

# FOREWORD

**T**he year 2020 has been indelibly marked by the Covid-19 global pandemic. This public health crisis, with serious economic and social ramifications, has also created new challenges for judicial systems, whether they be national or international. Our three regional human rights Courts have had to adapt to this unprecedented situation through numerous changes to our working methods. Yet despite the challenging times we are living through, we have been able to innovate, often using IT solutions, in order to continue delivering judgments and decisions and thereby defending the rights and fundamental freedoms of millions of people on our three continents.

Despite the difficulties faced, it has been more important than ever for our three Courts to maintain our regular cooperation and dialogue as foreseen in the San José and Kampala Declarations from 2018 and 2019 respectively. Accordingly, on 9 July 2020, the first online dialogue between our three Courts took place on “The impact of Covid-19 on human rights. The perspectives of the three human rights courts of the world”. This dialogue provided a unique opportunity for our Courts to exchange information on our respective experiences, challenges and case-law. At the heart of our exchanges were the proportionality of measures taken by public authorities in the context of the pandemic, the current vital role of new technologies, and the fundamental importance defending the rule of law during this period.

This second Joint Law Report for 2020 keeps the same format as the first. It is divided into three chapters, one for each Court, with an introduction by each Court’s Registrar. Each chapter highlights major cases that represent new standards or innovative case-law developments during the year.

The purpose of our Joint Law Report is to highlight our points of convergence, but also our different perspectives, so that an open dialogue can be maintained between our respective Courts. What is absolutely clear is that the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as safeguarded by our three regional human rights courts are as important and relevant as they have ever been, indeed perhaps more so.

Judge IMANI DAUD ABOUD

President of the African Court  
on Human and Peoples’ Rights

Judge ROBERT SPANO

President of the European  
Court of Human Rights

Judge ELIZABETH ODIO BENITO

President of the Inter-American  
Court of Human Rights