

**Note: As of August 26, 2020, this is an internal document – not for public distribution. What follows is a rough translation of the original statement, which will soon be published in Spanish.**

## **RESLAC REPUDIATES ATTACKS AGAINST THE AUTONOMY OF THE IACHR AND SUPPORTS ITS WORK IN THE REGION IN MATTERS OF MEMORY, TRUTH, JUSTICE AND REPARATION**

The Network of Latin American and Caribbean Sites of Memory (Red de Sitios de Memoria Latinoamericanos y Caribeños – RESLAC) repudiates the attack led by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, against the autonomy of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Unilaterally and untimely, Almagro decided not to renew the administrative contract of the executive secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Abrão, ignoring the extension of his mandate as unanimously defined by the Commission for the 2020/2024 period. This decision seriously affects not only the independence and performance of the Commission, but also the group of organizations that fight for the defense and enforcement of human rights in the region, for whom the IACHR is in many cases the last resort to justice or advocacy to protect human rights, limit or stop abuses, and encourage affirmative interventions.

Faced with this abusive interference by the OAS, which ultimately seeks to de facto discipline the Commission, as the Network of Sites of Memory in Latin America and the Caribbean, we state the following:

- ✓ The autonomy and independence of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is one of the pillars that strengthen its legitimacy vis-à-vis civil society, victims of human rights violations, and the States.
- ✓ The IACHR, thanks to its reinforced autonomy and independence, carries out its work impartially, free from any political influence and is an example and a reference for the world.
- ✓ We reject this interference and interference with the exercise of the mandate of the IACHR and, in particular, with its power to elect, renew and dismiss its trusted officials.
- ✓ We express our appreciation for the work carried out by the Commission during the four years that Paulo Abrão was its Executive Secretary, promoting the observance and defense of human rights in our Region at especially critical moments for the continent.
- ✓ We condemn this decision of the Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, which deepens his previous public positions in favor of a regional human rights system aligned with the interests of the hegemonic powers, and biased in his interventions.

RESLAC, which in recent years has maintained permanent contact with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and with its Rapporteurship on Memory, Truth and Justice, both to report on the situation of the memory sites and spaces in the region, and to denounce abuses and attacks, respond to calls from the Commission, participate in hearings

and sessions, or collaborate in the collective construction of protection tools such as the "Principles on Public Policies on Memory in the Americas," wants to highlight the support and accompaniment received by the IACHR to the sites that make up our Network and its role in safeguarding and advocating on human rights at the hemispheric level.