limitations are further underscored by criticisms from women community leaders regarding

**22** | Macro-case 11 of Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) investigates sexual, reproductive, and other forms of gender-based violence committed in the context of the armed conflict, with particular emphasis on the intersectional harms suffered by women, girls, boys, and LGBTQ+ persons. This macro-case acknowledges that these acts of violence were not isolated incidents, but systematic and widespread practices used by various armed actors to exert territorial control, punish, discipline, and subjugate communities. The opening of Macro-case 11 represents significant progress in recognizing sexual violence as a serious crime in the context of the Colombian armed conflict, as well as in affirming the centrality of victims' rights by incorporating a gender, intersectional, and territorial perspective across truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition proceedings.



the cultural and emotional adequacy of the care provided, as well as experiences of re-victimization: “...there have been psychosocial care policies in which women have not felt very comfortable because... they feel re-victimized...” (Interview 1). In this context, the psychosocial and legal support provided by organizations of women victims and by international cooperation remains central, while not substituting the State’s non-delegable responsibility.

Colombia’s National Action Plan (NAP) 1325 (2022-2024, under Beijing’s axis 4), is characterized as one of the most extensive participatory processes, with regional and civil society forums, and strong leadership by women’s organizations, supported by international cooperation. The formal adoption of the decree remained pending by the end of 2024; however, by 2025 a Monitoring Committee was already in oper-

ation, with targets for the periodic evaluation of impacts, and its mechanisms functioning despite the absence of formal approval. The PAN aims to promote women’s participation in peacebuilding; the prevention of violence, particularly sexual violence; guarantees of truth, justice, and reparation, with territorial and ethnic approaches; and economic autonomy as a means to consolidate peace. In November 2025, the decree approving the plan was signed by the president under Number 1179 of 2025.

We observe that forced displacement is one of the most widespread forms of victimization and has the greatest impact on women in Colombia. The evolution of the normative framework, from Law 387 (welfare-oriented and lacking a gender focus) to Law 1448 (centered on victims as subjects of rights), reflects progress toward policies incorporating differential and intersectional approaches. However, significant implementation gaps persist in return and relocation processes due to the lack of basic services, territorial insecurity, institutional delays, insufficient resources, and the absence of differential approaches in practice. The difficulty of achieving a dignified return is illustrated by the prolonged processes faced by displaced Indigenous communities:

*“...returning to territories where there are no schools, where there are no teachers... without those guarantees of change, returning becomes very difficult.” (Interview 2)*

Therefore, violence against women leaders and human rights defenders continues to undermine meaningful participation. Interviewee 1 points to the absence of minimum guarantees and the existence of direct risks, including attempted murder. Moreover, it is stated that the killing or threatening of

women leaders erodes the social fabric, particularly among Indigenous peoples.

*“...many spaces for participation become merely decorative spaces... the point is that, through the participation of victims, their voices can actually be taken into account...” (Interview 1).*

*“...these are not spaces guaranteed by the State... women continue to be harassed and threatened...” (Interview 1).*

Over the past 30 years, Colombia has built a dense legal and transitional framework to address violence against women, particularly violence perpetrated during the armed conflict. This framework recognizes sexual violence as a weapon of war, mandates investigation under patterns of macro-criminality, excludes such crimes from amnesty, and establishes pathways

to truth, justice, and reparation with a gender perspective. However, a persistent gap remains between sophisticated legal mechanisms and real-world effectiveness: sexual violence persists, underreporting remains high, psychosocial care is fragmented, and territorially unequal, dignified returns are not guaranteed, and women leaders face ongoing threats and re-victimization. Within this tension lies the main regional challenge illustrated by the Colombian case in the comparative analysis: democratization and formal peace, on their own, do not ensure a reduction in violence unless they translate into comprehensive State presence, effective justice, and territorial transformation grounded in an intersectional approach.



## El Salvador

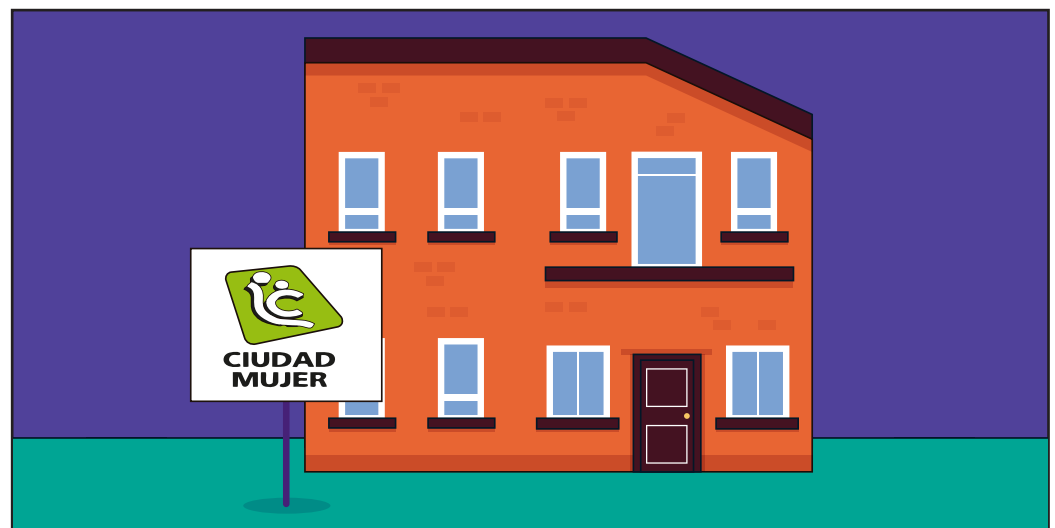
El Salvador presents a scenario of historically high prevalence of gender-based violence, with impacts that also affect children and adolescents. A national survey conducted in 2017 indicates that more than two thirds of women have experienced violence at some point in their lives, and one third in the previous year. The Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres – LEIV), enacted as Legislative Decree No. 520 of November 25, 2010, and in force since 2021, was established as a comprehensive framework law that defines multiple forms of violence, prohibits mediation, and establishes precautionary measures. Interinstitutional pathways have been developed involving the Prosecutor’s Office, specialized judges, the police, the health sector, CAIMUS (Specialized Care Centers for Women in Situations of Violence), and the program Ciudad Mujer<sup>23</sup>.

Despite this institutional structure, effectiveness remains limited: minimal

judicialization, overburdened services, a shortage of shelters, budget cuts to the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer-ISDEMU), and State restrictions on access to data, which has compelled civil society to generate its own records. Another area of concern is violence in the context of the state of exception and incarceration, highlighting how the broad-based securitization of public policy can give rise to new forms of State violence.

In El Salvador, available data for the period 1995–2025 show the persistence of gender-based violence at a high magnitude, with partial improvements in recording and State response but without a sustained reduction in prevalence. During the post-war phase of the 1990s and 2000s, violence against women, girls, and adolescents remained a structural problem inherited from the armed conflict and later reinforced by social and gang-related violence, in a context of institutions that remain fragile in their capacity to ensure effective protection.

**23** | A social protection initiative that also operates in other countries such as Honduras and Paraguay, offering comprehensive services for women, adolescents, and children under one roof, with a human rights– and gender-based approach. Its objectives include the prevention of violence, the promotion of economic autonomy, and the improvement of health conditions, using both fixed centers and mobile units to reach diverse communities. These centers provide specialized services to women facing situations of violence and discrimination. Available at: <https://www.iadb.org/es/proyecto/ES-L1056#:~:text=LosobjetivosespeCADficossoni,ycambiaractitudeyconductas>.



**Table: Dimensions and indicators of violence against women in El Salvador**

Dimension	Indicator	Period / Year	Key data	Source
Violence against women (prevalence)	Women who have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime	2017	67.4 %	National Survey on Violence against Women (2017)
Violence against women (prevalence)	Women who experienced violence in the past 12 months	2017	33.8 %	National Survey on Violence against Women (2017)
Sexual violence (prevalence)	Women who have experienced sexual violence at least once in their lives	2017	4 in 10	National Survey on Violence against Women (2017)
Sexual violence (recent prevalence)	Women who experienced sexual violence in the past year	2017	1 in 10	National Survey on Violence against Women (2017)
Sexual violence (complaints)	Reports of sexual violence	Jun. 2023 – May 2024	3,018 cases	Office of the Attorney General (FGR)
Sexual violence (total registered cases)	Registered cases of sexual violence	Jun. 2023 – May 2024	8,984 cases	Office of the Attorney General (FGR)
Sexual violence (trend)	Annual variation in registered cases of sexual violence	2023–2024	+13 %	Office of the Attorney General (FGR)
Femicide	Officially registered femicides	Jun. 2023 – May 2024	130 cases	Office of the Attorney General (FGR)
Femicide (alternative records)	Femicides recorded by feminist organizations	2022	63 cases	ORMUSA <sup>24</sup>
Femicide (alternative records)	Femicides recorded by feminist organizations	2023	46 cases	ORMUSA
Femicide (alternative records)	Femicides recorded by feminist organizations	Until Nov. 2024	≥ 36 cases	ORMUSA
Access to justice	Cases filed under LEIV that resulted in judicial proceedings	2023	0.82 %	IWFM <sup>25</sup> (2023)

Source: Research team.

<sup>24</sup> | Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace.

<sup>25</sup> | Initiative for Women's Justice and Peace.



# Guatemala

Guatemala records widespread violence against women, with high prevalence in both urban and rural settings, although rates are higher in cities. The country has a solid legal framework and a specialized institutional network, including the Presidential Secretariat for Women (Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer - SEPREM<sup>26</sup>) and the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (Coordinadora Nacional para la Prevención de la Violencia Intrafamiliar y Contra las Mujeres - CONAPREVI<sup>27</sup>). It also has national plans (Planovi<sup>28</sup> 2004-2014 and Planovi 2020-2029) that strengthen the legal classification of femicide, establish comprehensive care centers (Centros de Atención Integral para Mujeres - CAIMUS<sup>29</sup>), and incorporate a more recent intersectional approach.

The State response has combined normative expansion with the creation

of multiple reporting pathways; however, territorial and cultural inequalities in access to justice persist, particularly for Indigenous, rural, migrant women and women with disabilities. Reports of violence against children and adolescents are also observed, with alert systems such as ALBA-KENETH<sup>30</sup> and comprehensive care protocols in place.

Despite this extensive legal framework and the multiple government initiatives, available data point to systematic violations of women's human rights. The intense violence against women, girls, and adolescents over the past three decades can be explained by the continuity between the political violence of the armed conflict (1960–1996) and contemporary forms of social and domestic violence. The truth commissions have documented more than 200,000 victims of the conflict, the majority of them Indigenous, and thousands of Mayan women were subjected to sexual violence as a weapon of war. In addition, they were subjected to forced displacement and separation from their families, leaving a legacy of trauma and impunity that continues to shape the post-conflict period.

In the following democratic stage (1996–2015), despite the creation of CONAPREVI, SEPREM, and the Planovi, intrafamilial, sexual, and femicidal violence remained a structural problem, while the State's capacity for prevention and sanction remained limited, particularly for Indigenous and rural women who face territorial, linguistic, and access-to-justice barriers. In the last decade, data from the National Survey of Household Quality and Well-being (Encuesta Nacional de Calidad y Bienestar de los Hogares-ENCABIH,

**26** | High-level public entity under the Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala, responsible for advising, coordinating, and promoting public policies aimed at the comprehensive development of women and the achievement of gender equality nationwide.

**27** | Intersectoral institutional mechanism whose function is to coordinate, advise, and promote policies, actions, and mechanisms for the prevention, accountability, and eradication of domestic violence and violence against women in Guatemala.

**28** | National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women: a long-term plan, as a formal public policy, designed by the State of Guatemala to comprehensively address violence against women in its various forms.

**29** | Comprehensive support service for women victims or survivors of different forms of violence, adopting an integrated and multidisciplinary model that includes, among other components: initial intake and active listening to understand the situation of violence; legal advice and follow-up in protection and justice processes; psychological and emotional support for survivors and, in some cases, for their children; medical care and guidance on sexual and reproductive health; social support and follow-up to overcome barriers linked to violence; and temporary shelter in high-risk cases (subject to availability)

**30** | ALBA-KENETH Alert System is an official protection and immediate search mechanism created in Guatemala to locate and safeguard girls, boys, and adolescents who have been abducted or are missing. It was created in 2010. The system was named after Alba Michelle España and Keneth Alexis López, two children whose disappearances and tragic deaths shocked the country and motivated the creation of this alert system.

2023) confirm the ongoing magnitude of the problem: 55.2% of urban women and 40.5% of rural women reported having experienced at least one incident of violence over the course of their lives, indicating high prevalence and territorial gaps that reflect structural inequalities (INE/ENCABIH, 2023). Added to this is the sexual violence against girls and adolescents, which remains critical: between January 1 and July 11, 2025 alone, 131 ALBA-KENETH alerts were activated for sexual violence, exploitation, and traffick-

ing of minors, 110 of which involved girls, evidencing the persistence of severe forms of violence in the third decade after Beijing (PGN/ALBA-KENETH, 2025). Taken together, this longitudinal evidence indicates that, between 1995 and 2025, Guatemala has sustained high and diversified levels of gender-based violence — rooted in the legacy of war, reproduced within the family sphere, and extending to children and adolescents — despite the strengthening of the State’s legal and institutional framework.

**Table: Reporting Mechanisms in Guatemala**

Institution	Function	Contact
Public Prosecutor’s Office (Prosecutor’s Office for Women and Children/ Adolescents)	Receives complaints, conducts investigations, and requests restraining orders.	1572 / Public Prosecutor’s Central Office
National Civil Police (PNC)	Immediate assistance and emergency protection.	110
Attorney General’s Office (Procuraduría General de la Nación - PGN)	Intervenes when there are child or adolescent victims.	1546
SEPREM	Refers cases and conducts institutional follow-up.	—
DEMI	Provides culturally appropriate support for Indigenous women.	1512
PDH (Ombudsperson’s Office for Women and Children)	Supervises State action and assists complaints.	1555
Hotline 1572 (Public Prosecutor’s Office hotline)	Emergency line exclusively for women.	1572

Source: Research team.

**Table: Key laws and decrees related to violence (Guatemala)**

Year	Law / Decree	Purpose
1996	Decree 97-1996	Prevention and punishment of domestic violence.
1999	Decree 7-99	Comprehensive development and advancement of women.
2001	Decree 42-2001	Social development with an equity-based approach.
2003	Decree 27-2003	Comprehensive protection of children and adolescents.
2005	Decree 87-2005	Family planning and prevention of adverse outcomes.
2008	Decree 22-2008	Law against femicide and other forms of violence.
2009	Decree 9-2009	Sexual violence, exploitation, and trafficking.
2016	Decree 21-2016	Institute for Comprehensive Assistance to Victims.
2016	Decree 44-2016	Migration Code with victim protection provisions.

Source: Information team.



# Honduras

Honduras presents a context of structural violence against women and girls, marked by significant underreporting and low rates of complaint. Since 1997, the country has had a law against domestic violence, strengthened in 2005, and the Criminal Code (amendment of 2020) defines specific crimes against women, including violence occurring within unequal power relations. However, substantial gaps remain: the original law does not cover all forms of violence, insufficiently recognizes intersecting forms of discrimination (Indigenous, Afro-descendant, LGBTQIAPN+, disability), and its implementation remains limited, reinforcing a message of impunity.

The 2023 National Specialized Survey on Violence against Women and Girls aged 15 and over (ENESVMN)<sup>31</sup> shows a high prevalence of violence (one in two women has experienced violence) and a stark reporting gap (nine out of ten do not report). The State has developed care pathways (hotline 114<sup>32</sup>, the 911 system<sup>33</sup>), national plans, health-sector protocols, and the Ciudad Mujer program. A reduction in violent deaths of women was observed between 2014 and 2018, alongside an increase in reporting, although implementation remains uneven and constrained by budgetary barriers, particularly in rural areas.

**31** | The first national survey specialized on this issue in Honduras, conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) with technical support from international organizations such as UNDP and USAID, in 2022 and launched in 2023.

**32** | Emergency telephone line.

**33** | Official emergency number 911 for risk situations.

**34** | A strategic public policy of the State aimed at improving the living conditions, rights, and well-being of women, adolescent girls, and girls through free, comprehensive services delivered under a single model and within a single space. This program forms part of the State's public policies on social protection and assistance for vulnerable groups, adopting a gender-responsive, human rights-based, comprehensive, and inter-institutionally coordinated approach.





# Mexico

Mexico constitutes a case of massive and widespread violence against women and girls, with very high lifetime prevalence and rising rates in the most recent year. Psychological and sexual violence are among the most prevalent forms, and incidence is also high in the community sphere, extending beyond intimate partner relationships.

Over the past three decades (1995–2025), violence against women, girls, and adolescents in Mexico has remained a massive and multifaceted phenomenon, whose severity is intertwined with the escalation of social violence in the 2000s and subsequent security crises.

Taken together, the evidence shows continuity of high prevalence of domestic violence, community-based violence, and sexual abuse since the 1990s, alongside an intensification of lethal violence and disappearances in the context of the militarization of public security since the mid-2000s. This places Mexico among the countries with the highest regional persistence of gender-based violence over the period 1995–2025.

The State response is structured around a national coordinating axis. The General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia), in force nationwide since 2007, mandates coordination across the federal, state, and municipal levels through mechanisms such as gender violence alerts, shelters, protection orders, and justice centers. This framework has been reinforced by recent initiatives such as the 2021–2024 Comprehensive Program to Prevent, Address, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence against Women (Programa Integral para Prevenir, Atender, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres—PIPA-SEVM) and the operational guidelines for 2025. In Mexico, the aggravating factor is that violence occurs within a context of generalized criminality and migration-related challenges, which introduce specific risks and abuses in militarized areas. The State thus combines advanced policy mechanisms with a highly violent social context.



**Table: Dimensions and indicators of violence against women in Mexico**

Dimension	Indicator	Population / Period	Value	Source
Violence against women (prevalence)	Women who have experienced at least one incident of violence in their lifetime	Women aged 15 and older	70.1 %	INEGI <sup>35</sup> , ENDIREH <sup>36</sup> 2021
Violence against women (recent prevalence)	Women who experienced violence in the past 12 months	Oct. 2020 – Oct. 2021	42.8 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Types of Violence (lifetime)	Psychological violence	Lifetime	51.6 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Types of Violence (lifetime)	Sexual violence	Lifetime	49.7 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Types of Violence (lifetime)	Physical violence	Lifetime	≈ 34-35 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Child sexual abuse	Women who experienced sexual violence before the age of 15	Childhood	11.5 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Child abuse (any type)	Women who experienced some form of violence before the age of 15	Childhood	1.8 %	INEGI, ENDIREH 2021
Missing persons	Missing people (cumulative)	Since 1960	> 117,000	Secretariat of the Interior
Missing children and adolescents	Proportion of women among missing persons aged 0 - 17	Up to Aug. 30, 2024	2 out of 3 (71,591 of 106,343)	Registro Nacional de Personas Desaparecidas y No Localizadas / SEGOB (2024)

Source: Research team.

**35** | National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía).

**36** | National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares).



# Panama

Panama emerges as a case of weak State information capacity: there are no accessible national surveys, and available data are fragmented and non-standardized.

In Panama, lethal violence against women has followed a sustained pattern with variation over the past three decades.

The State response is better described as a partial accumulation of records and sectoral studies rather than a consolidated, comprehensive policy. The absence of unified data constitutes a central obstacle to understanding and addressing the problem.

**Table: Evolution of Femicide in Panama by Decade**

Decade / Period	Dimension	Indicator	Year(s)	Key data
First post-Beijing decade (≈1995-2005)	Femicide	Women killed	1999–first half of 2004	≥ 157 cases
First post-Beijing decade (≈1995-2005)	Statistical Context	Data quality	1999-2004	Fragmented statistical systems
Second post-Beijing decade (2006-2015)	Femicide	Estimated total number of femicides	2005-2015	≈ 320 cases
Second post-Beijing decade (2006-2015)	Femicide	Rate (per 100,000 women aged 15 and over)	2005-2015	≈ 25
Second post-Beijing decade (2006-2015)	Trend	Evolution relative to the previous period	2005-2015	Relative increase and consolidation of recording
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Recorded femicides	2016-2025	196 cases
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Rate (per 100,000 women)	2016-2025	11.4
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Cases within the cycle	2014 – Oct. 2019	125 cases (> 6 per 100,000)
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Comparable regional rate	2015	1.5
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Comparable regional rate	2020	1.4
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Comparable regional rate	2023	0.7

Source: the research team, based on data from the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Panama (annual statistical reports, 2016–2024) and ECLAC (2019, 2021, 2023), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.



## Paraguay

Paraguay exhibits persistent gender-based violence, alongside the recent criminalization of femicide (Law 5777/2016) and subsequent reforms (Law 7239/2024). The State organizes its response through the Ministry of Women, national plans, comprehensive health protocols, and the program *Ciudad Mujer*. A strategy to train health professionals in preventing the revictimization of women has also been identified. However, obstacles to the implementation of these policies persist, including low levels of help-seeking among survivors, unequal access to services for women living in urban and rural areas, and a conservative political context that restricts comprehensive sexuality education. Overall, national surveys indicate significant levels of domestic violence throughout the 2000s, while more recent regional estimates place the phenomenon at high

levels, albeit comparatively lower than in other countries, without having been eliminated.

In Paraguay, violence against women has remained a structural phenomenon over the past three decades (1995–2025), characterized by high prevalence in the domestic sphere, the persistence of extreme forms such as femicide, and improvements primarily in the recording of cases rather than in a sustained reduction of violence itself.

Overall, we note that between 1995 and 2025, Paraguay has combined legal advances — including Law 5777/2016 and its implementing framework — with persistent domestic and femicidal violence, marked by territorial inequality, barriers to access to justice, and underreporting, particularly affecting rural and Indigenous women.



**Table: Dimensions and indicators of violence against women in Paraguay**

Decade / Period	Dimension	Indicator	Year(s)	Key data	Source
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Verbal violence against women aged 15–49	2004	33.4 %	ENDSSR <sup>37</sup>
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Physical violence against women aged 15-49	2004	19.3 %	ENDSSR
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual violence against women aged 15-49	2004	7.6 %	ENDSSR
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Verbal violence against women aged 15–49	2008	36 %	ENDSSR
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Physical violence against women aged 15-49	2008	17 %	ENDSSR
First post-Beijing decade	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual violence against women aged 15-49	2008	5 %	ENDSSR
Second post-Beijing decade (2006-2015)	Intimate Partner Violence	Regional comparative incidence	2008	Relatively lower incidence at the regional level, without absence of the problem	PAHO
Second post-Beijing decade (2006-2015)	Access to support	Underreporting and Barriers to Reporting	2006-2015	Persistent, especially in rural areas	PAHO
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Intimate Partner Violence	Women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner	2018	27 %	PAHO
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Femicide rate (per 100,000 women)	2018	1.7	ECLAC
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Femicide cases	2016	43 cases	Ministry of Women
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Femicide cases	2017	53 cases	Ministry of Women
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Femicide cases	2018	59 cases	Ministry of Women
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Femicide	Femicide cases	2019	37 cases	Ministry of Women
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Social impact	Girls, boys, and adolescents orphaned by femicide (cumulative)	Since 2017	108	Ministry of Women
Third post-Beijing decade (2016-2025)	Territorial distribution	Departments (regions) with the highest concentration of femicides	2017-2019	Canindeyú, Amambay, Paraguari and Asunción	Ministry of Women
Tercera década (2016-2025)	Distribución territorial	Departamentos con mayor concentración de feminicidios	2017-2019	Canindeyú, Amambay, Paraguari y Asunción	Ministerio de la Mujer

Source: Research team.

**37** | National Survey on Sexual and Reproductive Health: an official statistical instrument used to measure sexual and reproductive health conditions, intimate partner violence, particularly against women of reproductive age

# Peru

In Peru, gender-based violence appears as a long-standing phenomenon, affecting both the family and intimate partner contexts. Significant legal advances have been made, including Law 30364 (2015) on the prevention, punishment, and eradication of violence against women and family members; the criminalization of femicide in 2011 and its expansion in 2013; and the 2022 National Strategy “Women Free from Violence” (Mujeres libres de violencia), which articulates multisectoral public policies.

Empirically, the past two decades show that domestic and intimate partner violence remains widespread, although with a gradual decline. According to ENDES, the proportion of women

who are victims of family violence has remained at very high levels. Between 2000 and 2015, gender-based violence shows a relative reduction in percentage terms, without falling below the threshold of high prevalence. In parallel, femicide records — available through data from the Public Prosecutor’s Office (Ministerio Público) and strengthened since the criminalization of femicide in 2011 — demonstrate the persistence of extreme forms of violence against women, with high and relatively stable annual figures. Taken together, the data reflect both the strengthening of State recording systems and the structural continuity of gender-based violence (Peru. Public Prosecutor’s Office, 2023).

**Tabla: Trends in Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in Peru (2000–2015)**

Year	Prevalence of gender-based violence (%)	Femicide (number of victims)	Observations
2000	70.0	—	High prevalence of gender-based violence
2004	74.7	—	Increase within the high prevalence threshold
2009	69.3	154	Onset of a percentage decrease; high number of femicides
2011	—	123	Criminalization of femicide; increased visibility
2012	67.0	122	Slow and irregular decrease in gender-based violence
2013	71.5	111	Percentage increase while remaining within the high-prevalence threshold
2014	—	100	Relative decrease in femicides
2015	70.8	103	Persistence of Structural Violence

Source: research team based on data from the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Peru, 2023.



In sum, the available evidence for 2000–2015 indicates that gender-based violence decreased in percentage terms but remained structurally widespread, while femicide stabilized at high annual levels. This reflects both the strengthening of State recording systems and the continued presence of extreme forms of violence against women (Peru. Public Prosecutor's Office, 2023).

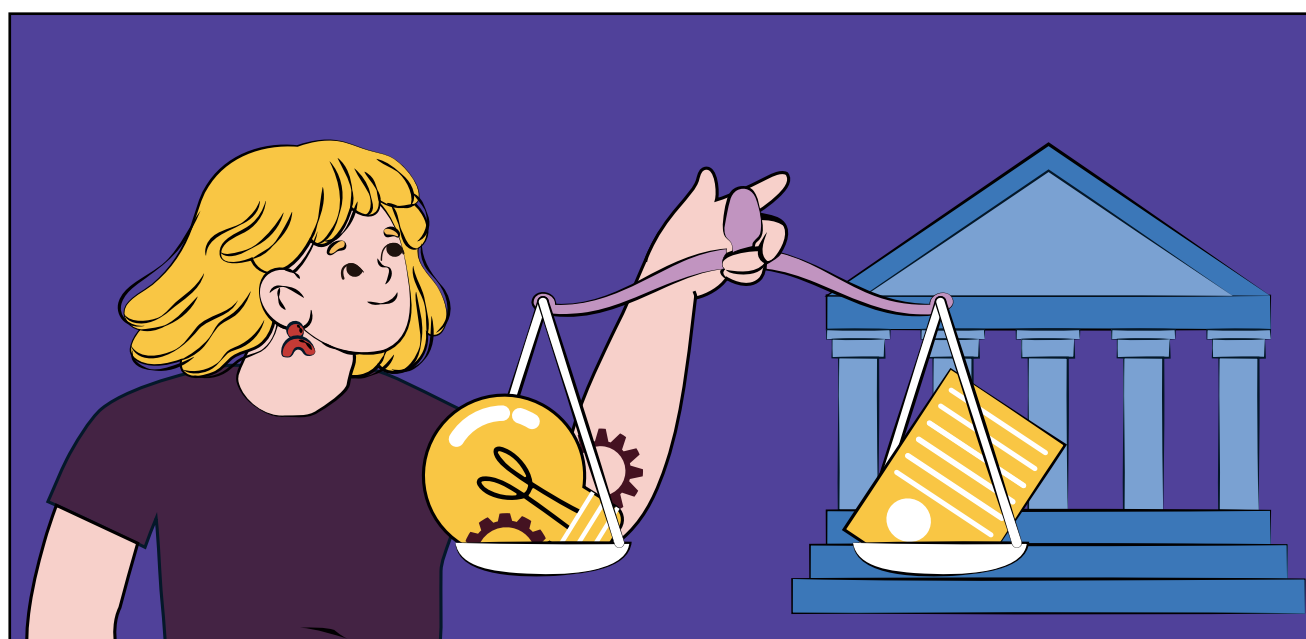
The empirical situation nonetheless remains serious. Family violence

has decreased since 2000 but remains at high levels; femicide shows significant peaks (with a sharp increase in 2013 compared to 2012), pointing to improvements in visibility and case recording, but also to the persistence of the problem. The State responds through comprehensive legal frameworks and national strategies, highlighting a pattern of articulated preventive intervention, although without eliminating prevalence.


# Regional Overview: excellent laws, challenging implementation

**ALL THE COUNTRIES** analyzed show that violence against women, girls, and groups in situations of vulnerability has remained a structural phenomenon over a thirty-year period, regardless of the type of political regime. This suggests that formal democratization has not been sufficient to dismantle sociocultural patterns of inequality, nor the criminal and armed networks that sustain violence. In response, countries in the region have evolved from the adoption of initial laws focused on domestic violence toward comprehensive gender-based legal frameworks that include the criminalization of femicide, giving rise to comprehensive mechanisms of protection. These mechanisms encompass both civil and criminal spheres and articulate them across multiple courts.

The region thus converges toward a shared trend in legal approaches to rights, prevention, and punishment. Yet a major common problem remains: the gap between law and reality. Bolivia illustrates this through a sustained increase in complaints; Brazil, through territorial inequality and budget cuts; El Salvador, through low rates of prosecution and limited transparency in official figures; Honduras, through impunity and incomplete territorial coverage; Guatemala, through cultural and territorial barriers to access to justice; and Panama, through data fragmentation. In other words, these Latin American States have proven to be more effective at producing legal norms than at ensuring their homogeneous, sustained, and intersectional implementation. In most cases, violence is distributed asymmetrically.



**Table: Key Legal and Public Policy Milestones (1994–2025)**

Country	Key Legal and Public Policy Milestones (1994–2025)
 <b>Bolivia</b>	1994 → 2013: transition from an initial law focused on domestic violence toward a comprehensive gender-based violence framework, consolidated with the Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free from Violence (2013).
 <b>Brazil</b>	Maria da Penha Law (2006) as the backbone of comprehensive protection; criminalization of femicide (2015); recent national pacts and plans (2023–2024) aimed at strengthening policies, inter-institutional coordination, and funding
 <b>Colombia</b>	Law 294 of 1996 (domestic violence); Law 1257 of 2008 as a comprehensive framework for the prevention, punishment, and eradication of violence against women; criminalization of femicide (2015) and subsequent developments in policies and intersectoral protocols.
 <b>El Salvador</b>	Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free from Violence for Women (LEIV, 2011), serving as a comprehensive framework for prevention, protection, accountability, and remedy.
 <b>Guatemala</b>	Law against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women (2008); development of the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women (PLANОВI), implemented through successive phases.
 <b>Honduras</b>	Law against Domestic Violence (1997); criminalization of femicide (2013); limited subsequent development of comprehensive public policy, with persistent gaps in implementation and territorial coverage.
 <b>Mexico</b>	General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV, 2007) as a federal legislative framework; creation of the corresponding National System; recent plans, programs, and reforms aimed at implementation and intergovernmental coordination.
 <b>Panama</b>	Law 38/2001 on domestic violence; Law 82/2013 establishing precautionary measures and the criminalization of femicide; subsequent reforms (2020–2024) expanding protection, incorporating political violence, and strengthening gender-related institutional frameworks.
 <b>Paraguay</b>	Law 5777/2016 on the comprehensive protection of women and the criminalization of femicide; updating and strengthening of the legal framework through Law 7239/2024.
 <b>Peru</b>	Criminalization of femicide (2011) and its expansion (2013); Law 30364 (2015) as a comprehensive framework to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women and family members.

Brazil and Honduras show greater vulnerability in rural or Amazonian territories, linked to the absence of the State in those areas. Colombia and Guatemala emphasize the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and bear deep marks and consequences derived from armed conflicts. El Salvador and Mexico, in turn, present major obstacles for rural, poor, or migrant women, amid generalized violence in these societies, closely linked to State action — or lack of action.

Another shared issue is the tension between public security policies

and women's rights: in Colombia, the history of armed conflict incorporates state violence and militarization as constitutive elements of the dynamics of violence against women and girls; in El Salvador, "iron-fist" strategies coexist with persistent reports of violence and with lack of statistical transparency; and in Mexico, violence against women is linked to organized crime and the militarization of borders. In these contexts, new forms of violence against women emerge, while institutional transparency is restricted, with direct effects on mechanisms for protection against gender-based violence.

However, as we could verify, over the past thirty years Latin America has advanced toward increasingly robust legal frameworks to address violence, with specialized institutions, national plans, and the criminalization of femicide established as a regional standard. Nevertheless, violence remains high and, in several cases, continues to increase. This situation is due to the convergence of multiple factors including impunity, structural inequality, racism, political conservatism, lack of consistent data, budgetary shortages, State absence in peripheral territories, militarization, and armed conflict.

The region thus shares a central paradox: the States have formally recognized violence as a public issue and a violation of human rights, but they have not yet managed to transform it into an effective and sustained field of action. The comparison between countries suggests that the common challenge is not only legal but also involves state capacity to implement public policies, substantive and real justice, cultural prevention with significant changes in stereotypes, and inclusive territorial governance.



# Sexual and Reproductive Health

**THIRTY YEARS AFTER** the Cairo Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action, women's bodily autonomy remains a key area of political dispute in Latin America and the Caribbean. In line with Beijing's Critical Area of Concern C and with Chapters VII and VIII of the Cairo Programme of Action, States have progressively incorporated legal frameworks, policies, and protocols aimed at ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services and to assistance for survivors of sexual violence. However, these formal advances coexist with persistent forms of reproductive violence, evidenced by forced pregnancy and motherhood; the continued illegality of abortion in most countries and the resulting unsafe procedures for women and girls — particularly those who are Afro-de-

scendant and Indigenous; high levels of preventable maternal mortality; and the high prevalence of pregnancies among girls and adolescents, especially in contexts marked by territorial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequality. Administrative barriers, conscientious objection, fragmentation of health systems, and insufficient service coverage in rural and Indigenous areas limit the effective exercise of formally guaranteed rights, reproducing a structural gap between law and practice. In this regard, compliance with the commitments before Cairo and Beijing requires not only adequate legal frameworks, but also sustained state capacity, sufficient funding, and intersectional approaches that ensure real, timely, and non-discriminatory access to sexual and reproductive health.

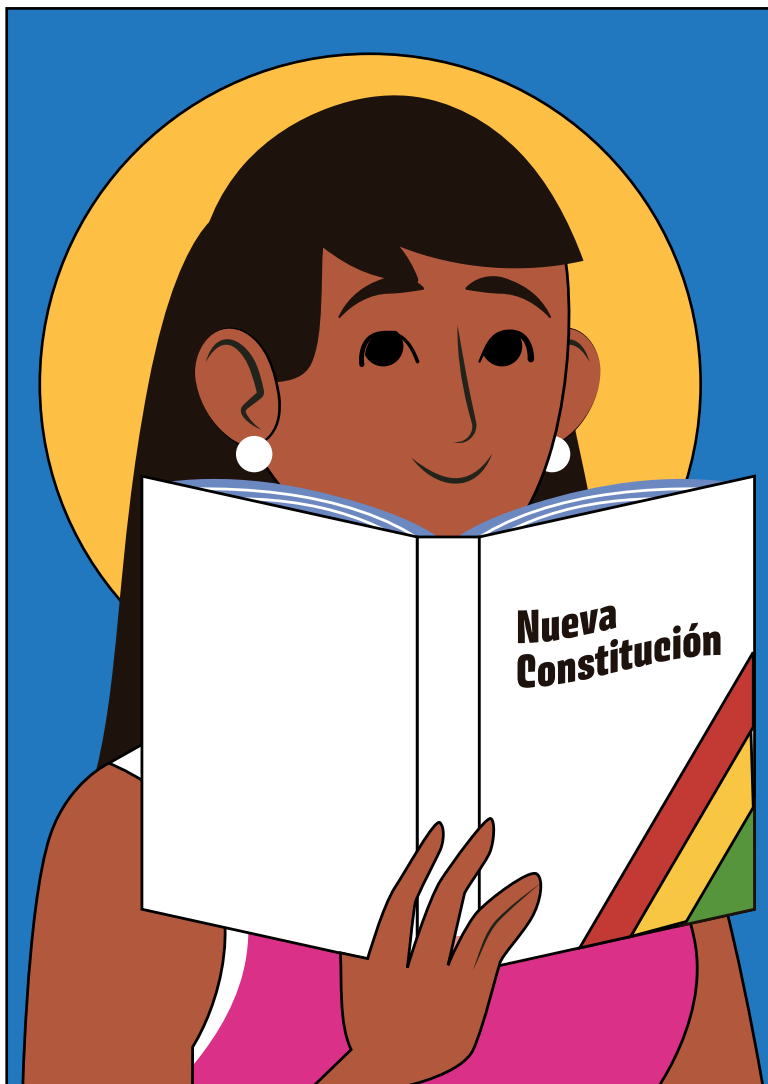
# Bolivia

In Bolivia, violence linked to the denial of sexual and reproductive health affects girls, adolescents, and women who are survivors of sexual violence with particular severity, including through the continued contribution of unsafe abortion to maternal mortality. At the same time, significant normative advances can be observed: the 2009 Constitution enshrines the universal right to health and explicitly guarantees sexual and reproductive rights (Arts. 18 and 66). In addition, protocols have been implemented to ensure the right to legal

abortion in cases of sexual violence (Constitutional Judgment 0206/2014), and an Integrated Care Model for Survivors of Sexual Violence has been adopted.

However, there is a structural gap between law and practice driven by insufficient funding for inputs; gender- and age-based biases among health personnel; resistance to the implementation of legal abortion, including at the institutional level; and the absence of specific protocols for girls under the age of 15 within multisectoral referral networks. This produces a regime of “formal protection” with real obstacles for survivors, resulting in the limited effectiveness of these legal frameworks. Forced motherhood and early unions resulting from sexual crimes persist as ongoing forms of violence, sustained by conservative family patterns and by the lack of effective protection.

An internal comparison between prenatal care coverage and the number of legal abortions among girls and adolescents reveals a critical asymmetry: prenatal care for pregnant girls and adolescents is massive, while legal abortions in cases of sexual violence remain extremely lim-



**Table: Prenatal care for girls and adolescents (January –October 2025)**

Age	N° of Prenatal Care Attendances
Under 10 years	58
10–14 years	1,131
15–19 years	22,674
Total	23,863

Source: Research team, based on data from the National Health Information and Epidemiological Surveillance System (Sistema Nacional de Información en Salud y Vigilancia Epidemiológica-SNIS/VE).

**Table: Legal Abortions (LA) by Legal Ground and Age (January – October 2025)**

Legal Ground	LA, under 10 years	LA, ages 10–14	LA, ages 15–19	TOTAL
Sexual violence	1	45	36	82
	2	10	14	26
		1	3	4
Health Risk		7	155	162
		1	6	7
			9	9
Fetal malformation		1	2	3
		0	3	3
TOTALS	3	65	228	296

Source: Research team, based on data from the National Health Information and Epidemiological Surveillance System (Sistema Nacional de Información en Salud y Vigilancia Epidemiológica-SNIS/VE).

**Table: Childbirth care by mode of delivery and age (January–October 2025)**

Age	Vaginal delivery	Cesarean section	Total
Under 10 years	4	47	51
10–14 years	252	313	565
15–19 years	8,876	5,649	14,525

Source: Research team, based on data from the National Health Information and Epidemiological Surveillance System (Sistema Nacional de Información en Salud y Vigilancia Epidemiológica-SNIS/VE).

ited. This disparity can be interpreted as evidence of institutional and social barriers that result in forced motherhood.

In this context, the persistence of structural obstacles that undermine the effectiveness of normative advances severely constrains women's rights. These obstacles are rooted in insufficient budgetary allocation, which limits the comprehensive implementation of sexual and reproductive health services and the provision of essential supplies, including modern contraceptives, emergency contraception, and antiretroviral medicines for the prevention of HIV and hepatitis B, among others. They are strengthened by gender- and age-based biases among health personnel which, particularly in relation to adolescents, restrict access to clear, evidence-based information within the Comprehensive Care Network for Adolescents (Atención Integral de Adolescentes – AIDA). In addition, resistance to the implementation of legal abortion

regulations persists, including institutional conscientious objection, despite the fact that the legal framework recognizes conscientious objection only on an individual basis. These deficiencies are reflected in the continued prevalence of unsafe abortion as the third leading cause of maternal mortality, as well as in the absence of up-to-date reporting and record-keeping on the implementation of the Maternal Mortality Reduction Strategy. This occurs in a country that continues to record one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the region: the National Health Information and Epidemiological Surveillance System (Sistema Nacional de Información en Salud y Vigilancia Epidemiológica – SNIS-VE) has recorded 3,091 maternal deaths in Bolivia between 2010 and 2024, an average of approximately 200 deaths per year, or one woman dying every two days from complications related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period.

# Brazil

Brazil exhibits a pattern of structural violence that directly affects sexual and reproductive health, influenced by racial, territorial, and socioeconomic inequalities. Despite the existence of a robust normative framework to address gender-based violence, elevated maternal mortality persists in vulnerable territories and among racialized women — particularly Afro-descendant women — alongside sustained adolescent pregnancy and barriers to access to legal abortion imposed by both state agents and civil society organizations. These barriers notably include conscientious objection by health-care personnel and shortages of essential medicines and supplies. In this context, Law No. 12,845/2013 established the obligation to provide comprehensive care to survivors of

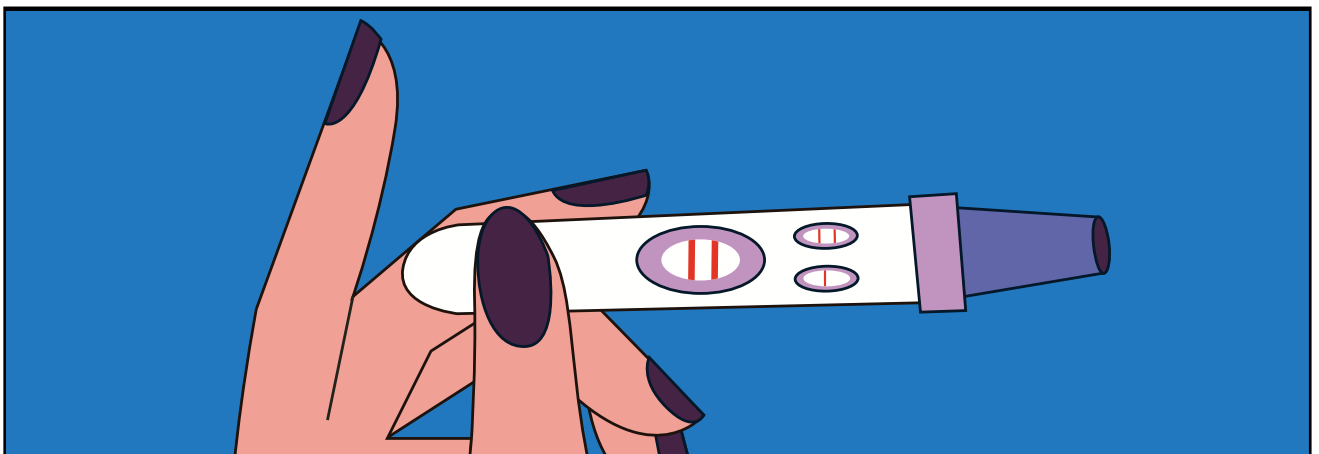
sexual violence within public health services, complemented by Decree No. 7,958/2013. However, implementation remains uneven, with significant gaps across regions and social groups (Law No. 12,845/2013; Decree No. 7,958/2013).

Maternal mortality is a particularly sensitive indicator of institutional violence, inequalities in access to obstetric emergency care, and gender inequity in a country. In this regard, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) reflects the level of development, equity, and capacity of the health system to safeguard women’s lives and well-being, and is considered a key measure of both health-system quality and existing gender gaps. Although there has been a slight long-term downward trend, the MMR remains high.

**Table: Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Brazil**

Period	Average MMR	Maximum (year)	Minimum (year)
2000-2005	69.2	72.4 (2002)	67.9 (2001)
2006-2015	65.0	72.0 (2007)	56.9 (2012)
2016-2020	62.5	72.2 (2020)	59.2 (2018)

Source: research team, based on data from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).



This persistence reveals that advances in healthcare coverage have not managed to eliminate the structural failures that affect poor, rural, Amazonian, and Indigenous women more severely, as well as Afro-descendant women, especially in obstetric emergency situations.

Access to legal abortion constitutes one of the most critical issues in the field of sexual and reproductive health, particularly for girls and adolescents who are victims of sexual violence. We note that, although legislation guarantees access to legal abortion services in public hospitals in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape, practical barriers persist, including conscientious objection by healthcare personnel, shortages of medication, and irregular service availability (Law No. 12.845/2013). The National Abortion Survey (PNA) 2021 shows the magnitude of the problem: one in seven women near the age of 40 has already had at least one abortion, and 52% of those who had an abortion had their first abortion before the age of 19; within this group, 46% were adolescents aged 16 to 19 and 6% were girls aged 12 to 14 (PNA, 2021). These data reveal the early exposure of girls to forced pregnancy and the gap between formal legal rights and effective access to legal abortion for survivors of sexual violence.

Challenges to the provision of legal abortion services have been exacerbated in a political context marked by the adoption of regressive measures, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022), when services were restricted and sexual and reproductive health programmes were dismantled, disproportionately affecting women, girls, and adolescents (PNA, 2021; Law No. 12,845/2013). This context underscores the need for sustained vigilance against potential conservative pressures and the risk of legislative regression affecting reproductive rights. It also recalls that the CEDAW Committee has recommended the review of criminal legislation on abortion in order to eliminate sanctions and ensure access to safe services, in line with General Recommendation No. 24 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (CEDAW). Thus, Brazil combines an important regulatory framework — including Law No. 12,845/2013 — with a fragile and increasingly threatened implementation landscape. The persistent violation of reproductive rights linked to racial, territorial, and regional inequalities reinforces the central importance of protecting and expanding effective access to legal abortion for survivors of sexual violence, particularly girls and adolescents.

# Colombia

Colombia emerges as a case in which violence related to sexual and reproductive health is shaped by three interrelated dimensions: (1) the historical criminalization of abortion and its underreporting; (2) high rates of maternal mortality, marked by pronounced ethnic inequality; and (3) child and adolescent pregnancy, understood as an indicator of sexual violence and insufficient protection. At the same time, over the past thirty years Colombia has progressively consolidated a democratic framework that recognizes sexual and reproductive health (SRH) as a field of rights, yet within a context marked by the violence of the armed conflict and long-standing inequalities. International observations (CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observa-

tions on Colombia in 2007, 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2021; and the first and fourth Rounds of MESECVI, 2004–2008 and 2018–2021, respectively) indicate that the context of violence associated with the armed conflict exposes women and girls to sexual violence, insecurity, and trafficking. These conditions are accompanied by low levels of reporting and the continued use of conciliation in cases of domestic violence, directly affecting access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and to autonomous reproductive lives, particularly in territories with armed presence and weak institutional capacity (CEDAW, 2013; MESECVI, 2019).

With regard to reproductive autonomy, key legal advances include the partial decriminalization of abortion in



2006 and the expansion of the right to voluntary abortion up to 24 weeks in 2022, free from criminal liability, constituting a substantial advance in the formal guarantee of this right (Constitutional Court, 2006; Constitutional Court, 2022). However, judicialization and criminal prosecution continue to disproportionately affect rural women and survivors of gender-based violence, while the continued practice of clandestine abortion limits the accurate estimation of unsafe abortion and reveals the gap between the legal framework and its effective access, particularly in peripheral and impoverished areas (CEDAW, 2019).

In parallel, significant legal advances have been recorded in the post-Beijing period, including Law No. 12,257/2008 on violence against women, widely regarded as a legislative milestone, although marked by heterogeneous implementation. At the same time, sustained demands to guarantee access to voluntary abortion without obstacles or the abusive use of conscientious objection persist (Law No. 12,257/2008; CEDAW, 2019).

In terms of health outcomes, maternal mortality remains a critical and deeply unequal indicator. Between 2016 and 2023, the national maternal mortality ratio (MMR) showed significant fluctuations, with severe peaks in 2020–2021 (415 and 456 deaths per 100,000 live births) followed by a subsequent decline. Nevertheless, the persistence of preventable deaths is interpreted as an expression of structural inequity (MSPS/Observatorio Nacional de Salud, 2023). This gap is further exacerbated along ethnic-racial lines: in 2020, the estimated MMR among Indigenous women was 332.7, compared to 87.5 among women

without ethnic affiliation, confirming a form of health-related violence that is territorially concentrated and associated with historical marginalization (MSPS, 2020).

Another persistent dimension is adolescent pregnancy, particularly among girls, which constitutes a strong indicator of sexual violence and insufficient protection. The National Policy on Children and Adolescents (Política Nacional de Infancia y Adolescencia) 2018–2030 reports a slight decline, though levels remain high: in 2016, 20.1% of births occurred among adolescents aged 15–19 (130,225 cases), and 0.9% among girls aged 10–14 (5,551 cases) (ICBF, 2018). The continuation of these figures — especially at extremely young ages — is linked to sexual coercion, social inequality, and limited access to information and preventive services, particularly in rural and Indigenous areas and in territories affected by armed conflict (CEDAW, 2019; MESECVI, 2019).

In sum, Colombia combines normative and institutional advances in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) with structural challenges that continue to limit their effectiveness, including the persistence of armed and social violence that constrains access to SRH services; maternal mortality that remains high and marked by racial inequality; and the continued prevalence of adolescent pregnancy and motherhood in childhood. Therefore, the central challenge is not only to expand formal rights, but to close the gap between law and practice through genuine state capacity, effective justice, and intersectional territorial coverage that guarantees reproductive autonomy throughout the country (CEDAW, 2019; MSPS, 2023).



## El Salvador

**38** | El Salvador's health system is mixed and non-universal, comprising a public subsystem (MINSAL), a social security subsystem (ISSS), and a private sector, which operate in a fragmented manner and with differing levels of financing, coverage, and quality. Under this model, effective access to health services depends on employment status, ability to pay, and territory, which prevents the right to health from being guaranteed on equal terms for the entire population and reproduces structural inequalities, particularly for people living in poverty, women, and rural populations.

In El Salvador, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) over the past three decades has shown relevant institutional advances, although within a framework of strong structural constraints. Following the 1992 Peace Accords, the country consolidated a formal democracy and established a specific institutional framework for gender equality, led by ISDEMU (Legislative Decree No. 644, 1996) and the National System for Substantive Equality (SNIS, 2013), alongside national equality plans for 2016–2020 and 2021–2025 that include an explicit sexual and reproductive health strategic axis. Within the health sector, a mixed (public and private) and non-universal system<sup>38</sup> is

formally established, with access gaps related to costs, transportation, and affiliation, alongside coordination efforts under the Law Establishing the National Health System (Ley de Creación del Sistema Nacional de Salud). In parallel, sectoral policies were adopted, such as the National Multisectoral Strategic Plan on HIV and STIs 2022–2026 (PENM HIV/STIs), as well as community-based SRH and family planning programs in rural areas promoted by civil society organizations (ADS/Pro Familia).

However, the most concerning feature of the Salvadoran case is the extremely restrictive nature of reproductive rights: the Constitution and the Penal Code maintain a total prohibition of abortion, resulting in the criminalization of women and girls, even in cases of obstetric emergencies. The CEDAW Committee has expressed concern regarding this situation (CEDAW, 2015), and Amnesty International (2024) has repeatedly denounced this absolute prohibition as posing serious risks to life and health, as well as judicial persecution. Although emergency contraception is legal, access barriers persist due to prescription requirements, poor availability, stigma, and insufficient information, limiting its preventive effect — particularly among adolescents and in rural areas.

Within this environment, adolescent pregnancy and, in particular, child pregnancy associated with sexual violence constitute the critical core of SRH challenges. While the adolescent fertility rate has decreased, it remains high (68 births per 1,000 women aged 15–19), with pronounced territorial disparities.



In 2020, the Ministry of Health recorded 12,982 pregnancies among adolescents, of which 503 involved girls under the age of 14 and were identified as resulting from sexual violence (UNFPA). In response, the State has implemented the National Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Pregnancy in Girls and Adolescents 2017–2027 (Estrategia Nacional Intersectorial de Prevención del Embarazo en Niñas y Adolescentes-ENI-PENA) and targeted initiatives such as the Comprehensive Care Center for Girls and Adolescent Survivors of Sexual Violence (CIHUAT-Girls<sup>39</sup>), alongside a Comprehensive Adolescent Health Care Program (Programa de Atención Integral en Salud de Adolescentes). However, the scale of the problem exceeds the State’s actual response capacity, particularly in rural and impoverished terri-

tories. Maternal mortality also reflects persistent inequalities and health service weaknesses: in 2020 it increased by 72% compared to 2019, reaching 41.8 deaths per 100,000 live births, with an additional 17% increase among adolescents. Reported causes include obstetric complications and unsafe abortions, exacerbated by interruptions to prenatal and postnatal care during the pandemic, as well as by cultural barriers and obstetric violence. Overall, El Salvador falls within the regional sub pattern of “absolutely restricted SRH” (alongside Honduras and Guatemala), in which the combination of the criminalization of abortion, insufficient sexual education, and sexual violence against girls multiplies preventable health risks and constrains the reproductive autonomy of women and adolescents.

**39** | El Salvador’s health system is mixed and non-universal, comprising a public subsystem (MINSAL), a social security subsystem (ISSS), and a private sector, which operate in a fragmented manner and with differing levels of financing, coverage, and quality. Under this model, effective access to health services depends on employment status, ability to pay, and territory, which prevents the right to health from being guaranteed on equal terms for the entire population and reproduces structural inequalities, particularly for people living in poverty, women, and rural populations.



# Guatemala

**40** | Central public institution within Guatemala's health system, responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and implementing policies and actions related to the protection, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of the population's health.

**41** | Public entity responsible for administering the country's contribution-based social security system, with key functions in health care, pensions, and economic benefits, particularly for workers and their families.

**42** | Traditional midwives in Guatemala, most of whom are Indigenous women, play a fundamental role in providing care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period in rural communities with limited access to health services. Their work, grounded in ancestral knowledge and community trust, offers culturally responsive care in contrast to a health system that many women perceive as discriminatory or violent. Although the State has partially recognized their role and promoted processes of registration and training, their integration into the formal health system remains limited, marked by inadequate recognition, shortages of supplies, and the absence of remuneration. This situation reflects structural gaps in cultural responsiveness within sexual and reproductive health services and undermines Indigenous women's right to respectful and appropriate healthcare. *sa y adecuada.*

Guatemala exhibits violence linked to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) that manifests as preventable health inequities and restrictions on reproductive autonomy. The country operates a mixed health system (the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance – MSPAS<sup>40</sup>, the Guatemalan Social Security Institute – IGSS<sup>41</sup>, the private sector, and NGOs), with persistent gaps in achieving universal coverage and recent setbacks in protection against health emergencies. WHO estimates for 2025 indicate a net reduction in the population covered compared to 2018, disproportionately affecting rural areas and highly vulnerable contexts. This broader context shapes sexual and reproductive health outcomes in Indigenous and rural territories, where geographic, economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers restrict timely access to professional, culturally responsive services.

Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) remains high, as well as closely related to territorial inequalities. In 2023, the MMR was estimated at 93.7 deaths per 100,000 live births, reflecting limited effective coverage of emergency obstetric care and persistent gaps in skilled birth attendance in rural and Indigenous areas. While the share of births attended by skilled health personnel increased from 61% in 2000 to 87% in 2024, institutional delivery coverage exceeds 90% in urban areas but drops to 45–55% in rural and Indigenous territories. In these contexts, traditional midwives<sup>42</sup> continue to play a central role in childbirth, without full integration into the system. This uneven access to obstetric care constitutes a manifestation of structural violence affecting sexual and reproductive health.

Adolescent pregnancy emerges as another critical issue, with an adolescent fertility rate of 68.269 births



per 1,000 women aged 15–19 (2023). Despite initiatives such as PLANEA 2018–2022 and existing family planning guidelines, prevention efforts face constraints related to funding, territorial coverage, and political and social resistance. Although the demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods reached 77.1% (WHO, 2025), coverage remains significantly lower in rural, Indigenous, and impoverished areas, while access to emergency contraception continues to be shaped by stigma, misinformation, and administrative barriers. Taken together, these dynamics perpetuate adolescents' reproductive vulnerability, with direct consequences for educational continuity and autonomy.

Within this context, reproductive autonomy is restricted by the near-total criminalization of abortion, which is permitted only when the woman's life is at risk, in accordance with the Penal

Code, Decree No. 17-73, arts. 134-137. This legal framework is combined with barriers to access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence, despite the existence of the MPAS Protocol for the Care of Survivors of Sexual Violence (Protocolo de Atención a Víctimas Sobrevivientes de Violencia Sexual del MSPAS) since 2019, which establishes inter-institutional referral pathways, STI/HIV prophylaxis, emergency contraception, and psycho-emotional support. Therefore, Guatemala has developed relevant plans and protocols; however, their implementation is uneven due to budgetary shortfalls, political resistance, and cultural and linguistic gaps. As a result, formal institutional advances coexist with preventable health risks and with limited reproductive autonomy for women, girls, and adolescents — particularly among Indigenous and rural populations.



## Honduras

In Honduras, sexual and reproductive health is deeply shaped by violence that primarily affects children and adolescents including child sexual abuse, pregnancy as a direct consequence of coercion, child marriage, and widespread underreporting resulting from the silencing of victims. The 2017 Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (La Encuesta de Violencia contra la Niñez y la Juventud-VACS), cited in the country profile, reveals alarming rates: 16.2% of women and 9.9% of men experienced sexual violence before the age of 18; in addition, nearly one in three women (31.9%) experienced physical violence during childhood. Sexual violence had direct reproductive consequences: 15.8% of victims of forced sexual relations or alcohol-relat-

ed vulnerability reported having become pregnant, and more than one in five girls married before the age of 18. These dynamics are compounded by structural conditions that exacerbate vulnerability, including food insecurity — which affects one in three young people — and the high proportion of victims who do not disclose their experiences or seek support, further deepening underreporting.

State responses are organized around child and adolescent protection frameworks and specific health policies. Honduras ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) through Decree No. 75-90 and passed the Code on Childhood and Adolescence through Decree No. 73-96, which constitute the legal basis for the prevention and punishment of child sexual abuse and are currently articulated through DINAF as a specialized protection subsystem. Within this interconnected framework, the National Response Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Children and Youth 2021–2026, under the Information System for the Management of the Rights of Children, Adolescents and Families (Plan Nacional de Respuesta para la Prevención de Violencia contra Niñez y Juventud-SIGADENAH), prioritizes the response to sexual violence, intersectoral coordination, monitoring indicators, and targeted budget allocation. In regard to sexual and reproductive health (SRH), a recent advance is the adoption of the Comprehensive Care Protocol for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence (Resolution No. 19-DGN-2022, Code PT47:2022), which also authorizes the free use and distribution of emergency contraception, following



years of prohibition until 2022. This protocol integrates psychosocial support, prophylaxis for STIs/HIV/hepatitis B, and the prevention of unwanted pregnancy through emergency contraception. Maternal mortality reduction strategies are also recognized as important advances, including the Red Code and the “Zero Maternal Deaths Teams,” (Código Rojo y “Equipos Cero Muertes Maternas”), together with improved coverage of births attended by trained personnel (83%) and a reported decrease in the maternal mortality ratio in 2024.

Nevertheless, structural challenges continue to limit the effectiveness of these advances. The health system remains fragmented between public and private sectors and marked by deep inequities, with limited coverage and barriers to access to specialized medical services and supplies, particularly in rural areas. The National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health (Política Nacional de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva) faces a context of high rates of teenage pregnancy, the second highest in the region. Within this policy framework, the Multisectoral Plan for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy, while operating through 91 health centers — 24 of which provide specialized adolescent-friendly services (UNFPA Honduras, 2019) — and having reached approximately 60,000 young people aged 12 to 18, remains insufficient in light of the structural scale of the problem and the restrictive norms governing access to sexual and reproductive health. In this regard, the absolute prohibition of abortion forces girls and adolescents to carry pregnancies resulting from sexual violence to term, giving rise to forced motherhood in contradiction with the State’s international commitments and its own Constitution (arts. 16 and 18). This situation is further aggravated for migrant, Indigenous, and

Afro-Honduran women, who face additional barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health services not only due to material constraints (precarious infrastructure, staff shortages, and territorial barriers), but also due to the lack of culturally responsive services. In many cases, these women distrust or avoid health facilities due to historical and ongoing experiences of institutional violence, discrimination, disrespectful treatment, and coercive practices, which deepen fear of seeking care and perpetuate exclusionary patterns of health service delivery. As a result, sexual and reproductive health functions as a right that is territorially, ethnically, and socially unequal, with disproportionate impacts on racialized women and women experiencing displacement and migration.

In summary, Honduras exhibits an acute pattern of violence linked to sexual and reproductive health, marked by high levels of sexual violence against children and adolescents, early sexual and reproductive health impacts, child marriage, and widespread social insecurity, alongside critical underreporting and institutional silence. This silence reflects the convergence of gaps in data production, the absence of substantive political engagement with structural causes, and an insufficient and territorially unequal state response. Although the State has advanced regulatory frameworks, protocols, and plans (including PT47:2022 and the 2021–2026 Plan), actual territorial response capacity remains limited, marked by overwhelmed services in rural areas, a weak intersectional approach, and persistent budgetary constraints. In this context, programmatic advances remain insufficient to reverse forced motherhood or to guarantee effective sexual and reproductive health for girls, adolescents, and women in the most vulnerable territories.



## Mexico

**43** | A policy mechanism within Mexico's health sector that operationalizes the national sexual and reproductive health policy, aligned with the Health Sector Program and the National Development Plan. It is not a law, but rather a technical-operational program that guides the actions of health institutions

**44** | National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica-ENADID), conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía-INEGI). It is one of the country's main demographic surveys and a key source for analyzing fertility, marital patterns, reproductive health, and family dynamics.

In Mexico, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) over the 1995–2025 period has developed within a mixed and federal healthcare system that, while having expanded coverage, remains fragmented and unequal. There have been significant advances in family planning and preventive services: the Specific Action Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health consolidates the provision of contraception, STI/HIV prevention, and maternal care, and by 2025 contraceptive coverage reached 93.2%, one of the highest in the region, although not fully universal due to territorial and cultural gaps, particularly in rural and Indigenous areas (PAE SSR<sup>43</sup>; INEGI/ENADID<sup>44</sup> 2023). This expansion coexists with structural challenges within the health system — such as general shortages of medicines, de-

spite high contraceptive coverage (93.2%), waiting lists, and insufficient infrastructure in peripheral regions — which constrain effective access to SRH for the most vulnerable groups.

Concerning reproductive autonomy, a recent far-reaching legal shift is evident: in 2021, a ruling by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation declared the criminalization of abortion unconstitutional, directly affecting SRH policies and service provision. Nevertheless, barriers in availability and timely access persist, stemming from restrictive interpretations at the state level, stigma, lack of information among health personnel, and the imposition of undue requirements, even though abortion in cases of rape is guaranteed nationwide under the General Victims Law, NOM-046-SSA2-2005, and national clini-



cal guidelines (SCJN, 2021; General Victims Law; NOM-046-SSA2-2005). The scale of unsafe abortion is closely linked to this implementation gap: over the period from 1990 to 2016, a total of 2,408 abortion-related deaths were recorded, including 305 adolescents aged 15–19 and 13 girls aged 10–14, underscoring the persistence of preventable health risks in contexts of restrictive practices and illegal abortion procedures.

In terms of maternal health and adolescence, the overall balance reflects both progress and persistent challenges. The maternal mortality ratio has declined and is projected at 25.5 deaths per 100,000 estimated live births in 2025, associated with the fact that more than 90% of births are attended by health personnel following the expansion of prenatal care; however, avoidable deaths remain concentrated in rural territories and marginalized communities, where access to quality care continues to be limited (INEGI; sector salud federal). At the same time, adolescent SRH remains marked by inequality: in 2023, 10.4% of adolescents aged 15–19 had experienced at least one pregnancy in the five years preceding the survey, a figure that nearly doubles among Indigenous-language-speaking adoles-

cents (20.1%), with a fertility rate of 90.3 births per 1,000 Indigenous adolescents. Moreover, only 26.6% used contraception during their first sexual intercourse, and 42.0% of sexually active adolescents currently use contraceptive methods, revealing persistent gaps in prevention and access (INEGI/ENADID 2023).

Overall, Mexico combines a robust institutional framework for SRH with substantial advances in contraceptive coverage, reductions in maternal mortality, and the jurisprudential expansion of the right to abortion. However, it continues to face structural challenges linked to health system fragmentation, territorial and ethnic inequality, and the persistence of social and institutional barriers to safe abortion and the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. Closing the gap between formal norms and effective practice requires strengthening coordination between the federal government and the states in the implementation of SRH rights, while ensuring the availability of supplies for timely care. It is also essential to address stigma and misinformation within health services, particularly for Indigenous, rural, and adolescent populations (PAE SRH; SCJN 2021<sup>45</sup>; ENADID 2023; NOM-046-SSA2-2005<sup>46</sup>).

**45** | In September 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN) ruled that the absolute criminalization of abortion is unconstitutional, as it violates the human rights of women and pregnant persons. Notably, through Action of Unconstitutionality No. 148/2017 (Coahuila), the Court established that no woman or pregnant person may be criminally sanctioned for having an abortion, and through Action of Unconstitutionality No. 106/2018 (Sinaloa), it invalidated provisions that protected life “from conception” in an absolute manner for contravening the Constitution. In addition, a series of health-related rulings reinforced the obligation of authorities to guarantee access to legal abortion services in accordance with constitutional and human rights standards.

**46** | A regulatory standard establishing the criteria for the prevention of and response to family, sexual, and violence against women, as well as for the provision of medical care to victims within the National Health System. It is a mandatory technical standard applicable to all public and private health sector institutions in Mexico. Its purpose is to ensure comprehensive, timely, and human rights-based care for individuals who are victims of violence, particularly sexual violence.



# Panama

Panama presents a sexual and reproductive health landscape marked by sharp contrasts between the formal institutional framework and social reality. Unsafe abortion is difficult to measure due to its unregulated nature, resulting in partial estimates that do not allow for a precise assessment of its public health impact (Ministry of Health of Panama, 2024). At the same time, the State maintains a regulated

framework for therapeutic abortion with a high approval rate. Between 2021 and 2024, 44, 36, 44, and 41 applications were submitted respectively, of which 43, 35, 44, and 37 were approved, with only minimal rejections in those years (1, 1, 0, and 4) (Ministry of Health of Panama). Violence linked to SRH is particularly evident in the persistence of adolescent pregnancy and its social consequences.

**Table: Pregnancy among girls and adolescents in Panama**

Indicator	Value	Year
Total registered pregnancies	32,611	2021
Pregnancies among girls aged 10–14	404	2021
Pregnancies among girls aged 15–19	7,223	2021
Total pregnancies among girls and adolescents (ages 10–19)	7,627	2021
Percentage of pregnancies among girls and adolescents out of total	23.4 %	2021
Adolescent fertility rate (ages 15–19)	68.5 births per 1,000 women	2022

Source: Research team based on data from the Ministry of Health of Panama (Ministerio de Salud de Panamá, 2024) and ECLAC.



In addition, we observe a growing educational exclusion of girls, which functions as an indirect indicator of reproductive vulnerability: the average proportion of girls out of the school system increased from 3.6% (1995–2005) to 5.1% (2006–2015), reaching 11.1% over the 2016–2025 period. This growing educational exclusion of girls does not stem from a single factor, but rather from the convergence of two structural dynamics. First, early pregnancy and motherhood — often linked to sexual violence — interrupt or force girls out of the education system. Second, girls are compelled at an early age to take on intensive care responsibilities and unpaid domestic work within their households, particularly in contexts of poverty, limited co-responsibility policies, and weak social protection systems. In this sense, early school dropout functions as an indirect indicator of reproductive vulnerability and the intergenerational reproduction of inequality, rather than as an individual choice by girls.

In maternal health, while Panama has achieved long-term improvements,

it continues to display important territorial inequalities, particularly in Indigenous regions. The maternal mortality ratio shows a historical average of 61.73 deaths per 100,000 live births, declining to an average of 49.0 over the 2016–2024 period, although with a sharp peak in 2020 (74.2). These gaps are associated with unequal coverage of skilled birth attendance: while the national average exceeds 90%, births attended by qualified health personnel in the *Emberá* and *Ngöbe Buglé* regions stood at only 29.0% and 35.6%, respectively (Ministerio de Salud de Panamá, 2024).

In sum, Panama has a relatively consolidated regulatory framework for therapeutic abortion, yet limited monitoring of unsafe abortion. It also faces an SRH context under strain due to the persistence of high adolescent pregnancy rates, growing educational exclusion, and deep territorial inequalities — particularly in Indigenous territories, where SRH-related violence is manifested through preventable health risks and restricted reproductive autonomy (Ministerio de Salud de Panamá, 2024; ECLAC).



# Paraguay

Paraguay has a public policy framework for sexual and reproductive health (SRH), grounded in the National SRH Plan and the National Health Policy 2015–2030, which seek to expand access to information, education, and services, with targets for reducing maternal and infant mortality and preventing STIs (Paraguay, 2015; WHO, 2018; UNFPA, n.d.-b). In recent decades, there has also been a sustained increase in the use of contraceptive methods, representing progress in reproductive autonomy and family planning, albeit with uneven coverage between urban and rural areas (UNFPA, n.d.-a; UNFPA, n.d.-b; UNICEF, 2024).

Nevertheless, structural challenges remain evident in maternal health outcomes. The country faces persistent difficulties in ensuring timely and quality care, exacerbated by territorial barriers, the lack of specialized services in rural areas, and longstanding gaps that disproportionately affect Indigenous and impoverished women (WHO, 2018; UN Women, 2024; UNICEF, 2024). These inequalities limit the effective implementation of the normative framework and existing programs, indicating that access to SRH is disproportionately limited for rural, Indigenous, and low-income populations (UN Women, 2024; UNICEF, 2024).

Adolescent pregnancy remains a critical issue. Although adolescent pregnancy rates have gradually decreased, Paraguay continues to register high levels of unintended pregnancy, particular-

ly linked to sexual violence and the absence of fully comprehensive preventive policies (Amnesty International, 2021; UNICEF, 2024). This is further compounded by setbacks in comprehensive sexuality education: the suspension of pedagogical frameworks and restrictions on gender-responsive content have weakened a key tool for preventing violence and early pregnancy, disproportionately affecting girls and adolescents (CODEHUPY, 2020; Amnesty International, 2021; UNICEF, 2024).

Finally, the near-total criminalization of abortion constitutes a major barrier to access to SRH. The legal framework permits pregnancy termination only when the life of the pregnant woman is at risk, excluding grounds such as rape or incest, thereby pushing women and girls toward unregulated and unsafe abortions (MSPBS, n.d.; CODEHUPY, 2020). This restriction results in preventable deaths and revictimizes girls and adolescents forced to continue pregnancies resulting from violence; moreover, unsafe abortion remains a significant cause of maternal mortality in the country (Soto, 2004; Amnesty International, 2021; UN Women, 2024). Overall, Paraguay combines normative advances and some progress in family planning with serious challenges related to inequality, educational setbacks, and the criminalization of abortion, which prevent the full realization of sexual and reproductive rights (Paraguay, 2015; UNFPA, n.d.-b; UN Women, 2024).

# Peru

Peru has achieved substantial progress over the past three decades in sexual and reproductive health, particularly in reducing maternal mortality, which is understood as a central indicator of well-being and state capacity.

However, this overall progress coexists with persistent territorial inequalities — particularly in rural and Amazonian areas — that make SRH a field in which violence is primarily expressed through healthcare inequities

and barriers to timely access to skilled birth attendance.

The different Demographic and Family Health Surveys (Encuestas Demográficas y de Salud Familiar-ENDES) show that adolescent pregnancy remains a longstanding structural issue. Only in the most recent decade has a marked decline been observed, although without eliminating the phenomenon: 8.2% in 2020 and 8.4% in 2024 (ENDES).

**Table: Trends in the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Peru**

Period / Year	Indicator	Value (per 100,000 live births)	Notes
1994-2000	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	185	Very high levels in the 1990s
2003-2009	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	103	Significant decline associated with increased skilled birth attendance
2004-2010	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	93	Continued downward trend
2015	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	99.42	Annual fluctuation within a declining trend
2016	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	71.33	Marked reduction in risk
2017	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	78.46	Slight year-on-year increase
2018	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	74.08	Return to a downward trajectory
2019	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	62.23	Lowest level in the period analyzed

Source: Research team based on data from ENDES/INEI, Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio y Ginecología y Obstetricia (2022).



**Table: Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES) records by survey round**

Year of record	Adolescent pregnancy (%)
2000	13%
2004-2005	12.7%
2007-2008	13.6%
2009	13.7%
2013	13.9%
2014	14.6%
2015	13.6%
2020	8.2%
2024	8.4%

Source: Research team based on the Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Familiar-ENDES.

Thus, the Peruvian State has implemented a sustained and effective long-term response to reduce maternal mortality through the expansion of skilled birth attendance within the public health system, yet continues to face persistent challenges in adolescent protection and early pregnancy prevention, which remains an indicator of enduring social vulnerability and inequalities that limit full access to SRH.

# Regional Overview: Legal Convergence and Implementation Gap

**THE COUNTRIES ANALYZED** collectively confirm that violence associated with sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is not an isolated event, but rather a persistent structure that is reproduced, in which social inequality, conservative control of sexuality for strictly reproductive purposes, territorial marginalization, and state weakness converge. In Bolivia and Honduras, sexual violence against girls and adolescents emerges as a dominant feature and a direct causal driver of child pregnancy and forced motherhood. In Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, the near-total criminalization of abortion forms part of this structural violence, as it compels pregnancies to be carried to term even in cases of rape or extreme risk, sustaining networks of illegal and unsafe abortion practices that result in preventable deaths. In Colombia and

Mexico, where legal frameworks have expanded, violence shifts to the realm of implementation through selective judicialization — whereby not all cases are investigated, but the State determines whom to prosecute, whom to expose to the justice system, and whom to hold accountable — thereby reproducing structural inequalities and using law and bureaucracy as mechanisms of disciplinary control. Within this framework, judicialization serves a dual function: it undermines the agency of the women directly affected while sending an exemplary message to society, even when the normative framework formally recognizes the right. Additional barriers to abortion access are administrative in nature and closely linked to stigma, as well as to territorial and ethnic inequalities, which together constrain the effective exercise of this right.

In Brazil, although abortion is legally permitted under only three grounds (rape, risk to the pregnant woman's life, and anencephaly), in practice access is obstructed by conscientious objection, bureaucratic hurdles, and territorial inequality. This pushes many women — particularly poor, Afro-descendant, and adolescent women — toward unregulated and unsafe abortion procedures despite the formal legal framework, with especially severe consequences for girls who are survivors of sexual violence. Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, Panama, and Paraguay all display significant maternal mortality rates linked to inequality, demonstrating that violations of the right to health materialize in preventable risks of death. In sum, countries across the region share a pattern in which sexual and reproductive health policies and practices highlight the persistence of structural and institutional gender-based violence,

**47** | The Beijing Platform for Action identifies violence against women and structural inequalities as central obstacles to the realization of women's rights (Section D) and underscores States' obligation to develop policies, services, and institutional mechanisms that ensure their effective implementation (Sections C and H), in line with the commitments undertaken under the Cairo Programme of Action regarding reproductive rights and State responsibility.

expressed through State omissions in guaranteeing these rights, as well as through legal and administrative restrictions and territorial and ethnic inequalities that limit effective access to sexual and reproductive health. As already underscored by the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>47</sup> regarding States' obligations to eliminate violence and ensure the material conditions for the realization of women's rights, these dynamics are inconsistent with the commitments undertaken under the Cairo Programme of Action, which recognizes reproductive rights as human rights and establishes States' responsibility to guarantee timely, safe, accessible, and non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services (Cairo Programme of Action, ch. VII, paras. 7.2 and 7.3; ch. VIII, para. 8.25; ch. XII, paras. 12.1 and 12.5).

There is a convergent regional trend toward more protective legal frameworks and more comprehensive programs, but with unequal outcomes. Bolivia has advanced by guaranteeing legal abortion in cases of sexual violence and establishing specific protocols; Colombia has taken a historic step by expanding access to abortion up to 24 weeks without the need to meet specific legal grounds; Mexico has consolidated federal jurisprudence declaring the criminalization of abortion unconstitutional and upholding NOM-046 for abortion in cases of rape; Brazil has robust regulations mandating care for survivors of violence and legal abortion services; Peru has strengthened obstetric care and reduced maternal mortality; Honduras and Guatemala have developed national plans and protocols on sexual violence; Panama has a formal regulatory framework for therapeutic termination of pregnancy under which most requests are approved; Paraguay maintains SRH



policy frameworks and expanded contraceptive coverage; and El Salvador has established gender equality institutions and SRH policy frameworks.

However, across all these countries a persistent gap remains between formal rights and their effective realization. Bolivia faces institutional resistance, de facto objection, and budgetary constraints; Brazil exhibits territorial inequalities in service provision and conscientious objection as a barrier to access; Colombia faces weak judicial presence in rural territories, underreporting, and ethnic inequality; Mexico displays federal fragmentation in SRH policy implementation, stigma, and operational barriers; Honduras, Guatemala, and Paraguay face weak services in remote areas and setbacks in comprehensive sexuality education; Panama continues to struggle with limited monitoring of unsafe abortion; and El Salvador combines policy frameworks with the absolute prohibition of abortion, which undermines the effectiveness of protection mechanisms. Thus, comparative regional evidence makes clear that the law is a necessary but insufficient condition: violence persists when States fail to translate policies into accessible and culturally responsive services.

Violence intensifies where the State is weak, absent, or culturally misaligned. Data on access to services, when presented in aggregate or as national coverage averages, do not always capture the full complexity of national realities, as they often obscure deeply unequal coverage patterns, with a high concentration of services in urban areas and persistent gaps in rural, remote, Amazonian, and other hard-to-reach regions. In this context, Indigenous and Afro-descendant women experience higher maternal mortality and lower rates of institutional delivery in countries

such as Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Brazil, Mexico, and Paraguay, revealing an ethno-territorial form of violence that cannot be addressed solely through the formal expansion of services at the national level, but instead requires differentiated, territorially grounded, and culturally responsive policies. Rural, Amazonian, and border regions concentrate barriers to access in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Mexico, and Paraguay. In El Salvador, despite its smaller territory, territorial violence manifests through rural–urban inequalities in access to contraception, prenatal care, and responses to sexual violence. This pattern confirms that health-related violence is also territorial violence: the geography of exclusion reproduces forced pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths among the same populations and in the same regions.

Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Mexico exhibit persistently high rates of adolescent pregnancy, including among girls at extremely young ages. In the countries with the most acute scenario of sexual violence (Bolivia and Honduras, followed by Paraguay, El Salvador, and Guatemala), child motherhood emerges primarily as a direct consequence of coercion, abuse, and impunity, rather than as a “reproductive choice.” In Colombia and Mexico, although partial declines have been observed, rates remain high in rural and Indigenous areas, where inequality, limited access to comprehensive sexuality education, and underreported sexual violence intersect. Peru represents a partial exception: it has successfully reduced maternal mortality, yet adolescent pregnancy remained high for two decades and has only recently begun to decline, illustrating that improvements in obstetric care

do not immediately translate into reductions in youth reproductive violence. This regional central pattern shows that adolescent and child pregnancy functions as a barometer of sexual violence and State failures in protection.

We therefore observe that significant legal and programmatic advances coexist with the persistent prevalence of harm. Over the past thirty years, States have expanded rights, protocols, and plans, but have been less effective in translating these advances into material and cultural change, including: sustained budgetary investment; equitable territorial coverage; regulation of institutional conscientious objection; culturally responsive services, particularly for Indigenous and Afro-descendant pop-

ulations; comprehensive sexuality education; and real access to justice. Thus, both in countries with strict abortion bans (Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, El Salvador) and in those with expanded legal frameworks (Colombia, Mexico, and partially Bolivia and Brazil), the core challenge remains the same: building effective State capacity to guarantee reproductive autonomy, dignified care for survivors of sexual violence, and sustained reductions in maternal deaths and forced motherhood, especially in Indigenous, rural, and impoverished territories. Regional comparison shows that without this material translation, the law is reduced to “formal protection,” and reproductive violence continues to operate as an everyday structure.

# Economic autonomy and parity

**BASED ON THE** data analyzed, it is possible to affirm that women's integration into labor markets has not consistently translated into real autonomy or substantive equality. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) defines women's autonomy as the capacity to have control over their own lives, make free and informed decisions, and effectively access the resources, opportunities, and rights necessary for their well-being and development. From this perspective, ECLAC conceptualizes autonomy as a multidimensional and interdependent phenomenon encompassing three fundamental dimensions: economic autonomy, physical autonomy, and autonomy in decision-making (ECLAC, n.d.).

Economic autonomy refers to women's capacity to generate their own income and to access and control economic, productive, financial, and technological resources, as well as the use of time, taking into account the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work, particularly domestic and care work. Physical autonomy refers to women's right to live free from violence and to exercise control over their own bodies, including sexual and reproductive health. Autonomy in decision-making, in turn, relates to women's full and effective participation in spaces of power, leadership, and political, social, and community representation.

These three dimensions reinforce one another and constitute necessary conditions for the full realization of women's human rights and for substantive gender equality. In this regard, ECLAC underscores that partial progress in one dimension does not guarantee comprehensive autonomy if structural constraints persist in the others, a point that is particularly relevant for public policy analysis and for monitoring commitments undertaken within the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action.

In line with Strategic Objective F of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>48</sup> and with the economic empowerment approach of the Cairo Programme of Action, countries in the region have recorded advances in women's labor force participation and in the adoption of equality-oriented legal frameworks. However, these advances coexist with persistent wage gaps,

high levels of informality, vulnerable employment, and marked occupational segregation. In this regard, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), a significant proportion of women in the region do not generate their own income<sup>49</sup>, which limits their economic autonomy and places them in situations of material dependence — particularly concerning the burden of unpaid domestic and care work — thereby deepening structural gender inequalities.

The disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work constitutes a structural factor that restricts women's labor market entry and continuity, income levels, and access to social protection, reproducing intersectional inequalities that affect Indigenous, rural, racialized, and impoverished women most intensely. This work is largely unrecognized for pension (retirement) and social security purposes in the vast majority of countries in the region. In this context, economic violence manifests through precarious labor participation and material dependence, underscoring that the effective fulfillment of the Beijing and Cairo agendas requires strengthening comprehensive care systems, promoting labor formalization and social protection systems, and ensuring gender-responsive economic policies that sustainably expand women's economic autonomy.

**48** | Strategic Objective F of the Beijing Platform for Action addresses women's situation in the economy, one of the twelve critical areas of concern defined within the Beijing agenda to advance gender equality and women's autonomy. This objective recognizes that, in most countries, women continue to face unequal access to economic resources, to economic policy decision-making, and to opportunities for decent work, and that their participation in the formulation of financial, trade, and labor policies remains insufficient or insufficiently valued. Strategic Objective F calls on governments and relevant stakeholders to adopt specific measures to improve women's economic situation, including the promotion of equal access to employment, equitable working conditions, full labor rights, economic security, participation in economic decision-making, and the elimination of structural barriers that perpetuate gender economic inequality.

**49** | "In the region, the cost of mobile and fixed broadband services for households in the lowest income quintile averages 14% and 12% of income, respectively (ECLAC, 2020a) (see Graph 4). Moreover, an average of 39.1% of women in households in the lowest income quintile do not have their own income. This clearly constitutes a barrier to many women's participation in the digital economy. When these figures are analyzed in light of opportunities for remote paid work, it becomes evident that lower-income women face a double obstacle: lack of economic autonomy and unequal access to the Internet for telework" (ECLAC, 2021).

# Bolivia

Bolivia combines democratic continuity with episodes of high political conflict that have affected institutional stability and the State's capacity to sustain equality policies. We observe a trajectory of national mechanisms for the advancement of women since the 1990s (Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Género in 1993, Viceministerio in 1997 and subsequent institutional reconfigurations), with a gradual but fragile incorporation of the women's agenda.

In terms of labor force participation and financial autonomy, women's participation has historically been high: the rate remained close to 58% between 1995 and 2015 and rose sharply to 72.5% in 2024 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025). This increase should be interpreted alongside the methodological caveats issued by the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística – INE/Encuesta Continua de Empleo) regarding post-pandemic adjustments and the absence of data from rural areas in 2020, which affect the comparability of the time series (INE, 2015–2025). Despite aggregate gains, equality has not improved at the same pace: the gender income gap remains high (26.5% as shown in the annex) and strongly intersectional, widening among Indigenous women and those engaged in informal work (Coordinadora de la Mujer/UN Women, 2019–2023; ILO Southern Cone, 2025).

Economic violence manifests as “precarious participation.” Although women's vulnerable employment declined from 74.5% in 1995 to 63.9% in

2015, it rose again to 69.6% in 2023 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025), signaling a return to precarious employment in times of crisis. Moreover, informality remains widespread, concentrating the majority of women in sectors characterized by weak safeguards, low incomes, and high occupational segregation (UDAPE/INE, 2023; Coordina-



dora de la Mujer, 2023). In public policy, the care agenda emerged early through the National Plan for Equal Opportunities (Plan Nacional de Igualdad de Oportunidades) of 2008, yet CEDAW has noted delays in its full implementation and in the development of a comprehensive system of shared responsibility (CEDAW, 2015; CEDAW, 2022). At the same time, targeted advances in financial inclusion stand out, such as the Domitila Barrios Programme known as “Mujer BDP” (Semilla Mujer and Jefa de Hogar credit lines), which by March 2025 had benefited 13,071 women producers — mainly in agriculture (73%) and manufacturing (22%) — through funding and technical assistance (BDP-SAM, 2025); its reach, however, remains limited in relation to structural informality. In sum, Bolivia displays high labor force participation and some autonomy-oriented programmes, but persistent wage gaps, vulnerable employment, and disproportionately ethnic and territorial informality. The common challenge is therefore to translate policy advances and credit-related

initiatives into effective State capacity, labor formalization, and a national care system that expands women’s real autonomy (CEDAW, 2022; Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2023).

The country has made progress in institutionalizing parity with alternation and in promoting women’s political participation through temporary special measures and quota systems for decision-making positions, both elective and non-elective. However, international monitoring itself shows that these advances coexist with persistent gaps: the CEDAW Committee continues to point to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and recommends strengthening quotas and other temporary measures to accelerate substantive equality at all levels of the State, including national, departmental, and municipal government, the judiciary, and international representation, with particular emphasis on Indigenous and Afro-Bolivian women. At the same time, it is emphasized that effective participation requires addressing gender-based political violence: CEDAW urges the investigation and sanctioning of political harassment and violence against women, the strengthening of prevention mechanisms, and the evaluation of the implementation of Law No. 243, so that formal parity is not neutralized through exclusion, intimidation, or party-based barriers. Taken together, the Bolivian case reflects a normative framework favorable to parity, but with challenges in implementation, sustainability, and the protection of women in the actual exercise of public power

**50** | The Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2009) establishes an explicit legal framework for substantive equality and equal political participation between women and men. Among the fundamental values on which the State is based are equality, inclusion, social justice, and social and gender equity in participation (art. 8), and the government system is defined as a participatory, representative, and community-based democracy, founded on the equivalence of conditions for men and women (art. 11). Likewise, the Constitution recognizes the right of all individuals to freely participate in the development, realization, and monitoring of political power, individually or collectively, ensuring equitable participation and equal conditions for men and women (art. 26). This principle is reflected in specific policies on political representation, establishing equal participation of men and women in the election of assembly members (art. 209) and the nomination of candidates on equal terms by political organizations, civil society groups, and Indigenous Originary Peasant Nations and Peoples (art. 209).

This constitutional framework is further developed by Law No. 026 on the Electoral Regime (2010), which regulates the exercise of representative, community-based, and intercultural democracy, and establishes as mandatory principles equality, equivalence, parity, and alternation in candidate lists for legislative and municipal bodies, ensuring that women comprise 50% of candidacies and that alternation between candidates of different sexes in primary and substitute positions is observed.

# Brazil

Brazil exhibits a pattern of women's economic autonomy marked by partial advances and structural constraints within an unstable political and economic context. The 1995–2025 period unfolded within a formal democracy shaped by crises and political shifts that affected the continuity of gender policies: mass protests and polarization since 2013–2014; the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2015–2016 and subsequent institutional reconfiguration under the Temer administration; followed by a regressive cycle during Bolsonaro's term (2019–2022), which was characterized by the dismantling of policies and budget cuts affecting women's agendas; and a reactivation since 2023 under Lula's government, albeit with a more conservative legislature (CLADEM Brasil, 2024; Freedom House, 2025; Associated Press, 2024; Reuters, 2024; Ministry of Women, 2023). In the labor market, women's participation in the economically active population rose from 48.9% to 56.9% between 1995 and 2005, but subsequently stagnated, reaching 53% in 2024 — evidence of more than a decade without sustained growth (World Bank, 2025). The wage gap remains significant: a 10% difference in 2025 according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) and 23.2% in weighted monthly income in 2023 according to the International Labour Organization, indicating that inequality is driven by discrimination and occupational segregation that disproportionately affects Black women (World Economic Forum, 2025; ILO Southern Cone, 2025; IDB, 2021; Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2025).

Although women's vulnerable employment has declined (from 32.1% in 1995/2005 to 22.6% in 2023), this coexists with persistent informality in female-dominated sectors, such as domestic work and care (World Bank, 2025). In contrast to other countries, Brazil has moved toward establishing a national care framework through the National Care Policy (Law No. 15,069/2024) and the National Care Plan (Decree No. 12,562/2025). However, the burden of unpaid work remains decisive: women devote 2.3 times more time than men, limiting income, labor market continuity, and career advancement (World Bank, 2025). In sum, economic violence in Bra-



zile combines participation stagnation, structural wage gaps, racial inequalities, and the sexual division of domestic labor, and CEDAW reiterates that addressing it requires effective pay equality, labor formalization, and care policies grounded in an intersectional approach (CEDAW, 2012; CEDAW, 2024).

With regard to parity and women's participation in public office — both elective and non-elective — we observe gradual but insufficient progress. Female representation in parliament increased from very low levels in the late 1990s to 18.1% in 2024, confirming advancement without achieving substantive parity (World Bank, 2025; CEDAW, 2024). At the local executive level, women's presence remains stagnant, with women holding 12% of mayoral offices

in 2016 and 11% in 2022, indicating persistent barriers to territorial leadership (World Bank, 2025; CEDAW, 2024). In the judiciary, higher participation is evident, but with glass ceilings in senior positions: women judges account for approximately 36–38%, while female court presidents remain around 26–28% between 2016 and 2024 (World Bank, 2025). Accordingly, CEDAW has repeatedly recommended across successive review cycles the intensification of temporary special measures, the strengthening of party incentives, and the fighting against gender-based political violence to ensure not only access to office but also continuity and the effective exercise of power — particularly for Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and rural women (CEDAW, 2012; CEDAW, 2024).

# Colombia

Colombia combines a formal democracy with a political-economic context shaped by a prolonged armed conflict, social inequality, and uneven territorial state presence. The 1991 Constitution defines the country as a social state governed by the rule of law, decentralized and pluralist; however, current tensions affecting democratic legitimacy are reflected in voter turnout of 58.17% in 2022 and in declining support for democracy (48%) and satisfaction with it (20%) by 2025 (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991; Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2022; Radio Colom-

bia, 2025). This background is linked to a history of armed violence and economic, racial, and rural exclusions that have had intersectional and more severe negative impacts on Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant women (GMH, 2013; Escóbar, 2015; Instituto Internacional sobre Raza, Igualdad y Derechos Humanos, 2021).

In this regard, women's economic autonomy is characterized by labor market participation without sustained improvement: fluctuating participation that remained stagnant at 51.7% in 2024, alongside wage gaps that, while appearing relatively low in aggregate



indicators, remain significant in monthly earnings (17.1% in 2023) and are exacerbated by rural residence, informality, ethnic identity, and motherhood (World Bank, 2025; ILO Southern Cone, 2025; CEDAW, 2019). Female informality remains structurally high (52.1% of employed women in 2025), limiting stable income and access to social protection (DANE, 2025). This is compounded by a marked care burden: women devote 3.4 times more time than men to unpaid domestic and care work, conditioning job quality and economic autonomy (World Bank, 2025). Taken together, this configuration reflects a pattern of economic violence: limited labor participation and poorer employment conditions (higher informality, lower pay, among others), with internal inequalities concealed by national averages and strong structural constraints derived from the sexual division of labor (CEDAW, 2007; CEDAW, 2019).

With regard to parity and women's participation in public office, both elective and non-elective, Colombia shows significant legal advances but still mixed outcomes. Law 581 of 2000 (Quota Law) requires at least 30% women in senior discretionary appointments, while Law 1475 of 2011 establishes a minimum of 30% women on electoral lists. Nevertheless, CEDAW observed that formal compliance does not ensure more women are elected or placed in competitive positions, and therefore recommended measures to improve list place-

ment, funding for women candidates, and the participation of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women (Law 581, 2000; Law 1475, 2011; CEDAW, 2013; Red Nacional de Mujeres, n.d.).

At the executive level, the government of Gustavo Petro (2022–2026) can be considered a parity-based cabinet and includes a female vice-presidency, signaling recent political will (Banco de la República, n. d.; Viceministerio de las Mujeres, 2024). However, women's legislative representation has historically remained low, and political violence against women candidates and leaders continues to operate as a barrier to both access and continued tenure in office, as documented by studies and international recommendations (Sarmiento & Ospino, 2019; ONU Mujeres Colombia, 2018; CEDAW, 2019). In senior public administration posts, official data show stronger progress (48.26% women in 2024), suggesting that advancement has been more dynamic through appointments than through popular elections (Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública, 2024). Thus, Colombia combines a robust parity framework and recent executive efforts toward equality with persistent challenges: limited translation of quotas into electoral representation, gender-based political violence, and intersectional gaps that restrict women's access to and effective participation in senior public posts (CEDAW, 2013; CEDAW, 2019; CEJ, 2021).



# El Salvador

El Salvador combines institutional advances in gender matters with an increasingly restrictive political-economic context for women's autonomy. Following the 1992 Peace Accords, a formal democracy was consolidated, although marked by persistent poverty, inequality, and social violence. Since 2019, the growing concentration of power in the Executive branch and the adoption of a state securitization strategy — based on the expansion of police and military control — have contributed to a significant reduction in homicide rates, but at the cost of increased state violence, the militarization of social life, and the restriction of democratic guarantees and fundamental rights. This

context has narrowed civic space and weakened institutional accountability mechanisms, negatively affecting the formulation, implementation, and sustainability of gender equality policies, limiting the effective exercise of women's autonomy. In this context, women's labor market participation remains low, albeit with a slight upward trend, rising from 46.8% in 2019 to 48.0% in 2022 according to available national data (DIGESTYC, 2023). Women's labor market insertion is marked by high informality and concentration in low-productivity sectors, alongside pronounced wage and territorial gaps: between 2019 and 2022, women's average earnings were consistently lower than men's, with



wider differences in services and commerce and in rural areas; moreover, female informality exceeds 70%, and exit from the labor market is largely driven by family and care responsibilities. Economic violence manifests as care-related exclusion and rural precarization, despite regulatory frameworks such as the Labor Code (Decree No. 15/1972) and the Equality Law (Decree No. 645/2011), as well as the recent National Policy on the Co-responsibility of Care 2022–2030, which recognizes and seeks to redistribute unpaid work, although with budgetary and monitoring limitations (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025; ILO Southern Cone, 2025; Código de Trabajo, 1972; Ley de Igualdad, 2011; Política Nacional de Corresponsabilidad de los Cuidados 2022–2030).

With regard to parity and women's participation in public office, the country shows formal progress but still uneven outcomes. The Political Parties Law (Legislative Decree No. 307/2013) establishes a minimum quota of 30% women candidates, but does not ensure parity; accordingly, institutions such as UNDP and feminist organiza-

tions have called for its reform toward a parity-based and inclusive system. Although women's representation in the Legislative Assembly has increased, it remains concentrated in lower-power positions: between 2018 and 2021, 65% of elected women legislators served as alternates, compared to 38% of alternates among men. In addition, seven out of ten women were placed at the bottom of party lists. Underrepresentation is further intensified at the local and institutional levels: only 27 of 262 municipalities had women mayors in 2018–2021, and for 2024–2027 only 18% of mayoral offices are headed by women; in the judiciary, women account for approximately 26.7% of full justices of the Supreme Court (4 of 15). These gaps reflect persistent structural barriers — including gender-based political violence, the sexual division of labor, and non-parity party practices — that restrict women's substantive access to both elective and appointed positions, despite the institutional structure led by ISDEMU and the SNIS (ISDEMU, 1996; SNIS, 2013; Ley de Partidos Políticos, 2013; ECLAC, 2023).



# Guatemala

Guatemala presents, over the 1995–2025 period, a political-economic context shaped by the legacy of the internal armed conflict (1960–1996), subsequent democratic reconstruction, and persistent instability marked by corruption, institutional capture, and a crisis of legitimacy; within this context, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) played a central role in anti-corruption oversight until its closure in 2019 (CICIG, 2007–2019). In recent years, new democratic expectations have emerged with the inauguration of Bernardo Arévalo in 2024, albeit amid strong conservative resistance. This background intersects with structural ethnic, territorial, and gender inequalities in a pluriethnic country with a high proportion of Indigenous populations and persistent rural poverty. In this context, women’s economic autonomy remains constrained by low and stagnant labor market participation. In 2023, total employment reached 6.6 million people, of whom 4.2 million were men and 2.4 million women. Informal employment accounts for 67.9% of total employment, particularly concentrated in rural areas, and the share of women in informal work (74.2%) exceeds that of men (63.1%), alongside higher open unemployment among women (2.3% versus 1.2%), low earnings, and limited access to social assistance (Source: ENEIC IV 2024, INE Guatemala). Consequently, the wage gap that disadvantages women is reflected in substantially lower average monthly incomes and in particularly sharp income

declines in rural and gendered occupations. This is compounded by the most acute care inequality observed across the countries analyzed: women devote 7.5 times more time than men to unpaid domestic work, which operates as a structural barrier to decent employment and economic autonomy in the absence of a national care policy that redistributes this burden, which remains privatized within households (SEPREM, 2008–2023; UNFPA, n.d.).



With regard to parity and women's political participation, Guatemala has developed institutional frameworks and policies promoting women's rights, but lacks a binding national law establishing 50/50 parity and alternation in elective positions. The National Policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women (Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres-PNPDIM) and its Equal Opportunities Plan (Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades-PEO) constitute the country's main public policy framework for advancing women's rights and substantive equality. Coordinated by the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), these instruments were most recently in force for the 2008–2023 period. These policies aim to promote the integral development of Maya, Garífuna, Xinka, and Mestiza women through strategic axes linked to economic autonomy, comprehensive health, the eradication of violence, socio-political participation, and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective across the State. The Law of Dignification and Comprehensive Promotion of Women (Ley de Dignificación y Promoción Integral de las Mujeres. Decree 7-99), passed in 1999, constitutes one of Guatemala's main legal frameworks for promoting gender equality and eradicating discrimination and violence against women in both public and private spheres. This law incorporates and puts into practice the Guatemalan commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), particularly with regard to the pillars of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, women's human rights, politi-

cal participation, employment, and the eradication of violence. Likewise, it establishes state obligations for the formulation of public policies with a gender perspective and serves as a basis for the development of subsequent mechanisms, such as the National Policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women (Política Nacional de Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres-PNPDIM) and the Plan for Equal Opportunities (Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades-PEO). These initiatives reflect the State's efforts to promote equality (SEPREM, 2000; SEPREM, 2008–2023). However, the unicameral Congress continues to maintain female representation at around 20 per cent (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2025), indicating insufficient progress toward substantive parity.

The mandate of the Supreme Electoral Court (Tribunal Supremo Electoral-TSE) to promote equality and non-discrimination in political participation is based on the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, which recognizes the right of citizenship to elect and be elected without discrimination (art. 136) and enshrines the equality of all individuals before the law, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex (art. 4). In addition, the Electoral and Political Parties Law (Ley Electoral y de Partidos Políticos-LEPP), Decree No. 1-85, assigns to the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) the responsibility of ensuring free, fair, and non-discriminatory electoral processes, as well as regulating and supervising political parties. In this capacity, the TSE may issue regulations, guidelines,

and amendment proposals aimed at strengthening democratic participation, including measures to promote gender equality. In this context, the TSE presented a bill to amend the Electoral and Political Parties Law on April 17, 2024, in order to incorporate the principles of gender parity and alternation into the law. Prior to that, in 2021, a group of female deputies promoted a similar initiative. However, none of these proposals have been passed, and Guatemala persists lacking a mandatory parity law. Within the judiciary, although gradual progress has been observed in women's participation, significant gaps persist. At the national level, the Supreme Court of Justice is composed of 13 permanent justices, and available data indicate that in 2020 women accounted for 39.58 per cent of the judiciary, with higher representation at the first-instance level (45.16 per cent) and lower representation in appellate courts (33.87 per cent). The data further reflect an approximate annual increase of 1 per cent in female representation (ICCPG, 2020).

It is therefore observed that women's representation is higher within the

judiciary than in the legislative branch; however, their presence remains lower in appellate positions and senior judicial leadership, thereby reproducing persistent glass ceilings. Inequality also persists in the Executive, and at the municipal level women continue to be a clear minority. This gap indicates the absence of binding legal parity measures, persistent party resistance, and entrenched gender stereotypes and political violence. In response, recent initiatives have sought to strengthen women's leadership, including the "*Participa Mujer*" project (2024–2028), led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, and the European Union (EU), which aims to support elected women officials and enhance their permanence and influence in political life (UNDP/UN Women/UE, 2024–2028). Nevertheless, in the absence of a binding legal framework on parity and of effective measures to prevent and address political violence, these advances in training and institutional support operate within an incomplete structural context, thereby limiting women's full access to and exercise of public power, particularly for Indigenous and rural women (DEMI, n.d.; PDH, n.d.).



## Honduras

Between 1995 and 2025, Honduras combines a fragile political and economic context with partial regulatory advances in terms of gender equality. Formal democracy was seriously weakened after the 2009 coup d'état, leading to a prolonged cycle of institutional erosion. This process frames the conditions under which the current State response has unfolded. Since 2022, the government of Xiomara Castro — the first woman to assume the presidency of the country — has confronted persistent structural challenges, including corruption, narcotics-related violence, and a social crisis marked by high levels of poverty. These conditions constrain the State's capacity to sustain redistributive policies and gender equality policies (Honduras,

Visión de País 2010-2038 y Plan de Nación 2010-2022; Honduras, INAM, 2010-2022).

In this scenario, women's economic autonomy develops in a highly segmented and precarious labor market: women's labor participation declines in the long term and reaches 39.5% in 2024 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025), with a strong concentration in informal, domestic, and agricultural employment, and with greater restrictions for rural women. Although the Labor Code (Decree No. 189-59, enacted in 1959 and with various subsequent amendments) recognizes wage equality, recent data shows the persistence of a structural gender gap in the Honduran labor market, both regarding the access to and the quality of employment. According to ILO-modeled estimates available through the World Bank Gender Data Portal, in 2024 the female labor force participation rate stood at 39.5 per cent, significantly lower than the male participation rate of 74.9 per cent, reflecting a gap of approximately 35.4 percentage points. This low participation of women in the labor market is combined with high levels of precariousness: in 2023, 48.6 per cent of employed women were in vulnerable employment, a proportion higher than that observed among men, reflecting women's greater concentration in informal work, characterized by limited social protection and unstable incomes. Overall, these indicators reflect persistent inequalities in women's economic autonomy and patterns of occupational segregation and vulnerability



based on gender (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025). Emerging responses have begun to take shape, including the establishment of a national care governance mechanism through the creation of the Care Secretariat (Gabinete de los Cuidados) in 2024. However, these efforts remain incipient in light of the scale of existing social and territorial barriers (Honduras, INAM, 2010–2022; Honduras, 2024).

Regarding parity and the participation of women in public office, Honduras shows significant formal progress, but it is still far from substantive equality. The amendment to the Electoral and Political Organizations Law of 2012 established a minimum quota of 40 per cent of women on lists (Legislative Decree No. 54-2012), but the effective representation remains lower: in 2025 women occupy around 35 of 128 seats in the National Congress ( $\approx 27\text{--}28\%$ ), highlighting a gap between quotas and actual results (Honduras. Congreso Nacional, 2012;

Honduras, INAM, 2016). Furthermore, the persistence of gender-based political violence, as monitored by the Women's Political Observatory<sup>51</sup>, continues to constitute a significant barrier to women's candidacies, retention in office, and effective exercise of political power (Honduras, INAM, 2016). By contrast, a notable advancement has been observed in non-elective positions within the judiciary: the Supreme Court elected for the 2023–2030 term holds a female majority, with women occupying 8 of its 15 judicial seats. This development indicates that parity has progressed more rapidly in certain branches of the State than within the electoral sphere (Congreso Nacional/elección de la CSJ 2023; Honduras, INAM, 2016). Overall, the country faces the challenge of translating quotas into effective equality, reinforcing guarantees against political violence, and creating party and cultural conditions for women to compete, win, and govern at all levels.

**51** | A monitoring and analytical platform focused on women's political participation in the country, dedicated to the collection, systematization, and dissemination of data and indicators on the representation and exercise of the political rights of women and girls. The Observatory operates under the Women's Parliament of Honduras and is coordinated by civil society organizations, with the support of feminist networks and institutional partnerships that promote gender equality in decision-making spaces.



# Mexico

52 | See footnote 2.

53 | Institutional, economic, and social reforms in Mexico (1995-2025): The reform process referred to includes, on the institutional level, the end of hegemonic prisms and the consolidation of democratic alternation since the 2000s, along with the strengthening of the electoral system, the creation and consolidation of the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES), and the development of a specialized legal framework on equality and gender violence, such as the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2007) and the national equality programs (PROEQUIDAD, PROIGUALDAD). In the economic and social sphere, the period 2012-2018 was marked by structural reforms aimed at economic liberalization and governance agreements, with differentiated impacts on employment, social security, and women's living conditions, in a context of high informality and inequality. Cross-cuttingly, since 2006 the process of militarization of public security has intensified in connection with strategies to combat drug trafficking, resulting in increased levels of violence and human rights violations, with particularly severe impacts on women and girls. Recent legal reforms (2024-2025) have sought to strengthen the protection of women's rights through modifications to key laws regarding equality, violence, work, justice, and public security, although significant gaps persist in their effective implementation.

Mexico combines, between 1995 and 2025, a democratization process with a political-economic context marked by structural, social, and political violence driven by drug trafficking and institutional reforms. The end of the long-standing political hegemony of the Institutional Revolutionary Party<sup>52</sup> and the subsequent period of political alternation from the 2000s onward unfolded alongside a cycle of security militarization (2006–2012) and economic and social reforms

(2012–2018<sup>53</sup>), generating differentiated impacts on women.

More recently, the pandemic (2020-2022) strained employment and caregiving, and the beginning of Claudia Sheinbaum's government in 2024 was accompanied by legal reforms in 2025 to strengthen the protection of women's rights (UN Women & ECLAC, 2020).

Within this framework, women's economic autonomy has improved gradually but continues to face persistent constraints. Female labor



force participation has risen steadily from 37.6 per cent in 1995 to 47.4 per cent in 2024, although it remains below male participation levels (World Bank, 2025; INEGI, 2024–2025). The gender wage gap has remained at approximately 15 per cent, both in international estimates (WEF, 2025) and in weighted monthly income figures (ILO Southern Cone, 2025), within a labor market in which more than half of employed women remain in informal employment, with limited access to social security, despite regulatory frameworks such as the Federal Labor Law (*Ley Federal del Trabajo*<sup>54</sup>) of 1931, and the NMX-R-025<sup>55</sup>, a non-mandatory policy on workplace equality (Mexico, 1931/amendments; Mexican policy, 2015; IMCO, 2024). This situation is compounded by the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work: women devote 2.5 times more time than men to caregiving, constraining income levels and labor market continuity, while the National Care System remains “under development” and has yet to function as a consolidated public care network (World Bank, 2025; PROIGUALDAD 2020–2024). In sum, economic violence against women in Mexico manifests as a paradox: labor market participation has expanded and equality frameworks and programs (PROEQUIDAD, PROIGUALDAD, PROABIM) have been strengthened, yet persistent wage gaps, widespread informality, and the absence of fully institutionalized care systems continue to limit progress and sustain vulnerability — particularly among Indigenous, rural, and young women (Mexico, 2001; Mexico, 2020–2024; INMUJERES, n.d.; CEDAW, 2025).

With regard to parity and women’s participation in public office, both elec-

tive and non-elective, Mexico stands as one of the most developed cases in the region, particularly within the legislative branch. According to the CLADEM Mexico Report, prepared within the framework of the *Programa Paridad* — which was promoted by CLADEM and Diakonia with the support of the Government of Sweden — the exercise of political rights constitutes one of the areas in which the greatest progress toward substantive equality has been achieved. Currently, 13 of the country’s 32 federal entities are governed by women, including Mexico City, and the Congress of the Union reflects parity, with a slight female majority in the Chamber of Deputies (251 women and 249 men) and exact parity in the Senate (64 women and 64 men). This progress is mirrored at the subnational level, where 21 state legislatures have a majority of women representatives, amounting in total to 592 women compared to 511 men across local legislative bodies. At the municipal level, although progress toward parity has been slower and territorially uneven, advances have been steady: women currently lead approximately 30 per cent of the coun-

**54** | Federal Labor Law (Mexico, 1931): Regulatory law of Article 123 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, enacted in 1931 and originally published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on August 28, 1931. It does not have a unique decree number, as it is a regulatory law of constitutional nature. It regulates labor relations and establishes fundamental rights in terms of dignified and decent work, equality and non-discrimination, as well as protection of maternity and breastfeeding. It has undergone multiple reforms, among which those enacted in 2012 and 2019 — relating to labor reform and the labor justice system — and those adopted in 2023, particularly in connection with the regulation of subcontracting, the strengthening of labor rights, and regulatory adjustments aimed at promoting equality.

**55** | The NMX-R-025 is an optional regulatory instrument that establishes criteria and guidelines to promote workplace equality and non-discrimination in Mexico. It was published in 2015 and is coordinated by the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social-STPS), together with the National Institute of Women (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres-INMUJERES), the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación-CONAPRED), and the Secretariat of Economy. The policy includes measures aimed at promoting pay equality; preventing and addressing harassment and sexual harassment; facilitating work–family balance; fostering shared responsibility in caregiving; and ensuring respect for women’s rights, including maternity protection and breastfeeding. While it has helped to promote good practices in workplace equality across both the public and private sectors, its non-mandatory nature limits its reach, particularly in contexts characterized by high levels of labor informality.

try's municipalities, compared to 5.3 per cent recorded in 2010. Nevertheless, only four states presently have a majority of municipalities governed by women. The case of Jalisco is emblematic of this cumulative process, having evolved from marginal female representation in its state congress in the early 2000s to achieving and surpassing parity by 2021, alongside a significant increase in women mayors between 2021 and 2024. These advances are the result of electoral reforms, equality policies, and international commitments undertaken since the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). Nevertheless, challenges persist in consolidating parity at the

municipal level and in eradicating practices of gender-based political violence (United Nations, 1995; México, 2007<sup>56</sup>; CLADEM México, 2024).

These advances coexist with gender-based political violence — recognized and sanctioned under the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2007) and the General Law on Electoral Offences (2014, as amended<sup>57</sup>). In this regard, gender-based political violence continues to function as a barrier to women's access to and retention in political office. Accordingly, the 2020 amendments and subsequent secondary legislation adopted in 2025 have strengthened institutional obligations related to the prevention and accountability of such offenses (Mexico, 2007; Mexico, 2014/2020<sup>58</sup>). Taken together, Mexico combines a robust national parity framework with the ongoing challenge of consolidating territorial parity and ensuring that women can exercise political power free from violence and partisan obstruction (Viceministerio/CONAVIM-PIPASEVM 2021-2024; UN Women & ECLAC, 2020).

**56** | Mexico, 2007: It corresponds to the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV), enacted in 2007 and published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on February 1 of that year.

**57** | General Law on Electoral Offences (Ley General en Materia de Delitos Electorales, 2014, amended in 2020): General law enacted in 2014 and published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on May 23, 2014, which establishes criminal offenses and penalties related to electoral crimes. The 2020 amendment introduced specific provisions to prevent, define, and sanction gender-based political violence against women, in line with the commitments undertaken by the Mexican State under the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, and other international human rights mechanisms.

**58** | Mexico, 2014/2020: Refers to the General Law on Electoral Offences (Ley General en Materia de Delitos Electorales), published in 2014, and its 2020 amendments, through which the classification and sanction of gender-based political violence were incorporated.



# Panama

Between 1995 and 2025, Panama has functioned as a representative democracy, with regular presidential transitions and separation of powers since 1989, which has enabled a degree of institutional stability for gender equality policies (Freedom House, n.d.; World Bank, n.d.). However, this stability coexists with high and persistent social inequality, repeatedly highlighted in the concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee, which have emphasized the need to accelerate substantive equality and reduce the socioeconomic gaps that disproportionately affect Indigenous and Afro-descendant women (CEDAW, 1998, 2010, 2022; Oratores, 2022; CLADEM, 2024). In the current context, the country faces budget deficits and social pressures associated with pension system reforms, budgetary conflict, the migration crisis in the Darién Gap, and climate-related impacts, factors that place additional strain on women's employment conditions and social protection (World Bank, n.d.; CEDAW, 2022).

Despite these advances, women's economic autonomy continues to be shaped by structural inequalities. Female labor force participation increased from 41.4 per cent in 1995 to 52.7 per cent in 2024; however, significant gaps persist in employment quality, including a weighted monthly wage gap of 18 per cent in 2023 and an increase in women's vulnerable employment to 33.2 per cent in the same year. These trends indicate that expanded labor market participation

has occurred largely under precarious and segregated conditions. The most recent and comprehensive State response has been the adoption of the National Care System (Sistema Nacional de Cuidados. Law No. 431/2024), accompanied by technical guidelines such as *Territorios que cuidan*, aimed at redistributing unpaid domestic and care work and supporting women's labor market participation. Nonethe-



**59** | It corresponds to Law No. 54 of 2012, which amends the Panamanian Electoral Code to incorporate affirmative action measures aimed at strengthening the political participation of women. The law establishes provisions on gender quotas in nominations and in the internal procedures of political parties, constituting one of the country's first legal advances in terms of parity, although with limitations in its effective application and in the accountability mechanisms.

**60** | Refers to Law No. 184 of 2020, which recognizes and regulates political violence against women, establishing definitions, measures of prevention, attention, and accountability measures, as well as institutional responsibilities for its implementation. This law aligns with the commitments undertaken by the Panamanian State under CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and constitutes a significant milestone in the protection of women's political rights.

less, official documentation acknowledges that existing information and monitoring systems remain insufficient to adequately capture how labor inequalities affect women differently according to territory, socioeconomic status, age, ethnic background, and other factors, thereby limiting the design and evaluation of intersectional public policies (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025; ILO South Cone, 2025; Panama, 2024; UN Women, 2023; MIDES, 2023; CEDAW, 2022).

With respect to parity and women's participation in public office — both elective and non-elective — Panama combines formal equality frameworks with still modest outcomes. Law No. 54/2012 amended the Electoral Code to require parity in internal party nominations, while Law No. 184/2020 typed and criminalized gender-based political violence, strengthening guarantees for women's electoral participation (Panama, 2012<sup>59</sup>; Panama, 2020<sup>60</sup>; PNUD, 2024). Nevertheless, the most recent electoral cycle revealed implementation

gaps in its implementation: only 19.28 per cent of candidacies were held by women, and they secured just over 12 per cent of elected positions. These outcomes may be linked to party resistance, gender stereotypes, barriers to campaign financing for women candidates, and political violence (CEDAW, 2022; PNUD, 2024; CLADEM, 2024; Oratores, 2022). Although women's parliamentary representation has increased, it remains low by regional standards, and progress in high-level non-elective positions has been moderate, with women comprising approximately one quarter of public office positions (CEDAW, 2010, 2022). Accordingly, the CEDAW Committee has consistently reiterated the need to strengthen sanctions for non-compliance with parity provisions, ensure adequate resources for training and electoral campaigns, and promote targeted measures for Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, in order to translate legal equality into effective political power (CEDAW, 1998, 2010, 2022; Ministry of Women of Panama, n.d.).



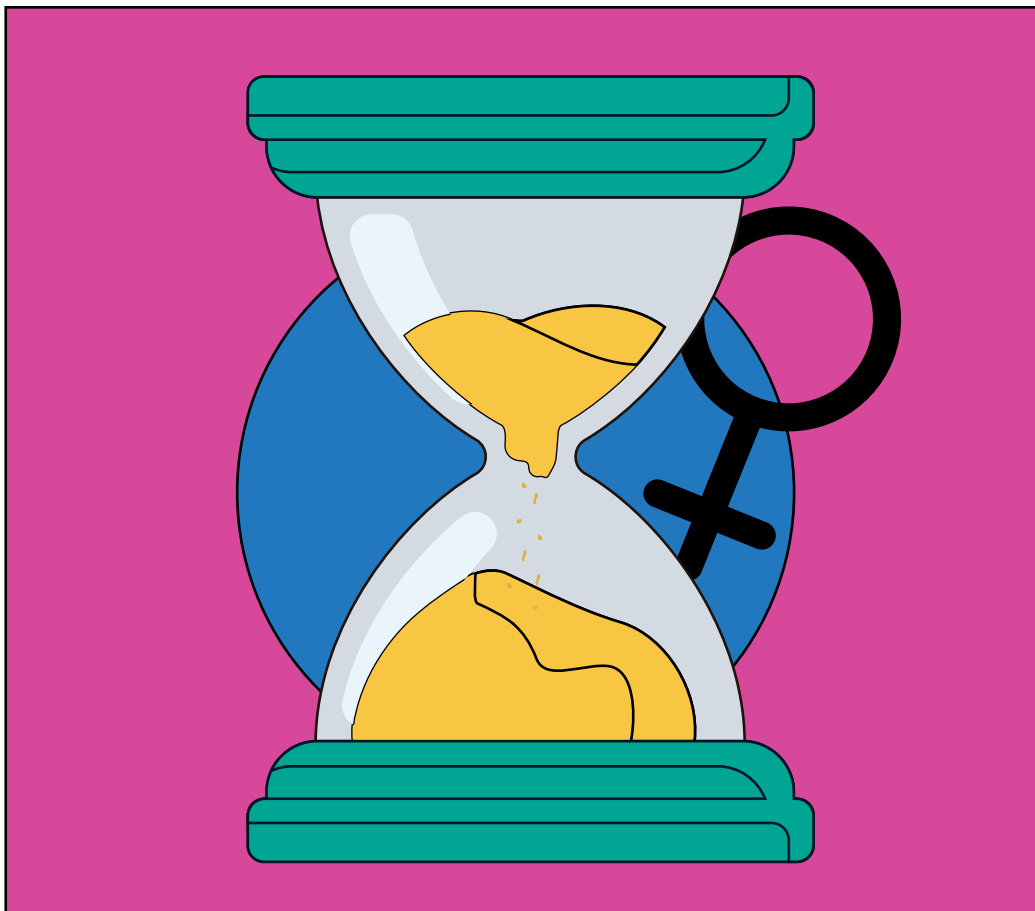
# Paraguay

Between 1995 and 2025, Paraguay has experienced a political and economic landscape marked by authoritarian legacies and recurrent crises and social conflicts — including cycles of protests and institutional tensions — which have constrained women’s economic autonomy and the State’s capacity to sustain equality policies. Within this context, female labor force participation has shown gradual and sustained improvement, rising from 52.2 per cent in 1995 to 59.1 per cent in 2024, alongside a progressive reduction in vulnerable employment — though it remains high — reaching 38.4 per cent in 2023 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025). However, increased labor market par-

ticipation has not eliminated income inequality: the weighted monthly gender wage gap remained at 18.5 per cent (2023), confirming the persistence of discrimination and occupational segregation (ILO Southern Cone, 2025). In the area of care, the country made a formal policy advance with the adoption of the National Care Policy (PNCUPA) 2030 in 2022, developed by the Inter-institutional Secretariat for the Prevention of Violence against Women (GIPC)<sup>61</sup>, under the coordination of the Ministry of Women. Nevertheless, in everyday life the disproportionate domestic burden continues: women devote 3.4 times more time to unpaid work, which remains a central driver of economic vio-

**61** | Inter-institutional coordination instance of the Paraguayan State, created within the framework of Law No. 5777/2016 on Comprehensive Protection of Women against all forms of Violence, and coordinated by the Ministry of Women. The GIPC aims to coordinate policies, plans, and actions among public institutions responsible for the prevention, attention, sanction, and eradication of violence against women, as well as to monitor the implementation of the law. This mechanism contributes to the fulfillment of the international commitments undertaken by Paraguay under CEDAW, MESECVI, and the Beijing Platform for Action.

**62** | National Care Policy of Paraguay (Política Nacional de Cuidados del Paraguay – PNCUPA): a public policy framework aimed at recognizing, redistributing, and reducing unpaid care work, while guaranteeing the right to care for people in situations of dependency and for caregivers, grounded in a gender perspective and the principle of social co-responsibility. The PNCUPA is coordinated by the Ministry of Women, in coordination with other State institutions, and is part of the commitments assumed by Paraguay in terms of gender equality, women’s human rights, and comprehensive care systems, in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, and recommendations of international organizations. Its implementation seeks to strengthen the economic autonomy of women and to reduce the gaps resulting from the burden of unpaid domestic and care work.



lence and a material constraint on financial autonomy (PNCUPA<sup>62</sup> 2030, 2022; World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025).

With regard to parity and women's participation in public office, progress has been slow and remains insufficient. Women's representation in parliament increased from very low levels during 1995–2005 (approximately 8.2 per cent of legislative seats) to around 17.6 per cent during 2016–2024, with a notable rise following the 2023 elections, according to data reported through the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Parliamentary Information System (IPU/Parline)<sup>63</sup>.

However, territorial inequality is pronounced: between 2018 and 2023 there were no women governors across the country's 17 departments, and only three women held such positions between 1998 and 2018 (International IDEA, 2023), evidencing persistent glass ceilings in subnational executive offices. At the municipal level, al-

though progress has been sustained, women mayors increased from just 2.7 per cent in 1996 to 11.8 per cent in 2021, according to International IDEA, reflecting ongoing partisan, economic, and cultural barriers. In non-elective positions, the pattern is mixed: the average share of women in senior management roles between 2015 and 2024 stood at approximately 38.35 per cent, with stronger representation at mid-level positions and more limited access to top decision-making roles. This reinforces the diagnosis of structural underrepresentation consistently highlighted by international treaty bodies (CEDAW, 1996; 2005; 2011; 2017; 2024). Overall, Paraguay demonstrates gradual improvements in labor market participation and certain normative advances in care policy and political participation, yet persistent inequalities continue to restrict women's economic autonomy and the effective realization of political parity.

**63** | IPU/Parline: Official database of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) that gathers compared and updated information on the composition and functioning of national parliaments. The PARLINE system provides sex-disaggregated data on the representation of women and men in legislative bodies, as well as information on electoral systems and election dates.

# Peru

Between 1995 and 2025, Peru has followed a political trajectory marked by a transition from Fujimori-era authoritarianism toward a constitutional democracy, though characterized by pronounced instability since 2016 due to successive presidential crises and recurrent social conflict. This context has hindered policy continuity and constrained the State's capacity to sustain redistributive reforms and gender equality initiatives (Ficha Peru, 2025). Within this framework, women's participation in the labor market has remained high and sustained: female labor force participation increased from 49.1 per cent in 1995 to 64.3 per cent in 2005, reached 67.7 per cent in 2015, and stood at 65.2 per cent in 2024 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025). However, this labor market presence does not ensure full economic autonomy. The gender wage gap persists both in international estimates (18.73 per cent in 2025) and in weighted monthly income figures<sup>64</sup> (19.3 per cent in 2023), reflecting occupational segregation, motherhood negative impacts, entrenched gender stereotypes, and intersecting disadvantages linked to rurality and Indigenous identity (WEF, 2025; ILO Southern Cone, 2025). Moreover, more than half of employed women remain in vulnerable employment (54.3 per cent in 2023), confirming that participation occurs within a context of widespread informality and precarity (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2025). This economic inequality is further reinforced by the burden of domestic work: women perform an average of 24 additional hours of unpaid work per week compared to men. Although Bill No. 2735 proposes the creation of a National Care System, it has yet to be consolidated as a state policy, leaving care responsibilities as a structur-

al barrier to women's financial autonomy (Peru, Law Bill No. 2735).

Regarding parity and women's participation in public office, Peru has developed a legal framework incorporating quotas, parity provisions, and sanctions against political violence that has facilitated women's representation. The minimum candidate quota was first introduced under the Municipal Elections Law No. 26864 (1997), subsequently expanded through electoral legislation and, more recently, through Law No. 32058, which establishes measures to optimize the electoral process from a parity perspective (Peru, Law No. 26864; Peru, Law No. 32058). In parallel, Law No. 31155 provides for the prevention and accountability for harassment against women in political life, strengthening protections against gender-based political violence. In terms of outcomes, women's parliamentary representation has shown sustained progress: 35 women among 120 members of Congress during 2006–2011 (approximately 29 per cent); 37 of 130 during 2016–2020; 34 of 130 during 2020–2021; and 49 of 130 during the 2021–2026 term (approximately 37.7 per cent), according to data from the National Office of Electoral Processes and the National Jury of Elections (ONPE/JNE, n.d.). In high-level non-elective public management positions, women's representation during 2021–2023 has remained close to one third (approximately 33 per cent), indicating the persistence of glass ceilings at the upper levels of the bureaucracy (SERVIR, 2024). Overall, Peru combines robust normative advances with clear improvements in congressional representation, while continuing to face significant gaps in achieving effective parity at the highest levels of political and State decision-making.

**64** | Indicator derived from monthly labor income reported in household surveys, to which sampling expansion factors are applied in order to extrapolate results to the total population. The weighting process incorporates the survey's sampling design and adjusts each observation according to its population weight, taking into account variables such as sex, age, area of residence, and household size. This procedure corrects for the under- or overrepresentation of specific groups and ensures statistical comparability of income across populations and subpopulations, constituting an appropriate measure for the analysis of income gaps and economic inequalities.

# Regional overview: increased labor participation, limited economic autonomy, and unequal representation in spaces of power

**65** | Rural territories characterized by the sustained absence or weakness of the State, precarious public services, limited economic opportunities, and the normalization of multiple forms of violence, which together generate structural conditions that compel women — particularly Indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural, and young women — to migrate or to remain in situations of exclusion and rights violations. The concept of rural push factors underscores that these dynamics are not the result of individual choices, but rather of structural patterns of territorial inequality that differentially affect the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, economic autonomy, and access to justice.

**ACROSS THE COUNTRIES** examined, a consistent pattern emerges: women’s economic autonomy has improved more rapidly than their effective access to power; however, these gains have largely occurred under conditions of precariousness. In Bolivia, Paraguay, Panama, and Peru, female labor force participation has increased or remains high, yet it is almost always accompanied by persistent wage gaps, informality, and vulnerable employment, conditions that heighten exposure to rights violations. This dynamic establishes a pattern of “market entry under structural inequality,” whereby women are working more (or sustaining higher participation rates), but with lower pay, reduced stability, and greater concentration in gendered and low-productivity sectors. In Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and El Salvador, la-

bor force participation remains lower or stagnant, and the primary challenge is not solely access to employment but also its quality: mass informality (Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador), prolonged stagnation over decades (Brazil), or limited participation shaped by rural push factors<sup>65</sup> (El Salvador, Honduras). A second regional pattern thus becomes evident: national averages mask intersectional gaps, with particularly acute disadvantages affecting Indigenous, rural, and Afro-descendant women. Across all contexts, the burden of unpaid care work functions as a structural “tax” on women’s employment. Even where care policies have begun to emerge — early but fragile in Bolivia; recent in Paraguay and Panama; institutionally established in Brazil; and still under development in Mexico and Peru — domestic labor con-

tinues to constitute the material foundation of economic inequality.

The comparative analysis reveals at least three distinct sub-patterns:

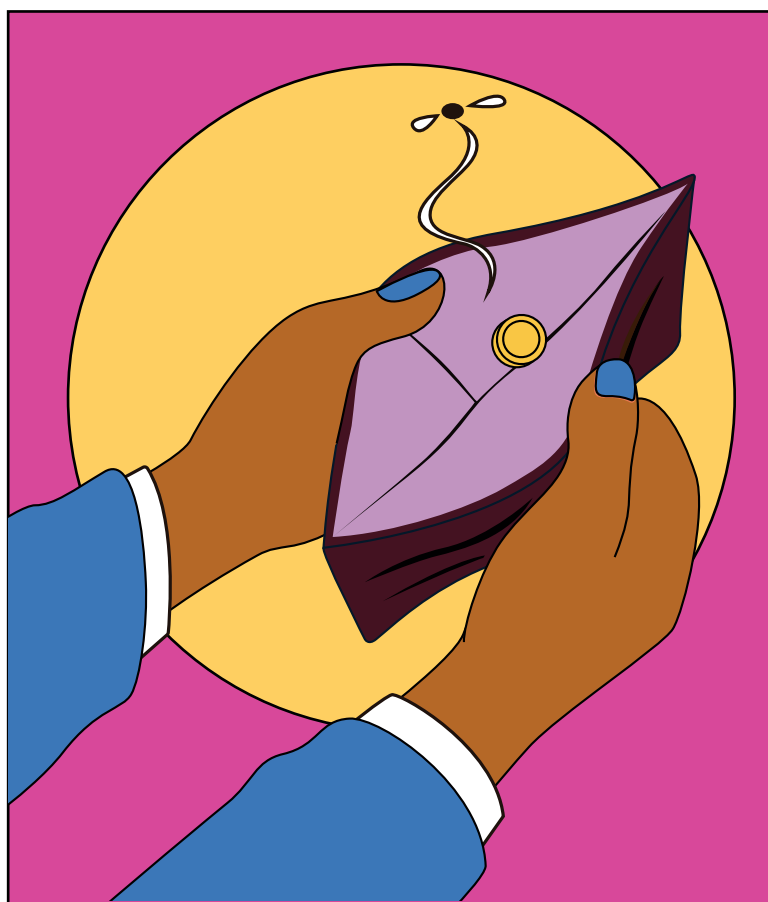
**(1)** High participation with persistent precariousness: Bolivia and Peru exemplify this model, with high or rising female labor force participation rates accompanied by very elevated levels of vulnerable employment and wage gaps approaching one fifth. Paraguay approximates this pattern insofar as it has recorded gradual improvements in women's labor participation; however, it continues to exhibit significant income inequalities and a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work that is 3.4 times higher for women, limiting the translation of increased participation into effective economic autonomy.

**(2)** Moderate or stagnant participation with structural wage inequality: Brazil and Colombia share patterns of stagnation or the absence of a clear upward trend, alongside substantial wage gaps and occupational segregation. In these contexts, economic violence manifests less through participation levels and more through inequalities regarding employment quality and internal labor market.

**(3)** Low participation due to care responsibilities and territoriality: El Salvador and Honduras present the most restrictive configuration, characterized by low labor market entry, high employment vulnerability, and withdrawal from paid work due to family responsibilities. Here, economic violence is directly reflected in gendered labor exclusion and rural precariousness. Mexico occupies an intermediate position: sustained improvements in participation and reductions in vulnerable employment coexist with persistent wage gaps and an underdeveloped care system, limiting the conversion

of labor market gains into full economic autonomy. In sum, the region shares a common dynamic: increased women's labor participation does not correspond to greater autonomy, as productive structures, widespread informality, and the privatization of care responsibilities continue to constrain material equality.

In the political sphere, regional convergence is evident: legal frameworks on quotas and parity have advanced further than actual representation and, above all, further than the effective exercise of power. Mexico and Peru represent the cases of greatest progress in national elective posts, with congresses approaching or exceeding 33 per cent women's representation and robust parity architectures. Even so, both countries continue to lag in senior public administration and local governments, underscoring that national parity does not guarantee territorial parity. Bolivia features an early



**66** | The Strategic Objective G of the Beijing Platform for Action focuses on achieving the full and effective participation of women in power and decision-making processes at all levels of society, recognizing that equality in these areas is essential both to strengthen democracy and to ensure that public policies reflect the needs and interests of half of the world's population. This objective stems from the observation that, despite advances in democratization, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in elective, executive, and political and public leadership positions, which limits not only substantive equality but also broader democratic development. In particular, G.1 seeks for governments and other actors to adopt concrete measures to ensure the full access and participation of women in power and decision-making structures, which may include mechanisms such as reforms in electoral systems, gender quotas, or other positive actions aimed at correcting persistent inequalities. G.2, in turn, focuses on strengthening women's capacity to participate effectively in leadership and decision-making, through training and leadership development, support for participation in political parties and public spaces, and the removal of cultural and structural barriers that prevent the full exercise of these roles.

and recognized parity framework; however, the analysis highlights persistent blockages arising from gender-based political violence and gaps in positions of effective decision-making power, particularly for Indigenous women. Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Honduras display the same phenomenon with varying intensity: quotas that do not translate into seats, women candidates who remain a minority or are placed in non-competitive positions, and severe underrepresentation in subnational executive offices (with extreme cases in Panama and Paraguay; low levels of women mayors in El Salvador; and stagnation in municipal-level access to power in Brazil). The most striking contrast in the region emerges in Honduras, where low legislative representation coexists with rapid progress in the Supreme Court, demonstrating that non-elective branches may achieve greater gender balance more quickly when institutional appointment mechanisms are in place, although this does not remedy the electoral deficit.

The comparative analysis suggests that Latin America and Central America are experiencing the same double paradox. On one hand, economic autonomy is growing (or remains high), but under precarious conditions, with constant wage gaps, gendered informality, and unpaid care work as a structural boundary. On the other hand, legal parity is advancing, but effective representation and the real exercise of power remain blocked by party structures, political violence, and territorial inequality. Both dimensions are interrelated: without economic autonomy, women have fewer resources to compete politically; without effective political power, they cannot transform the material bases of inequality (labor market in decent conditions, redistribution of care, taxation, and social security). The shared

regional challenge, therefore, is not only to increase indicators or enact legal frameworks, but to ensure the convergence of economic equality and political power through improved formalization of employment and income from an intersectional perspective; the development of national care systems that dismantle the privatization of care; and parity measures accompanied by effective sanctions, the financing of women's candidacies, and protection against political violence, so that access to the State constitutes a substantive exercise of power.

Therefore, we observe that regulatory advances towards equality in spaces of power have not automatically guaranteed substantive participation nor the effective exercise of political power by women. In line with Critical Area G of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>66</sup>, States have adopted quotas, parity principles, and electoral reforms that have increased women's presence in elective and non-elective positions; however, outcomes remain uneven, with persistent gaps between formal parity and substantive representation, particularly at the local level and in bodies with greater decision-making power. These limitations are reinforced by exclusionary partisan practices, unequal access to financing, and the persistence of gender-based political violence, which functions as a structural obstacle to women's access to, permanence in, and exercise of political leadership. In this regard, fulfilling the commitments under the Beijing and Cairo agendas requires not only equal legal frameworks, but also effective accountability mechanisms, protection against political violence, and special temporary measures that enable the transformation of normative parity into effective political power for women.

# Reviews conducted by follow-up mechanisms: CEDAW, CRC, and MESECVI

**CLADEM HAS A** broad and well-established track record in monitoring international treaties from a gender perspective, with advocacy actions that pioneered work now undertaken by multiple organizations across Latin America and the Caribbean. This engagement has been instrumental in advancing women's rights in the region, both through the adoption of relevant regulatory frameworks and through demands for compliance with these bodies' recommendations, which are frequently used to support advocacy efforts at the national and regional levels. All countries analyzed have ratified the three core treaties considered in this report: the CEDAW, the CRC, and the Belém do Pará Convention. While CEDAW and CRC fall within the global human rights protection system of the United Nations, MESECVI monitors the implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention and is a regional mecha-

nism operating within the framework of the Organization of American States.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a body of independent experts established to monitor States parties' implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, through the review of periodic reports and the issuance of concluding observations containing specific recommendations. Through CEDAW's Optional Protocol, adopted in 1999 and in force since 2000, States that ratify it recognize the Committee's competence to receive and consider individual communications from persons or groups alleging violations of the rights enshrined in the Convention, as well as to initiate inquiries into grave or systematic violations when appropriate, thereby strengthening international accountability for women's rights.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) by the States parties, examining initial and periodic compliance reports, and issuing concluding observations with recommendations. In addition to its treaty-monitoring functions, the Committee CRC is also empowered, under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (adopted in 2011 and in force since 2014), to receive individual communications from children or their representatives alleging violations by States parties of the rights recognized in the Convention and its related protocols; this mechanism provides an international means of redress when domestic remedies are insufficient or ineffective.

The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) is the inter-American system of continuous and independent assessment of compliance within the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women* by the States Parties, facilitated by a Committee of Experts that analyzes progress and challenges in the implementation of the Convention. The MESECVI operates through rounds of multilateral evaluation, which constitute periodic and comparable cycles of analysis on the implementation of the Convention. Each round is structured in two stages: an evaluation phase, based on questionnaires with common indicators completed by the States, and a follow-up phase, aimed at assessing the

measures adopted to comply with the recommendations issued by the Committee of Experts of MESECVI. Since its establishment, the MESECVI has carried out several hemispheric rounds that have made it possible to identify regulatory advances alongside persistent patterns of violence, structural gaps, and institutional deficits, producing national and hemispheric reports that serve as a regional reference for public policy design, accountability processes, and the strengthening of frameworks for the prevention, sanction, and eradication of violence against women. More recently, the MESECVI has promoted inter-American model laws aimed at strengthening regional legal frameworks to address specific forms of violence:

- The Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life (adopted in 2016) establishes a comprehensive framework for the classification, prevention, punishment, and remedy of all forms of political violence against women in the exercise of their political rights.

- The Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Gender-Based Digital Violence against Women, adopted by MESECVI, responds to the growth of violence in digital environments by establishing regional standards to protect women's rights against attacks, harassment, the non-consensual dissemination of intimate content, and other forms of violence facilitated by digital technologies, thereby strengthening national legal frameworks to address these contemporary forms of violence.

# Bolivia

Across four reviews before the Committee CEDAW (1991, 2008, 2015, and 2022), Bolivia displays a trajectory characteristic of “normative progress without substantive implementation,” in which the same core issues recur cycle after cycle. The Committee acknowledges relevant reforms and legislation but consistently underscores that the implementation gap sustains structural discrimination. With regard to violence against women, the internal progression of the recommendations is clear: in 2008, gender-based violence and femicide are identified as central problems linked to impunity and judicial barriers; in 2015, the agen-

da becomes more operational, calling for specialized courts under Law No. 348, unified registries, the effective sanctioning of femicide, the prohibition of conciliation, the strengthening of policing with a gender perspective, and the expansion of shelters; in 2022, despite the existing legal framework, alerts are reiterated concerning high incidence rates, revictimization, failures in protection, the absence of exclusive courts, and social stigma, alongside renewed calls to reform the Penal Code to redefine rape on the basis of lack of consent, in order to prevent the dismissal or premature closure of rape complaints and prosecutions.



In the area of SRH, continuity is equally evident: since 2008, SRH has been linked to the response to sexual violence; in 2015, there was a call for reductions in maternal mortality, the guarantee of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), expanded access to modern contraception, and the decriminalization of abortion under broad circumstances, including the provision of legal abortion (ILE) without judicial authorization; in 2022, the same agenda is reiterated, with the addition of a structural recommendation to adopt a comprehensive SRH law and plan with measurable indicators, effective regulation of conscientious objection, and robust policies to prevent early pregnancy.

Economic autonomy remains the central pillar: from the emphasis on labour inequality in 2008, the agenda transitions to broadened intersectional lens in 2015 (including informality, domestic workers, harassment, and child labour), and by 2022 advances toward ensuring equal pay, fighting occupational segregation, promoting shared responsibility, and recognizing the economic contribution of unpaid care work. Political parity has appeared since 2008 as insufficient, and

in the period 2015-2022, the need for special temporary measures, protection against political harassment (Law No. 243), accountability and remedy is emphasized, with special attention to Indigenous and Afro-Bolivian women. We also note expanded social participation since 2014, through thematic coalitions that sustain the monitoring of unmet recommendations.

The CRC review, concluded in 2023 on the combined fifth and sixth reports, focuses on concerns regarding sexual violence against children and adolescents, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, maternal and infant mortality, and an adolescent SRH set of measures that requires specific legislation, a strategic plan, safe abortion/decriminalization, mandatory CSE, and LGBTQIAPN+ inclusion. Although Bolivia ratified the Belém do Pará Convention, thus the commitment to undergo periodic evaluation rounds conducted by MESECVI, it has not participated in any so far. Overall, we note that Bolivia clearly reflects the regional persistence of violence, constrained SRH, and economic inequality shaped by caregiving responsibilities, along with a political parity that is more formal than substantive.

# Brazil

In contrast to Bolivia — although without breaking the regional pattern — Brazil illustrates a trajectory of high normative density and progressively deepening intersectionality. The CEDAW Committee reviewed the country in 2007, 2012, and 2024, with increasingly plural civil society participation: from relatively restricted national coalitions in the 1990s to a multiplication of thematic and identity-based shadow reports since 2010, including organizations focused on the rights of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, LGBTQIAPN+, and domestic workers, among others. Civil society organizations have actively participated both in the dialogue during the review sessions and in subsequent follow-up. Substantively, Brazil maintains four recurring core thematic areas of concern: violence, SRH, economic autonomy, and parity.

In 2007, priorities included the eradication of domestic violence and trafficking, the reduction of maternal mortality, reforming the punitive abortion framework, labour equality, and increasing political representation. In 2012, access to justice in cases of violence was reinforced, the call to abolish penalties for abortion was reiterated, the labour agenda addressing discrimination and harassment was intensified, and special temporary measures were requested for Afro-descendant and Indigenous women. In 2024, a broad intersectional approach is consolidated: strengthening protection for rural, Indigenous, *quilombola*, migrant, disabled, and LGBTQIAPN+ women; full decriminalization of abortion and comprehensive

guarantees of access; the creation of a National Care Policy developed through intersectional consultation; effective enforcement of equal pay; and parity at all levels of decision-making.

The CEDAW Committee reiterates its recommendation to improve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of comprehensive data disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, geographic location, and socioeco-



conomic circumstances, as well as the use of measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women. The Committee urges the State party, in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests that information on these measures be included in its next periodic report.

Within the international monitoring process, the issue regarding the concept of parental alienation gained special relevance in the Committee's recent reviews of Brazil. In the 2022 report, the State itself acknowledged that the application of Law No. 12,318/2010 (the Parental Alienation Law) had produced situations of injustice, and in the 2024 review session the issue received sustained attention from civil society, reflected in the submission of multiple specialized shadow reports. In its concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern regarding the impact of this law on the rights of women who report violence. In this regard, the Committee issued recommendations aimed at removing

gender bias in the justice system, ensuring that custody decisions prioritize domestic and family violence and the best interests of the child, and calling for a review of the current legal framework in accordance with the State's obligations under the Convention.

The CRC assessed Brazil in 2004, 2015, and 2025, reiterating insufficient federal–subnational coordination, weak data systems, and structural discrimination affecting girls and adolescents. The 2025 cycle further deepens the anti-racist and anti-LGBTQIAPN+ discrimination dimension, incorporating school-based racism and child hunger as critical concerns. Across its four rounds, MESECVI records convergence with CEDAW's findings: recognition of advances — including the Maria da Penha Law and policies addressing femicide and digital violence — alongside persistent deficits in implementation, territorial coverage, intersectional SRH, and budget allocation for public policies. Brazil thus confirms that formal regional progress becomes substantive only when the gap between the law, effective access to justice, territorial service provision, and material conditions is reduced.

# Colombia

Colombia introduces a structural aggravating factor: the armed conflict as a structural driver of gender-based violence and violence against children. The CEDAW Committee registered four key milestones (2007, 2016, 2019, and a 2021 follow-up) and an expansion of highly intersectional social participation (13 shadow reports in 2013–2016; 18 in 2019, including civil society participation within the official delegation). In 2007, it was noted that the generalized climate of conflict-related violence exposed women and girls to sexual violence and insecurity, with low reporting rates, limited State capacity to prevent, respond to, and sanction domestic violence, and persistent trafficking. Barriers to SRH were also flagged, including rising adolescent pregnancy, deep labour inequality, and very low legislative representation of women. In 2016, laws such as Law No. 1257/2008 were enacted, but their ineffective implementation was criticized due to concerns regarding limited shelters, insufficient data, weak State coordination, and inadequate specialized justice — particularly in conflict-affected territories. The Committee also called for guaranteeing access to legal abortion without barriers and strengthening the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. In 2019, concerns regarding impunity, femicides, rural violence, and threats against women leaders were reiterated, alongside abusive conscientious objection to legal abortion, gendered labour market informality, and the unequal distribution of care. With regard

to parity, legislative setbacks and the limited effectiveness of quotas were also noted.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reports five review cycles with a consistent agenda focused on violence against children and adolescents, both within the family sphere and in the context of the armed conflict, including forced recruitment, sexual violence, torture, and exploitation. It also highlights the persistence of territorial and ethnic poverty, adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, and school dropout in Indigenous and rural areas, together with structural deficits in data systems and budget allocation for child-related policies. In turn, MESECVI, across four evaluation rounds, identifies the armed conflict as a cross-cutting aggravating factor and warns against the use of conciliation and mediation mechanisms in cases of intrafamilial violence, sexual violence, and other forms of violence against women, girls, and adolescents, as these practices weaken the protection of rights, foster impunity, and expose victims to risks of revictimization. These observations are compounded by budgetary shortfalls and the absence of a comprehensive national plan with a territorial and intersectional justice approach. Within this framework, Colombia illustrates one of the most complex expressions of the regional pattern: significant legal advances coexist with structural violence, persistent territorial inequality, and impunity.



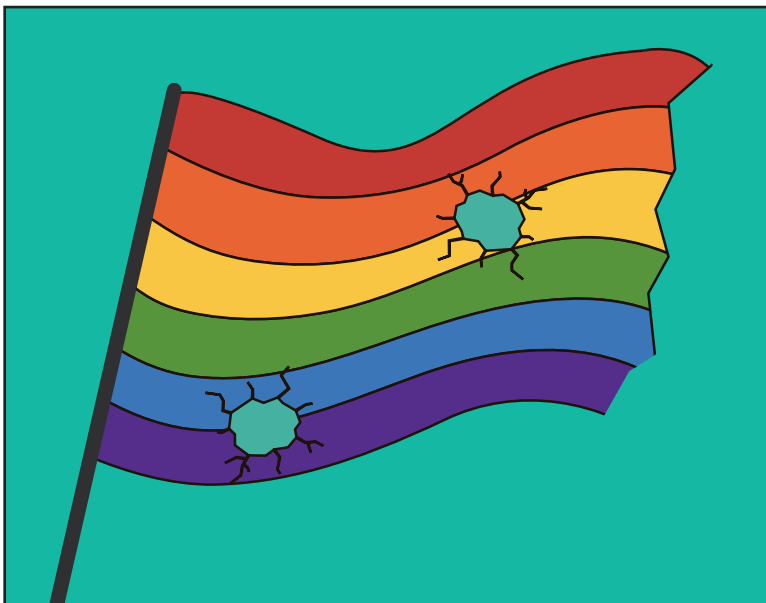
## El Salvador

El Salvador reinforces the regional reading of violence and SRH as inseparable core issues. The CEDAW Committee records six review cycles, with more detailed engagement beginning with the fifth periodic report (2001), followed by concluding observations on the seventh report in 2008, on the combined eighth–ninth reports in 2017, and the review of the tenth report in 2021. An increase in social participation has been noted since the mid-2000s. Measures to combat this form of violence are framed as a cross-cutting recommendation: strengthening the legal framework, ensuring effective accountability, expanding specialized services, and guaranteeing territorial protection, with specific reference to violence against LGBTQIAPN+ women.

Within the CEDAW review process, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) emerges as the most consistently reiterated critical core, associated with widespread adolescent pregnancy,

preventable maternal mortality, and the persistent demand to review the total criminalization of abortion, at least to permit termination of pregnancy when the life or health of the woman or girl is at risk, in cases of rape or incest, and in instances of severe fetal impairment, in accordance with international human rights standards. In the area of economic autonomy, the continuity of structural patterns of inequality is observed, expressed in the persistence of the wage gap, labour precarity in maquiladoras, the lack of social security for domestic work, and the triple burden of care borne by women, in a context marked by the absence of a robust public system of shared care responsibility. With regard to parity, although partial legislative advances are noted, the Committee reiterates the need to sustain temporary special measures and affirmative actions to ensure substantive equality, including at the municipal level and within the judiciary.

The CRC (2010 and 2018, see appendix) highlights sexual violence against girls, forced pregnancy from as young as age 10, limited access to contraception and CSE, and insufficient mental health services, as well as corporal punishment and rural school dropout associated with domestic labour. Through three national reports, MESECVI complements these findings by raising concerns regarding impunity, limited territorial service coverage, and deficits in data. Thus, El Salvador, together with Honduras and Guatemala, forms part of the regional sub pattern of absolute restrictions on SRH as a multiplier of violence and inequality.





# Guatemala

Guatemala confirms the regional pattern of persistent violence and a crisis in adolescent SRH, within a context of longstanding economic precarity. The CEDAW Committee records at least five review sessions (2002, 2009, 2017, 2023, and the corresponding Lists of Issues Prior to Reporting), with a recent expansion of social participation (7 shadow reports in the seventh review; 14 in the eighth–ninth; 33 in the tenth). The appendix underscores that gender-based violence and trafficking remain central issues, with weak implementation and insufficient access to justice, particularly for Indigenous women. In terms of economic autonomy, a pattern of long-term continuity is identified, characterized by the wage gap, informality, maquiladora (export-processing) employment, precarious domestic work, workplace sexual harassment, child labour among girls, and rural–Indigenous exclusion; in recent cycles, unpaid

care work has emerged as an additional structural dimension. In political parity, persistent underrepresentation is also observed, shaped by gender stereotypes and institutional barriers.

The CRC highlights extreme institutional violence in care facilities (Hogar Seguro<sup>67</sup>), noting the absence of reparation and heightened risk for girls with disabilities; in 2024, it further emphasizes early adolescent pregnancy, the criminalization of abortion, and the lack of SRH and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) services for adolescents. Across four rounds, MESECVI concurs with CEDAW regarding impunity for sexual violence and femicide, gaps in comparable data, insufficient resources, and the need for comprehensive plans with an Indigenous focus. Guatemala thus brings together, in a single case, persistent violence, the crisis in adolescent SRH, and feminized labour precarity as a structural triad.

**67** | Safe Home Program (Hogar Seguro) of Guatemala: The Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción was a State residential protection center for girls, boys, and adolescents administered by the Social Welfare Secretariat of the Presidency. On March 8, 2017, a fire inside the institution caused the death of 41 girls and left at least 15 girls seriously injured, who were locked up while in State custody after reporting abuse and inhumane conditions. The center was permanently closed after the tragedy. Although judicial proceedings were initiated against public officials for their responsibility in the events, progress has been partial and prolonged, without firm and proportionate sanctions being established at all levels of State responsibility; human rights organizations have repeatedly identified this as a situation of structural impunity. The case constitutes a critical reference within the framework of the Beijing +30 process, as it highlights serious failures in the protection of the rights of girls and adolescents, institutional violence based on gender, and the non-compliance with state obligations regarding prevention, protection, and access to justice.





## Honduras

Honduras represents one of the most extreme expressions of regional restrictions on SRH and of sustained violence. The CEDAW Committee reviewed the country in 2007, 2016, and 2022, and the appendix shows an increase in social participation (0 shadow reports in 2007; 7 in 2016; 16 in 2022). The Committee reiterates the persistence of domestic, sexual, and femicidal violence with impunity, aggravated by organized crime, and points to structural barriers within the justice system. SRH constitutes the most critical core issue: high maternal mortality, abortion fully criminalized without exceptions, and a ban on emergency contraception, even in cases of rape or incest; these restrictions are linked to high levels of adolescent pregnancy and forced motherhood. Economic autonomy remains marked by wage gap, occupational segregation, and disproportionately high

illiteracy among Indigenous, rural, and Afro-Honduran women, in addition to insufficiently addressed workplace harassment. With regard to political parity, the Committee identifies insufficient use of temporary special measures and calls for their expansion to Indigenous, rural, Afro-descendant, disabled, and LGBTQIAPN+ women.

The CRC (1999, 2015, 2025) notes legal and cultural discrimination against girls, sexual violence and exploitation, early marriage, widespread adolescent pregnancy, and intersectional exclusion. Across four rounds, MESECVI has underscored the persistence of femicide and sexual violence with impunity, as well as weak services, insufficient data, and budgetary deficits. Honduras evidences, in a condensed manner, the regional correlation between limited access to SRH, sexual violence, and systemic gender-based inequality.





# Mexico

Mexico represents one of the most complex regional expressions of extreme violence against women, within a context of fragmented State authority across different spheres of power (federal and state), which hinders homogeneous responses. The CEDAW Committee has examined the country on six occasions (1998–2025), where an exponential increase in civil society participation was observed: there were seven shadow reports in 2012, thirty in 2018, and sixty-nine in 2025, alongside increasing thematic diversification. Throughout the entire period, extreme violence has remained the most persistent issue of concern, expressed in femicides, disappearances, and sexual violence in contexts of impunity, leading the Committee to reiterate the need to harmonize legal definitions and sanctions across federal entities, as well as to strengthen data systems and ensure effective access to justice.

Within this framework, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) appeared consistently in the Committee's observations, linked to the persistence of preventable maternal mortality, gaps in comprehensive sexuality education, the effective guarantee of legal abortion, and the removal of administrative, territorial, and de facto barriers that limit access to services. In parallel, the continuity of structural constraints on economic autonomy has remained a persistent concern. This pattern is marked by the persistence of the wage gap, high levels of informality, and labour discrimination (particularly in maquiladora employ-

ment and domestic work), and, since 2012, the Committee has increasingly incorporated concerns regarding unpaid care work, culminating in 2025 with a call for the State to establish a National Care System with sufficient public funding. With regard to political parity, although formal advances were achieved, the Committee reiterated the need to set concrete targets and timelines, as well as an intersectional approach to ensure the effective participation of Indigenous, rural, and Afro-Mexican women.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), across six review cycles, repeatedly underscored the persistence of physical and sexual violence against girls, trafficking, child labour, and educational inequalities and, in its 2024 observations, emphasized the need for specific protection for unaccompanied migrant girls — understood as those separated from their families of origin and without a responsible adult — as well as the strengthening of age and gender responsive justice aimed at guaranteeing effective, safe, and non-revictimizing access to judicial and administrative procedures sensitive to the differentiated needs of girls. MESECVI, across four rounds, aligned with these findings regarding uneven implementation across territories, judicial stereotypes, insufficient comparable data, and fragmented budget allocation. Mexico thus demonstrates that the regional problem is not only normative but also one of effective territorial governance.



## Panama

Panama completes the regional panorama with a clear continuity of violence, territorially unequal access to SRH, and precarious economic autonomy. CEDAW has reviewed the country three times (1998, 2010, 2022). In 1998, it denounced the absence of specific legislation against violence and called for legal and psychological assistance in situations of violence; in 2010, it urged the proper criminalization of femicide and the production of reliable data; in 2022, despite Law 82, concerns

remained regarding prevalence, insufficient implementation, limited shelters, and specific urgencies in the migration context. SRH remains a persistent issue: high maternal mortality, with particular vulnerability among Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations; abortion access reflects earlier setbacks, the need for clear implementing regulations and persistent barriers, even in legally permitted cases; and adolescent pregnancy is associated with gaps in comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). Economic autonomy reflects a combination of female unemployment, informality, the wage gap, and labor discrimination (requests for pregnancy tests, harassment), alongside the recent incorporation of unpaid care as a structural factor. Political parity has progressed from recommendations for training (1998/2010 reports) to the requirement of mandatory parity, with sanctions and an intersectional approach (2022 report).

Across five reviews, the CRC has highlighted concerns regarding domestic and sexual violence; the absence of a comprehensive prohibition of corporal punishment; trafficking; child and adolescent pregnancy; discrimination against Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and children with disabilities; deficiencies in juvenile justice; incomplete civil registration; and persistent gaps in data and budget allocation. MESECVI underscored the need for earmarked funds, measurable training, and intersectionality. Panama thereby reinforces the regional finding that, in the absence of territorial justice and effective access to SRH, formal equality remains unrealized.





# Paraguay

Paraguay exhibits sustained continuity in violence and the denial of SRH services, combined with persistent economic precarity. The CEDAW Committee records six review cycles (1996, 2004–05, 2011, 2017, 2024), with growing and progressively more intersectional civil society participation. Violence remains the central focus of the reviews due to the historical absence of a comprehensive law, which was only adopted in the mid-2000s. In 2017, the weak implementation of Law No. 5777 was specifically highlighted by Committee experts.

SRH appears as early as 1996 marked by high maternal mortality and unsafe abortion associated with restrictive criminalization<sup>68</sup>, in contradiction to the commitments undertaken by the State under the Cairo Programme of Action, which recognizes reproductive rights as human rights and calls for the removal of barriers to safe sexual and reproductive health services, as well as under the Beijing Platform for Action, which identifies women's health and the eradication of violence against women as essential conditions for substantive equality. The CEDAW Committee has consistently insisted on a comprehensive strategy with adequate resources, education, and confidential services.

In terms of economic autonomy, wage gaps, high levels of informality, and precarious labour and domestic work persist, including the

“*criadazgo*”<sup>69</sup> as an extreme form of exploitation, workplace harassment, and the exclusion of rural women from access to land and productive resources, alongside limited recognition of unpaid care work. These dynamics evidence non-compliance with commitments undertaken before the Beijing Platform for Action — particularly concerning its Strategic Areas F (Women and the Economy) and A (Women and Poverty) — as well as with the principles of the Cairo Programme of Action aimed at women's economic empowerment and equal opportunity as conditions for sustainable development. Persistent low levels of political parity likewise reflect limitations in implementing Beijing Strategic Area G (Power and Decision-Making), despite repeated international recommendations regarding quotas and affirmative measures to ensure women's full and effective participation in decision-making spaces.

The CRC, across four review rounds, reiterated concerns regarding domestic violence, sexual abuse, and corporal punishment, and in 2024 emphasized adolescent pregnancy linked to sexual violence, child marriage, and trafficking. MESECVI confirmed insufficient protocols, weak data systems, limited budget allocation, and barriers to justice for Indigenous and rural women. The case of Paraguay thus reinforces the regional pattern of sustained violence and restrictive SRH as drivers of inequality.

**68** | Restrictive criminalization: Within the framework of this report, the term refers to legal regimes that criminalize abortion entirely or partially and that, even when they contemplate limited exceptions (for example, risk to life or health, rape), impose legal, administrative, and practical barriers that severely restrict effective access to sexual and reproductive health services. These barriers include the threat of criminal sanctions, the judicialization of cases, abusive use of conscientious objection, the requirement of improper authorizations, and institutional stigmatization, which contribute to the persistence of unsafe abortion and preventable maternal mortality.

**69** | A form of child and adolescent domestic labour historically prevalent in some countries of the region, through which girls — primarily from poor, rural, or Indigenous households — are placed with other families to perform domestic and caregiving tasks in exchange for accommodation, food, or promises of education. In practice, “*criadazgo*” often entails labour exploitation, deprivation of the right to education, physical and symbolic violence, and the absence of remuneration, constituting an extreme form of rights violation and of structural inequality based on gender, age, and class.

## Peru

Peru presents a case in which thematic continuity is maintained, albeit with a gradual modernization of approaches. The CEDAW Committee has reviewed the country across five cycles (1995, 1999, 2003, 2011, and 2018), issuing repeated observations on violence, which remains a central issue. Despite the reforms adopted, including Law No. 30364, the 2016–2021 National Plan, and the strengthening of specialized justice — a specialized institutional and procedural response to cases of violence with specialized prosecutor’s offices and courts — rates of violence against women remain high. This reaffirms the broader regional pattern of robust normative frameworks with weak implementation.

SRH concerns combine longstanding issues (maternal mortality, family planning) with the more recent recognition of obstetric violence as a form of gender-based violence, alongside the continued debate on abortion: a restrictive regime with a therapeutic exception, ongoing calls to expand legal grounds, and the need for differentiat-

ed access for adolescents. Economic autonomy is shaped by the wage gap, informality, and unpaid domestic work, and has thus become the focus of a recent policy agenda centered on care and intersectionality. Political parity shows progress through municipal quotas and institutional programs, yet the central challenge remains converting quotas into sustained and territorially equitable political power.

The CRC has conducted three review rounds (2000, 2006, 2016), emphasizing sexual violence and exploitation, rural–Indigenous inequality, adolescent health (including mental health and HIV), child labor, and child poverty as structural concerns. MESECVI has carried out four evaluation rounds (2008, 2014, 2019, 2024) focused on the effective implementation of anti-violence policies, the application of specific sanctions, inter-institutional coordination, and comparable data. In sum, Peru reflects the broader regional pattern, while also showing a gradual expansion of the agenda toward obstetric violence, unpaid care, and intersectionality.



# From 1995 to the following 30 years: Conclusions and implications for public policy

**THE EXPERIENCE OF** the past thirty years in Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrates unequivocally that there can be no democratic parity or substantive democracy as long as violence against women persists, structural concentrated burden of unpaid domestic and care work remain in place, and barriers to full access to sexual and reproductive health endure. These axes do not operate in isolation; they intersect as mutually reinforcing structural mechanisms of exclusion that constrain women's physical, economic, and decision-making autonomy, curtail their presence in the public sphere, precarize their economic participation, and obstruct equal political participation. Violence silences, intimidates, and expels women from public life; the burden of care deprives them of time, income, and political organizing capacity; and the denial of bodily autonomy imposes forced motherhood, disrupts educational trajectories, and perpetuates economic

dependence. In this context, the underrepresentation of women in spaces of power does not constitute an individual deficit, but rather a structural failure of the region's democracies. Compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action requires recognizing that gender equality is a constitutive condition of democracy, and that political parity will only be possible through comprehensive public policies, with sufficient funding, an intersectional approach, and effective accountability mechanisms that simultaneously address violence, socially redistribute care, and guarantee the full realization of sexual and reproductive rights. Without these structural transformations, democracy will remain incomplete, marginalizing, and limited in its capacity to legitimately represent the diversity of our societies.

Taken together, the countries reflect a regional pattern of continuity: three decades of reviews show that international and regional mechanisms

converge in identifying violence against women and girls as the most recurrent structural issue, and that its persistence is driven by impunity, insufficiently specialized justice systems, inappropriate conciliation or mediation practices, unequal territorial coverage of support services, and deficits in comparable data. From a public policy perspective, the region needs to move from “generalized” legal frameworks to verifiable comprehensive systems: operational specialized courts, interoperable and easily accessible unified registries, mandatory protocols prohibiting conciliation, indicators subject to annual monitoring, and sanctions for non-compliant officials. Even where public policy advances exist, they have failed to curb

violence trends in the absence of nationally sustained judicial and service infrastructures with effective territorial reach. The priority, therefore, is to strengthen effective state capacity (justice + services + follow-up), rather than to produce detached new laws.

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) emerges as a second structural core and as a causal bridge between violence and inequality. In nearly all countries, child and adolescent pregnancy is closely associated with sexual violence, exacerbated by the absence of comprehensive sexuality education and accessible youth-friendly SRH services. In addition, two normative frameworks can be identified:

(a) countries with absolute criminalization or extreme barriers to abortion and emergency contraception (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay in the context of unsafe abortion), where Treaty Bodies directly link these restrictions to preventable maternal mortality and forced motherhood;

(b) countries in which guaranteeing effective access to legal abortion is mandatory, and where administrative barriers and abusive uses of conscientious objection must be eliminated, or reforms advanced toward comprehensive decriminalization (Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Panama, Peru).

The public policy response must address two interrelated dimensions: first, harmonizing SRH frameworks with minimum regional standards (mandatory comprehensive sexuality education, accessible modern contraception, safe abortion pathways where applicable, and adolescent confidentiality); and second, ensuring effective implementation through funding, unified protocols, and territorial monitoring, given that SRH inequality concerns effective access more than formal legislation.



With respect to economic autonomy and political parity, the regional pattern is characterized by material inequality, reproduced through gendered informality and unpaid care work, and by formal parity that does not translate into equal access to positions of power. CEDAW consistently underscores the wage gap, occupational segregation, precarity in export-assembly (maquiladora) industries and domestic work, rural informality, and inadequate social security; in recent cycles, nearly all countries have recognized unpaid care as a structural driver of inequality. This suggests that public policies must go beyond labor-market measures to address the care system, including the creation of national public care systems or robust co-responsibility frameworks that reduce women's care burden and enable their formal labor market participation.

Regarding parity, the Committees acknowledge quotas and gains in representation, but denounce their ineffectiveness without intersectional temporary special measures, without sanctions for political violence, and without adequate material conditions for

competition. The regional implication is to consolidate parity with protection and resources, that is: quotas + funding + security + sanctions for political harassment + continuous training — prioritizing Indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural, women with disabilities, and LBT women, who are consistently the most excluded.

Thirty years after the Beijing and Cairo Conferences, the ten countries reviewed share a common feature: the region has produced dense and convergent normative frameworks, yet has failed to transform, to an equivalent degree, the material conditions that reproduce inequality and violence. Comparative analysis supports the conclusion that the gap between law and reality is not marginal; it constitutes the structural core of the regional problem.





In sum, the region reflects a paradigm of advanced legal development but limited structural change, compounded by democratic erosion, ascendant conservatism with governing power, and territorial inequality. The central challenge for the coming years is to transform normative frameworks into effective and verifiable guarantees in the daily lives of women and girls.



**Table: Structural Drivers of Regional Non-Compliance with the Beijing and Cairo Commitments and International Treaty Systems**

<b>Driver / core</b>	<b>Content</b>
Formal democracies marked by erosion and direct impacts on rights	Formal democracies marked by erosion and direct impacts on rights. The expansion of normative frameworks on women’s rights occurred during democratic cycles; however, several countries have undergone processes of weakening institutional checks and balances, securitization, or political capture of state institutions (Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay; as well as Peru, due to chronic institutional crisis). These contexts reduce budgetary continuity, weaken gender institutions, and foster conservative backlashes that block or slow policy implementation, particularly in SRH and comprehensive sexuality education.
Persistent gender-based violence despite comprehensive laws	Persistent gender-based violence despite comprehensive laws. The region evolved from domestic violence laws toward comprehensive frameworks including the criminalization of femicide and specialized care systems. However, rates of violence and femicide remain high or fluctuate without a clear downward trend. The common pattern includes impunity, non-specialized or insufficiently specialized justice systems, unequal territorial coverage, the absence of unified data systems, unstable budgets, institutional revictimization, and the lack of sustained prevention strategies. Violence intensifies along intersectional lines: Indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural, poor, migrant, and LGBTQIAPN+ women face heightened risk and reduced protection.
SRH as a causal driver of violence and inequality	SRH as a causal driver of violence and inequality. A regional continuum reveals that sexual violence against girls and adolescents, early pregnancy, and preventable maternal mortality are connected to structural barriers in SRH. Two normative models emerge:
Extreme restriction of reproductive rights	Extreme restriction of reproductive rights (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala; Paraguay, with strong practical restrictions): absolute or near-total criminalization of abortion, prohibition of emergency contraception, and the absence or weakness of comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly services. This translates into forced motherhood, unsafe abortion, and preventable mortality.
Partial or expansive legal openness accompanied by implementation barriers	Partial or expansive legal openness accompanied by implementation barriers (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru): here, the central challenge lies in implementation, abusive conscientious objection, territorial inequality, and stigma. In both models, child and adolescent motherhood functions as a critical indicator of sexual violence and state failures in protection.
Economic autonomy shaped by crosscutting precarity and care injustice	Economic autonomy shaped by crosscutting precarity and care injustice. Increased female labor participation has not eliminated inequality: in the Andes and the Southern Cone, “inclusion with precarity” predominates (Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay), while in Central America, “exclusion with persistent wage gaps” prevails (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador). The crosscutting factor is the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, which limits access to formal employment, reproduces wage gaps, and intensifies vulnerable employment. The region belatedly initiated care systems and policies (Brazil, Panama, Paraguay, Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador; Mexico and Peru still under construction), but without sufficient material impact through 2025.
Formal parity with restricted power	Formal parity with restricted power. Advances in quotas and parity are evident, yet underrepresentation persists in positions of real decision-making power, alongside gender-based political violence. Monitoring systems consistently reiterate that representation does not translate into power without funding, protection, effective sanctions against political harassment, and intersectional temporary special measures.
Strong convergence of the CEDAW/CRC/MESECVI systems	Strong convergence of the CEDAW/CRC/MESECVI systems. All three mechanisms reiterate the same “core issues” by country: (a) violence and impunity; (b) SRH (child and adolescent pregnancy, safe abortion, comprehensive sexuality education, maternal mortality); (c) economic autonomy constrained by informality and care burdens; (d) parity limited by political violence and intersectional barriers; and (e) deficits in data and earmarked funds. This confirms that the regional problem is not the absence of standards, but rather the lack of real, territorialized, and sustained state capacity to implement them.

**Table: Priority agenda for urgent advances in women’s rights guided by the Cairo and Beijing frameworks, by country**

Country	Specific Priority Actions
 <b>Bolivia</b>	<p>Bridging the implementation gap of Law No. 348 through operational specialized courts, permanent budget allocation, mandatory training, and a unified interoperable data system on violence and femicide. Guaranteeing legal abortion without barriers, including oversight of institutional conscientious objection, clear referral pathways for girls under 15, and prompt comprehensive care for survivors of sexual violence. Reducing female labor precarity through active policies promoting formalization and the reduction of vulnerable employment, particularly for Indigenous women. Ensuring parity with effective protection, including sanctions against political harassment and violence, and institutional support for elected Indigenous and rural women.</p>
 <b>Brazil</b>	<p>Territorial and racial inequalities related to violence: expanding specialized services and shelters in the Amazon and rural areas; ensuring stable funding and federal coordination. Effective SRH beyond the legislative framework: decentralizing national access to legal abortion and promoting strict oversight of abusive conscientious objection; fighting inequalities that lead to maternal mortality. Fully implementing the National Care Policy (Política Nacional de Cuidados): translating legal frameworks into territorially accessible services (childcare centers, home-based care, parental leave). Eliminating intersectional wage gaps: monitoring of pay transparency and targeted measures for Afro-descendant and Indigenous women.</p>
 <b>Colombia</b>	<p>Gender-based violence linked to the armed conflict: accelerating JEP Macro-Case 11 and ensuring effective protection for victims and women leaders in affected territories. Comprehensive state presence in peripheral regions: justice, services, and territorial protection aimed at reducing femicide, sexual violence, and underreporting. Effective implementation of abortion decriminalization: accessible services free from judicial intervention for rural and ethnic women. Economic autonomy in the context of informality: labor formalization and the development of a care system for displaced, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian women.</p>
 <b>El Salvador</b>	<p>Safeguarding rights in contexts of security-driven governance: data transparency, oversight of abuses, and the autonomous strengthening of ISDEMU and the protection system. Urgent SRH reform: review the absolute criminalization of abortion, at minimum for fundamental legal grounds; strengthen comprehensive sexuality education and adolescent services aimed at preventing forced motherhood. Strengthening of the implementation of the Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (LAIV): sufficient shelters, non-revictimized response pathways, and effective prosecution. Economic autonomy and care: expand co-responsibility policies toward a public care system that reduces women’s exclusion from the labor market.</p>
 <b>Guatemala</b>	<p>Child and adolescent pregnancy crisis: mandatory comprehensive sexuality education, culturally responsive SRH services, and a review of restrictions that perpetuate unsafe abortion. Effective access to justice for Indigenous and rural women: culturally and linguistically responsive services, expansion of CAIMUS centers and specialized courts. Reduction of structural economic violence: policies to address the wage gap, informality, and occupational segregation; establishment of a national care policy. Reparation and reform of the child protection system: prevention of institutional violence and full accountability.</p>



## Honduras

Addressing structural barriers in SRH: reviewing the absolute criminalization of abortion and the prohibition of emergency contraception; mandating comprehensive sexuality education; and expanding youth-friendly services. Reducing impunity in femicides: effective accountability, specialized justice, and a sustained State presence in rural and peripheral territories. Improving complaint and protection: combat underreporting by strengthening institutional trust, psychological and legal support, and territorial access. Public care system aimed at enabling women's labor market participation: consolidate the Care Secretariat (Gabinete de Cuidados) as a nationally funded public policy.



## Mexico

Effective federal harmonization of legal frameworks and procedures regarding femicide and enforced disappearances: uniform standards, comparable data systems, and specialized justice across all states. Elimination of territorial barriers to SRH access: guarantee access to legal abortion and advance toward uniform national coverage; ensure oversight of institutional conscientious objection. A funded National Care System: a necessary condition for eliminating labor market and wage gaps. Intersectional parity with safeguards: address political violence and guarantee resources for Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, rural, and migrant women.



## Panama

Unified National Information System on Violence: data standardization, regular surveys, and an integrated registry system to support comprehensive public policy. Territorially grounded SRH with an Indigenous and Afro-descendant focus: reduce disparities in maternal mortality and adolescent pregnancy; ensure effective implementation of legal abortion regulations. Broad implementation of the National Care System (2024): priority measures to reduce economic gaps. Mandatory parity with accountability provisions: advancing substantive representation and safeguarding against institutional barriers.



## Paraguay

Effective enforcement of Law 5777 and amendment 7239: specialized courts, shelters, earmarked budget allocations, and a unified national data system. SRH and unsafe abortion: a comprehensive strategy to reduce maternal mortality, prevent adolescent and child pregnancy, and review extreme legal restrictions. Fighting gendered economic precarity (including *criadazgo*): labor formalization, protection of domestic workers, and sanctions for harassment. Substantive parity in a conservative context: temporary special measures, funding, and protection against political violence.



## Peru

Institutional stability to ensure policy continuity: without democratic governance, sustained implementation of the gender agenda cannot be achieved. Strengthening enforcement of Law No. 30364: effective specialized justice, community prevention strategies, and territorial protection. Reducing adolescent pregnancy and sexual violence: robust comprehensive sexuality education, youth-focused SRH services, and prompt intersectoral referral pathways. Approving and funding a national care system: essential to reducing labor informality and domestic care burden.

The regional assessment allows for a sharper critical conclusion: after 30 years of increasingly dense policy frameworks, the region faces not a normative deficit but a deficit of verifiable and territorially operational state capacity. National averages continue to obscure persistent intersectional gaps (particularly affecting Indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural, and impoverished women), and unpaid care work operates as a “structural tax” that prevents the conversion of labor force participation into real autonomy even where care policies already exist (Brazil, Panama, Paraguay, Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador) or are still under development (Mexico, Peru). This explains why “more women’s employment and less economic autonomy” coexist: informality, precarity, and the privatization of care remain the material foundation reproducing inequality.



In regard to SRH, the two policy models described (extreme restriction vs. legal openness with implementation barriers) converge in the same outcome: the presence of child and adolescent motherhood and preventable maternal mortality as structural indicators of persistent sexual violence and failures of effective access to SRH, not of a lack of law. Concerning parity, the pattern is equally consistent: quota and parity frameworks have advanced further than effective representation and, above all, further than real access to positions of power. Even the strongest legislative cases (Mexico and Peru) show territorial gaps and deficits in senior public leadership, while Bolivia combines early formal parity with exclusion and obstruction driven by political gender-based violence. In sum, the region exhibits a sophisticated legal architecture with limited structural transformation, such as material inequality, privatized care, underfunding, impunity, and political violence neutralize formal gains.

The analysis leads to the following regional concluding recommendations aimed at transforming formal legal frameworks into comprehensive, assessable systems. First, on **violence and justice**:

(i) consolidate specialized courts and prosecutor’s offices with rural and Indigenous coverage, annual targets, and multi-year budgets;

(ii) effectively prohibit conciliation and mediation practices in gender-based violence cases and sanction public officials who permit such practices;

(iii) establish unified, interoperable data systems on violence, femicide, and sexual violence with ethnic, territorial, and age disaggregation, as the absence of harmonized data undermines preventive policy and effective remedies.

Second, on **SRH**:

(i) harmonize minimum regional standards (mandatory comprehensive sexuality education, modern and emergency contraception, confidential and culturally responsive adolescent care); and

(ii) ensure implementation through unified service pathways, guaranteed supply chains, and strict oversight of abusive conscientious objection. In countries under extreme restriction, review at least the basic legal grounds to prevent forced motherhood and unsafe abortion, a recommendation repeatedly issued by CE-DAW and the CRC to El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Paraguay.

Third, on **economic autonomy**:

(i) accelerate the formalization of women's employment in highly gendered sectors (domestic work, the maquiladora sector, agriculture, informal commerce) through labor inspection and social security;

(ii) enforce effective pay equity and transparency, prioritizing an anti-racist approach where the appendix identifies persistent intersectional gaps (Brazil); and

(iii) transform care policies into national systems with concrete accessible services, universal coverage, and territorial reach (early childhood, dependency, and community-based care), as sustainable economic autonomy requires the redistribution of care work.

Fourth, on **political parity**:

(i) combine quotas and parity measures with sanctions for non-compliance, campaign funding, and training, especially for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women;

(ii) strengthen laws against political violence and rapid reporting and protection mechanisms (critical in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, and Panama) so that parity is not nullified by harassment, expulsion, or intimidation.

In this context, the next regional stage does not hinge on new laws but on states capable of implementing those already in force, with territorial presence, stable budgets, comparable data, and an operational intersectional approach. As long as specialized justice remains fragile, SRH is blocked or bureaucratized, and care continues to be privatized within households, the region will reproduce the identified paradox: advanced norms alongside persistent harms, and formal parity without the effective redistribution of power. Transforming law into everyday guarantees therefore requires a political agenda of radical implementation: strong institutional capacity, sustained social accountability, and public metrics that compel the closure of gaps where violence and inequality are most acute.

# Appendix

Country	CEDAW: Persistent Core Issues	CRC: Persistent Core Issues (Girls / Children & Adolescents)	MESECVI: Main Pattern	Dominant Regional Nexus
 <b>Bolivia</b>	Violence and impunity; SRH access (child pregnancy, abortion, comprehensive sexuality education); economic gaps and informality; formal parity without effective power.	Sexual violence, child marriage, limited adolescent SRH access, barriers to safe abortion, gaps in comprehensive sexuality education.		Violence + structural SRHR deficits
 <b>Brazil</b>	Violence; SRH (maternal mortality/abortion); economic and care gaps; insufficient parity, growing intersectional inequalities.	Weak federal coordination, racial and territorial discrimination, and violence against children and adolescents.	Normative progress with implementation and data deficits.	Violence + intersectional inequality
 <b>Colombia</b>	Violence linked to conflict and impunity; barriers to SRH access; informality and care burdens; ineffective quotas.	Recruitment and conflict-related sexual violence; ethnic-territorial poverty; adolescent pregnancy.	Lack of a comprehensive plan; data and budget deficits; unequal access to justice across territories.	Conflict-related violence + impunity
 <b>El Salvador</b>	Systemic violence; widespread adolescent pregnancy; total abortion criminalization; precarity in maquila industry, domestic and care work; partial parity.	Sexual violence; legal authorization of corporal punishment; pregnancy among girls.	Impunity, weak data, low service coverage.	Restricted SRHR + sexual violence
 <b>Guatemala</b>	Violence and trafficking; historically entrenched labor precarity; growing unpaid care burdens; low political representation.	Institutional violence; adolescent pregnancy; criminalization of abortion.	Gap between law and practice; weak justice institutions; insufficient data and budgetary resources.	Violence + adolescent SRHR crisis
 <b>Honduras</b>	Extreme violence and impunity; total abortion ban and prohibition of emergency contraception; labor informality; low political parity.	Sexual violence, adolescent pregnancy, patriarchal stereotypes.	Femicide and sexual violence with weak institutional response.	Severely restricted SRHR + violence
 <b>Mexico</b>	Femicide, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence; territorially unequal SRH services; labor informality and care burdens; parity with intersectional gaps.	Child sexual violence; trafficking; child labor; vulnerability of migrant girls.	Uneven federal implementation; stereotypes; data and budget gaps.	Extreme violence + federal fragmentation
 <b>Panama</b>	Persistent violence and femicide; SRHR marked by Indigenous and Afro-descendant maternal mortality; ineffective abortion regulation; labor informality and care burdens; partial parity.	Domestic and sexual violence; adolescent pregnancy; discrimination against Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and disabled girls.	Need for earmarked budgeting, prohibition of conciliation, and strengthened intersectional data systems.	Violence + territorial SRHR gaps
 <b>Paraguay</b>	Historically entrenched violence (weak enforcement of Law 5777); unsafe abortion and restrictive criminalization; criadazgo and domestic labor precarity; low political parity.	Sexual violence and adolescent pregnancy; child marriage; trafficking.	Insufficient territorial coverage of justice mechanisms and data systems.	Violence + economic precarity
 <b>Peru</b>	Persistent violence; SRHR including therapeutic abortion, alongside persistent obstetric violence; informality and care burdens; quotas with partial progress.	Sexual violence and exploitation; Indigenous and rural disparities; insufficient adolescent health services.	Gaps in implementation monitoring, accountability mechanisms, and data.	Violence + transitional SRHR framework

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