

# *Ramos Durand et al. v. Peru:* Long-Awaited Accountability for Victims and Recognition of Forced Sterilization as Reproductive Violence



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In March 2026, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (the Court) issued a landmark [judgment](#) in *Ramos Durand et al. v. Peru*, holding Peru responsible for the forced sterilization and death of Celia Edith Ramos Durand. The case was [brought](#) by the Center for Reproductive Rights, DEMUS – Study for the Defense of Women’s Rights, and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). Global Justice Center submitted an [amicus curiae brief](#) in the case, with Debevoise & Plimpton acting as pro bono counsel, articulating the importance of specifically recognizing reproductive violence.

## Why the Judgment Matters

The judgment marks a significant moment in the decades-long fight for justice by the victims and survivors of Peru’s state-sponsored sterilization policy conducted in the 1990s under Peru’s *Programa Nacional de Salud Reproductiva y Planificación Familiar* (PNSRPF).

The judgment establishes an important precedent by expressly recognizing the harm of [reproductive violence](#), an often-overlooked form of sexual and gender-based violence. The judgment indicated that reproductive violence encompasses harm to all aspects of reproductive health, including forced sterilization.

The judgment offers justice to thousands affected by Peru’s policy of mass sterilization, which the Court held amounted to a form of institutional violence, characterized by coercion and grounded in discrimination against indigenous, rural, and poor women.

## Core Human Rights Violations Recognized by the Court

### **Freedom from gender-based violence:**

- violated by forced sterilization, as reproductive violence, under Peru's coercive state policy.

### **Rights to life, personal integrity, and health:**

- violated by the coerced procedure and negligent medical care.

### **Rights to liberty, privacy, information, family, and equality:**

- violated by the absence of free, prior, full and informed consent.

### **Judicial guarantees and obligations of judicial protection and due diligence:**

- violated by the state's failure to investigate effectively and an impermissible 23-year delay in domestic proceedings.

### **Rights of the family and the child**

- violated by the grave harms suffered by Celia Ramos' family.

## Forced Sterilization as Reproductive Violence

Building on its prior recognition of obstetric violence as a form of reproductive violence, the Court defined reproductive violence as encompassing the acts or omissions that impact reproductive health. This includes forced sterilization, forced pregnancy, measures to prevent births, forced abortion, and forced contraception. The Court held that Celia Ramos' sterilization qualified as reproductive violence because health workers used psychological pressure to override her will, which led to her undergoing a surgical intervention that ultimately led to her death.

## State Policy as Institutional Violence

The Court found that Peru's PNSRPF, conducted in the 1990s under the administration of President Alberto Fujimori, was a coercive state policy aimed at mass sterilization of vulnerable women rather than a rights-based family planning program. The PNSRPF operated through numerical targets, institutional incentives, and the "recruitment" of women through psychological pressure. The program disproportionality targeted indigenous, rural, and poor women. The Court found that the PNSRPF amounted to institutional violence against women which, through discriminatory practices and structural inequalities, obstructed women's enjoyment of their rights.

## No Free, Prior, Full and Informed Consent

Although Peru produced a consent form bearing Celia Ramos' signature, the Court held that it did not satisfy minimum requirements because it omitted essential information on risks, irreversibility, alternatives, and the right to withdraw. Health workers' repeated visits to Celia Ramos' home to pressure her into accepting the sterilization procedure further vitiated any apparent consent,

rendering the procedure a forced sterilization and leading the Court to find violations of personal liberty, privacy, information, family life, equality, and health.

### **Medical Negligence and the Failure to Protect Life and Health**

The Court identified two forms of medical negligence: Peru's failure to conduct an adequate pre-surgical assessment of a high-risk patient and its decision to perform Celia Ramos' procedure at a health post lacking necessary equipment. The Court linked these failures to the complications that caused Celia Ramos' death. The Court therefore found Peru in violation of the right to life, personal integrity and health.

### **Family Harm and Denial of Justice**

The Court held that Peru failed to act with due diligence after Celia Ramos died in a public facility within the known context of PNSRPF-related deaths. Peru also failed to open an investigation and order an autopsy. The domestic proceedings that followed were marked by evidentiary failures, improper termination, and an impermissible 23-year delay. The Court therefore found Peru in breach of judicial guarantees and protections, as well as the duty of due diligence to investigate violence against women.

The Court also recognized that the death of Celia Ramos and the prolonged impunity that followed caused profound harm to her three daughters, husband, and mother. Among other impacts, the daughters lost their mother, assumed household responsibilities at a young age, and lost educational opportunities. The Court found violations of personal integrity, family protection, and children's rights, and acknowledged damage to the life plans of all family members.

## **Redress and Reparations Ordered by the Court**

### **Investigation:**

- Peru must advance the investigation into Celia Ramos' death, prosecute direct and indirect perpetrators, and ensure victim participation in the process. Domestic laws, such as amnesty provisions, statutes of limitations, and liability exclusions, may not be invoked to bar investigation or punishment.

### **Publication and Public Acknowledgment:**

- Peru must publish the judgment, hold a public ceremony attended by senior officials acknowledging international responsibility for all violations and expressly referencing the PNSRPF as a coercive mass sterilization policy.

### **Education:**

- Peru must grant scholarships for professional or postgraduate studies at public institutions to each of Celia Ramos' three daughters.

**Compensatory Damages and Rehabilitation:**

- Peru must pay compensation for material damages and moral damages to the husband and daughters of Celia Ramos.

**Non-Repetition:**

- Peru must adopt a unified regulatory standard on free, prior, full, and informed consent, integrate this into hospital protocols and medical curriculum, and establish complaint mechanisms for consent violations.
- Peru must develop and disseminate guidelines for patients on obtaining informed consent in matters of sexual and reproductive health. These guidelines must be translated into the official languages of Peru and disseminated in an accessible manner, with linguistic sensitivity.
- Peru must implement a national sexual and reproductive health policy with a gender and intersectionality lens.
- Peru must register PNSRPF-related deaths and issue a reparations policy for surviving victims.