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|   **IACHR and UN Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons Welcome Decisions in El Salvador**  Washington/Geneva (27 October 2017) - The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons welcome the decisions adopted on October 6 and 13, 2017, by the Constitutional Chamber of El Salvador’s Supreme Court that aims to protect internally displaced persons. The IACHR and the Special Rapporteur urge the State of El Salvador to recognize and adopt measures to prevent displacement, as well as to protect the human rights of those who have been forced to leave their homes. According to official information, the Constitutional Chamber issued two injunctions (amparo) ordering that protective measures be adopted for a family that had fallen victim to forced internal displacement due to threats, beatings, harassment, and rape by the Mara 18 gang. These decisions use the standard of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that the lack of an effective investigation of violent acts may favor or perpetuate forced displacement, which constitutes a de facto restriction on the right of freedom of movement and residence. Likewise, these decisions emphasize the relevance of family protection in these cases based on the criteria developed by the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR).  Specifically, the court ordered the National Civilian Police and the Attorney General’s Office to adopt the appropriate measures to ensure the family’s integrity and security, considering the threats against them; prosecute those responsible in connection with all crimes related to the case; and ensure the victims’ safe return to their homes. In a statement at the end of her [visit to El Salvador](https://cidh.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=af0b024f4f6c25b6530ff4c66&id=41e2b3d533&e=eb50e732b7), in August 2017, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, said that the phenomenon of internal displacement caused by generalized and gang-related violence is a significant and largely unrecognized crisis in El Salvador, affecting thousands of individuals, families, and whole communities. She called for establishing a legal, policy, and institutional framework to specifically address the needs and vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons, as a category of victims, saying this is essential and overdue in El Salvador. For its part, the IACHR reiterates its concern regarding the violence that has affected El Salvador in recent years and its consequences in terms of internal displacement. It also reiterates its call to the Salvadorian State to adopt any legislative and other measures that may be necessary to respond to the situation of internally displaced persons, taking a human rights approach, as it indicated in the context of a hearing on violence and internal displacement in El Salvador held during the 156th session of the IACHR. “I welcome these important and timely decisions by the Constitutional Chamber in these cases. These decisions will help raise awareness about the problems and the many hidden victims of violence and internal displacement in El Salvador who are highly vulnerable and need protection, support, and access to justice,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary. “These recognitions of the shortcomings in the system of protection that is currently in place in El Salvador should help to inspire a necessary review by the State of its legal, political, and institutional frameworks to protect the human rights of all those who have been internally displaced by violence.” “These first decisions by the Constitutional Chamber on the protection of internally displaced persons constitute a significant step forward by the State to address the situation of these persons in El Salvador. The State has the primary responsibility for protecting the human rights of displaced persons, and so we commend the decision of the Constitutional Chamber, which shows the important role of judicial authorities in the protection of the human rights of displaced persons, and which integrates through the conventionality control the norms and standards developed by the IACHR and the IACtHR in the topic” said Commissioner Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva, the IACHR Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons. With the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement approaching—it will be commemorated in 2018—the IACHR and the UN Special Rapporteur reiterate that States have an obligation to adopt measures to prevent displacement; protect the internally displaced during and after displacement; provide and facilitate humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced; and adopt measures to facilitate their return or resettlement and reintegration. ENDS*A principal, autonomous body of the Organization of American States (OAS), the IACHR derives its mandate from the OAS Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights. The Inter-American Commission has a mandate to promote the respect for and defense of human rights in the region and acts as a consultative body to the OAS in this area. The Commission is composed of seven independent members who are elected in an individual capacity by the OAS General Assembly and who do not represent their countries of origin or residence. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, a human rights lawyer specialized in forced displacement and migration, has over two decades of experience in nongovernmental organizations that advocate for human rights. She was appointed Special Rapporteur on the* [*human rights of internally displaced persons*](https://cidh.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=af0b024f4f6c25b6530ff4c66&id=352535c9a0&e=eb50e732b7) *by the Human Rights Council in 2016. As Special Rapporteur, she is part of the “*[*special procedures*](https://cidh.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=af0b024f4f6c25b6530ff4c66&id=092f07ab3f&e=eb50e732b7)*” of the Human Rights Council. Special procedures—the largest body of independent experts in the UN human rights system—is the general term for the Human Rights Council’s investigative and monitoring mechanisms to address country-specific or thematic situations around the world. The special procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff members and do not receive financial remuneration for their work. They are independent of any government or organization and serve in a personal capacity.* |

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*UN Human Rights, Country Page:* [*El Salvador*](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/LACRegion/Pages/SVIndex.aspx)