

## CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE SPANISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

<b>Field presence</b>	OHCHR Regional Office for Central America, based in Panama City, Panama Operation established in 2007
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### Countries of engagement

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama (complementing the field presences in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and covering Cuba and the Dominican Republic until the deployment of a human rights adviser in 2014)

### Engagement with the human rights mechanisms

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During the past two decades, Central America has made significant political, economic, and social progress. All countries covered by the Regional Office for Central America (ROCA) are ruled by democratically elected governments and over the next four years new elections are scheduled to take place in all of them.

Nevertheless, these five countries continue to face a number of challenges. Economic recovery remains fragile and the region continues to be characterized by poverty and high levels of socio-economic inequalities. Persistent patterns of racial and/or ethnic discrimination against indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants exist and social tensions related to the implementation of development projects on indigenous lands are on the rise. Gender discrimination is deeply rooted, leading, *inter alia*, to high levels of gender-based violence. Insecurity and violence are particularly high in the region, especially in connection with organized crime. Central America continues to be a migration hotspot and irregular migrants experience many forms of serious abuses and human rights violations. Corruption and impunity are perceived as widespread and rule of law institutions remain weak. Domestic normative frameworks generally recognize and protect human rights.

At its UPR second cycle session in May 2013, Cuba was commended for its progress in several fields, including women's rights, housing, education, health, food, the Millennium Development Goals, migration, and its international assistance in particular in the health sector, despite resource constraints due to

sanctions. Recommendations were also made on issues such as the situation of human rights defenders and recognition of their work, freedom of expression and association, reform of the penal code and short-term detentions.

The Regional Office for Central America was established in 2007. ROCA engages regularly with United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in the region, is an active member of the United Nations Development Group Latin American and the Caribbean mission (UNDG-LAC) and interacts with regional and subregional organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Central American Integration System. In 2014, a human rights adviser will be deployed under the United Nations Development Group-Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism (UNDG-HRM) to the UNDG- Latin America and the Caribbean Team in Panama City.

### Thematic priorities

- ▶ Strengthening the effectiveness of international human rights mechanisms with a focus on: ratifications; submission of information by civil society actors, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and United Nations entities to treaty bodies, special procedures and the UPR; and establishment of national participatory bodies for reporting and implementing recommendations of human rights mechanisms.
- ▶ Integrating human rights in development and the economic sphere with a focus on: land, water and sanitation and housing rights; rights to consultation and to give informed consent; post 2015-development agenda; and integration of recommendations from human rights mechanisms and a human rights-based approach in United Nations work.
- ▶ Enhancing equality and countering discrimination with a focus on: legislation and policy on non-discrimination; women; racial and religious discrimination; indigenous peoples; afro-descendants; migrants; and lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and intersex persons.
- ▶ Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law with a focus on: human rights in the administration of justice.
- ▶ Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity with a focus on: sexual and gender-based violence and insecurity.

## OHCHR expected contribution

ALL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL IN CENTRAL AMERICA	
RIGHTS-HOLDERS	DUTY-BEARERS
<p><b>[EA5]</b> ▶ Increased number of consultation processes between States and indigenous peoples in order to obtain the latter's free, prior and informed consent in line with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>▶ Enhanced engagement of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in mechanisms and forums for political dialogue in the region.</p>	<p><b>[EA1]</b> ▶ Judicial operators increasingly apply international and regional human rights standards in their work regarding: women's and indigenous peoples rights, anti-discrimination, the rule of law and impunity.</p> <p>▶ Measures taken to combat gender-based violence, in particular through the use of the Latin American Protocol for the Investigation and Prosecution of Gender-Based Killings of Women.</p>
	<p><b>[EA2]</b> ▶ Increased ratification of international human rights instruments, especially CPED and the OPs to CRC (3rd) and ICESCR and increased number of declarations under article 14 of ICERD.</p>
	<p><b>[EA4]</b> ▶ Public policies, legislative frameworks and practices in the area of non-discrimination (racial discrimination, gender equality) are in compliance with international human rights standards.</p> <p>▶ Three NHRIs in the region have units or programmes to combat racial discrimination in compliance with international standards.</p>
<p><b>[EA7]</b> ▶ Increased number of civil society organizations, NHRIs and UN entities making substantial submissions to the international human rights mechanisms.</p>	<p><b>[EA6]</b> ▶ Establish fully functioning participatory standing national coordinating bodies in some of the countries covered by the regional office and strengthening the existing ones in Costa Rica and Panama to report/reply to individual communications and enquiries; Integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms.</p>
<p><b>[EA10]</b> ▶ A human rights approach is increasingly incorporated in the implementation of the Central American Security Strategy at both regional and national levels.</p>	
<p><b>[EA11]</b> ▶ UNDG LAC integrates a human rights-based approach in its support to countries in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda and implements the "Rights on Front" plan of action.</p>	

By 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the achievement of the results outlined on the table above, in support of national efforts in the different thematic priority areas (colour scheme). OHCHR will pursue these behavioural, institutional and legislative changes in cooperation with relevant partners, using the different strategic tools at its disposal – monitoring and reporting, capacity-building and advisory services, advocacy and awareness-raising (see chapter one) – on the basis of an assessment of the specific context. It is expected that if achieved, these results will contribute to improving the duty-bearers' compliance with their international human rights obligations and to the rights-holders' ability to claim their rights and thereby to the enjoyment of all rights for all in the region.