



UNITED NATIONS
**HUMAN RIGHTS
TREATY BODIES**

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/CostaRica/92

25 February 2026

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honor to refer to the examination of the eighth periodic report of Costa Rica, at the Committee's eighty-fourth session, held in February 2023. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/CRI/CO/8](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 54 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested Costa Rica to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16 (b), 18, 34 (b) and 40 (b) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/CRI/FCO/8](#)) received on 24 July 2025, four months after the two-year reporting period. Due to the postponement of the Committee's 92nd session as a result of the liquidity crisis, the report was examined with some delay under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its ninety-second session, held in February 2026, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 16 (b)** of the concluding observations that the State party "**strengthen the authority, mandate and capacity of the municipal offices for women's affairs by allocating adequate human, technical and financial resources and providing capacity-building on women's rights and gender equality to them**":

The Committee notes the State party's indication that various efforts have been undertaken to strengthen municipal offices for women's affairs, including the development of a Model Regulation by the National Union of Local Governments, the elaboration of a 2023-2025 Action Plan, and training activities for municipal staff. The Committee also notes the State party's indication that INAMU provides support through its six regional units by implementing regional work plans, technical accompaniment, advocacy for the creation and reopening of offices, capacity building on gender policies, and coordination of strategies to address gender-based violence. The Committee further notes the information provided on the adoption of 57 municipal regulations under the 2022 Law to prevent, address, punish and eradicate violence against women in politics.

The Committee regrets, however, that the 2010 legal reform (Law No. 8,679) eliminated responsibilities in matters of equality, gender and human rights previously attributed to Municipal Councils, leaving these responsibilities to the discretion of mayors' offices. The Committee notes that while INAMU filed an unconstitutionality action in 2024 challenging this reform, the action was dismissed on procedural grounds. The Committee observes that the State party acknowledges the need to recover the legal progress achieved in 2008 and expresses concern that the legal

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framework continues to undermine rather than strengthen the mandate and authority of these offices. The Committee further notes reports received indicating that municipal offices for women's affairs continue to operate with minimal budgets, lack specialized personnel and face employment instability, which severely limits their capacity to respond to women's needs in communities, and that these offices are reportedly undergoing a process of precarization and closure.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is extensive but does not fully address the core recommendation regarding strengthening authority, mandate and adequate resource allocation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 16 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Strengthen the authority, mandate and capacity of the municipal offices for women's affairs by allocating adequate human, technical and financial resources and providing capacity-building on women's rights and gender equality to them.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 18** of the concluding observations that the State party "**allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the Ombudsperson Office for Women within the Office of the Ombudsperson of Costa Rica so that it can effectively and independently discharge its mandate to promote and protect women's rights and gender equality, including by considering complaints by women and girls in a confidential and gender-responsive manner; [...] repeal or amend the proposed draft law No. 23217 amending Law No. 7319 (1992) on the Office of the Ombudsperson of the Republic to ensure the maintenance and independence of the Ombudsperson Office for Women and all specialized offices within the Office of the Ombudsperson; [...] and] expedite the confirmation of the head of the Office of the Ombudsperson of Costa Rica and ensure that the process is transparent and in conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles)**":

The Committee notes the State party's indication that the Ombudsperson's Office has implemented measures to strengthen the Office, including progressive restoration of personnel. The Committee welcomes the information that draft law No. 23,217 was archived by the Legislative Assembly. The Committee further welcomes the appointment on 27 February 2023 of lawyer Angie Cruickshank Lambert as Ombudsperson, noting that she is the first Afro-descendant woman to hold this public office in the country.

The Committee expresses serious concern, however, that the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the Ombudsperson Office for Women remain inadequate to effectively serve half of the country's population, particularly given the very high and increasing workload resulting from obligations under the Law against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Teaching, which requires the Office to exercise advisory and oversight roles regarding all sexual harassment complaints filed with competent authorities. The Committee regrets that the heavy workload risks undermining the Office's capacity to fully carry out its other essential functions,



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including participating in monitoring committees for the National Policy for Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women, observing the high-level political committee for the Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men, political advocacy, analyzing bills and programmes, advising the Legislative Assembly on gender issues, and supporting civil society. The Committee further regrets that despite efforts made to the Legislative Assembly and the Ministry of Finance, adequate financial resources have not yet been allocated as recommended. The Committee notes that the efforts made to strengthen the Office remain insufficient to fulfil the tasks and key role that this Office has for women's human rights in the country.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party relates to the recommendation but lacks specific detail on resources allocated to the Ombudsperson Office for Women. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 18** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the Ombudsperson Office for Women within the Office of the Ombudsperson of Costa Rica so that it can effectively and independently discharge its mandate to promote and protect women's rights and gender equality, including by considering complaints by women and girls in a confidential and gender-responsive manner. It also recommends that the State party repeal or amend the proposed draft law No. 23217 amending Law No. 7319 (1992) on the Office of the Ombudsperson of the Republic to ensure the maintenance and independence of the Ombudsperson Office for Women and all specialized offices within the Office of the Ombudsperson. It further recommends that the State party expedite the confirmation of the head of the Office of the Ombudsperson of Costa Rica and ensure that the process is transparent and in conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 34 (b)** of the concluding observations to **“cease efforts to repeal the technical guidelines for the therapeutic termination of pregnancy and widely disseminate and provide mandatory training to health professionals on the guidelines, with a view to reducing the number of unsafe abortions in the State party”**:

The Committee notes the State party's indication that it is applying the current national technical guidelines for therapeutic termination of pregnancy. The Committee also notes that the Costa Rican Social Security Fund disseminated the protocol to all institutional personnel and developed a training plan for healthcare staff throughout the health services network attending pregnant women. The Committee further notes that during 2023 and 2024, training was conducted in seven health service networks and that training for final-year residents in Gynecology and Obstetrics was included in 2025.

The Committee notes with concern that while the 2019 Technical Guidelines remain formally in force, they are reportedly almost inapplicable in practice due to the absence of clear directives, effective supervision and institutional will to guarantee compliance, and that there are



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no official and transparent records on requests and procedures performed. The Committee expresses serious concern about the absence of information from the State party on whether it has ceased efforts to repeal the Technical Standard, particularly given that multiple actions of unconstitutionality against Executive Decree No. 42113 remain pending before the Constitutional Chamber, that in January 2025 the State party announced Bill No. 24,864 aimed at increasing penalties for the crime of abortion and eliminating historical mitigating factors, and that training and dissemination activities related to the Technical Standard were suspended in 2024, all of which are in open contradiction with the Committee's recommendations and with human rights standards regarding sexual and reproductive health rights. The Committee regrets that these actions suggest a shift in political strategy from repealing the Technical Standard toward promoting legislative reforms that would further restrict access to abortion services, which fundamentally undermines the recommendation's objective of reducing unsafe abortions.

The Committee considers that while the State party has taken some steps to implement one aspect of the recommendation through training activities, the overall actions taken contradict the core elements and objective of the recommendation to reduce unsafe abortions. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that while the information provided by the State party is clear and extensive, it is also incomplete and omits critical information regarding the suspension of training activities and proposed legislative reforms that contradict the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 34 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Cease efforts to repeal the technical guidelines for the therapeutic termination of pregnancy and widely disseminate and provide mandatory training to health professionals on the guidelines, with a view to reducing the number of unsafe abortions in the State party.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 40 (b)** of the concluding observations to “**adopt measures to promptly address the pending asylum claims, and reduce the delays in refugee determination and appeal procedures, including by amending Executive Decree No. 43810 MGP and increasing the human, technical and financial resources of the Refugee Unit and the Commission on Restricted Visas and Refugees**”:

The Committee notes the State party's indication of a significant increase in refugee applications (34,584 in 2023 and 28,306 in 2024) which has exceeded institutional capacity. The Committee welcomes the replacement of Executive Decree No. 43810-MGP with Decree No. 44501-MGP in 2024, which restored the right to request refugee status without temporal limits and granted work authorization to all adults upon application submission. The Committee also notes operational improvements including increased appointment capacity from 420 to 960 weekly appointments for first-time applications and from 30 to 200 for work permits, with support from UNHCR.

The Committee notes with concern, however, that despite these efforts the service became saturated almost immediately and pending cases continue to increase. The Committee expresses serious concern that access to the asylum procedure remains excessively slow, sometimes taking



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up to 12 months, and that decision-making capacity remains limited. The Committee regrets that since 2018, the Public Employment Framework Law has prevented adequate staffing increases, with requests to expand the Refugee Unit rejected despite only five institutional staff currently serving. The Committee notes with concern that while UNHCR provides support through UNOPS with thirty-five personnel, this heavy dependence on international cooperation does not constitute a sustainable solution. The Committee expresses particular concern about gender-specific consequences experienced by women asylum seekers and refugees, including exposure to gender-based violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking and exploitation, lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, mental health disorders caused by prolonged uncertainty, and barriers to education and social integration.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken meaningful action towards the implementation of the recommendation through decree amendment and operational improvements. However, the Committee notes that structural limitations on adequate human, technical and financial resources continue to undermine effective implementation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 40 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Adopt measures to promptly address the pending asylum claims, and reduce the delays in refugee determination and appeal procedures, including by amending Executive Decree No. 43810 MGP and increasing the human, technical and financial resources of the Refugee Unit and the Commission on Restricted Visas and Refugees.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jelena Pia-Comena', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jelena Pia-Comena

Rapporteur on follow-up

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women