

COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC
OPINION No. 010

During the past hours, one of the most googled phrases in Colombia, and at least in the Hispanic-speaking world, is: “judge erotic show”, and the premium headline that appears in most mainstream media is: “Scandal of a Judge celebrating with erotic dance”. Next to this headline, the other one seems to fade and is the cyber attack committed on the computer systems of the Judicial Branch and other Entities, which has put the security of the country's judicial information at high risk.

The leading media, both national and international, and the social media cannot stop from advertising the unfortunate events from the celebration of Friendship Day amongst colleagues and workmates from the Judiciary Branch from City of Cucuta (Norte de Santander) and have left aside that there is no clear and precise information about the contingency plans that the Judicial Branch has planned to deal with the attack, and that only a timid plan B has been established, to which the media has not even addressed.

Several judges are worried about the kidnapping of the information contained in the processes contained among others in the public hearings found in the repository of a private cloud hijacked by cybercriminals, with which this technological infrastructure service and its backup had unfortunately been contracted.

It should be noted that the cyberattack went directly to the private cloud of IFX Networks, where many national entities from several countries, including the Colombian Judicial Branch, have databases and applications hosted, whose information was encrypted by a Ransomware-type virus. Unfortunately, the backup of this information was also in this cloud, which is why it was also affected; this is a gross error from the point of view of technical and contractual verification.

These apps and databases were initially located in a data center of the Judicial Branch that even acquired a Hyperconvergence architecture that seamlessly integrates computing resources, storage, and virtualization into a single system, so there is still no certainty as to why this information was transferred to that "private cloud."

The theme of the scoop in which a female judge is named over and over again makes it unavoidable for this Collective of Women Judges of Colombia to speak publicly, although by doing so, we contribute to increasing the ubiquitous topic; we take care of this, for the respect that each of the 50 million citizens we serve daily deserve. Trying to be brief:

1. We deeply regret what happened on Friday, September 15, 2023, in the Palace of Justice Building of the City of Cúcuta (Norte de Santander) and the consequences that arise for the Administration of Justice of our Country.

However, we are more concerned about the conditions in which the justice administration service is being provided without a clear roadmap to confront the crisis.

2. The disciplinary authorities are responsible for the task of investigating and deciding on the behavior of those involved in the two incidents within the legal and constitutional frameworks of the respective processes, which are already underway.

3. We call for reflection on the reasons why a phenomenon such as the security of judicial information is unquestioned while an episode such as what happened in Cúcuta, which evidently defies all the rules of common sense, causes so much interest in the news, networks, and media, because, with the range that has been given to it, we run the risk of stereotyping the female figure in the Judiciary, with the implications that this would have on the development of the jurisdictional function, rights that are guaranteed to all Colombians.

We are surprised that an issue like the computer emergency that has paralyzed the Judicial Branch does not generate so much concern in the community.

4. As is customary, the Ibero-American Code of Judicial Ethics, the Bangalore Rules, and the International Association of Women Judges principles - IAWJ inspire this public letter. We offer, once again, the space for dialogue on Ethics as the basis for the exercise of state functions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Colombian Association of Women Judges – ACMJ

Bogotá D.C., September 20, 2023.