

*Bogotá, Colombia
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Colombia's Constitutional Court Rules for Equality

In a historic decision, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled Wednesday that same-sex couples must be granted the same rights as heterosexual common law marriages.

The sentence grants sweeping civil, political, social, economic, immigration and criminal rights to gay and lesbian couples. Until now, these rights had only been reserved for non-married heterosexual couples. (Colombia recognizes common-law marriages.)

The decision was a result of a suit filed in April of last year by LGBT rights group Colombia Diversa, human rights group DeJusticia and the Group for Public Interest Rights from the Universidad de los Andes.

It is the latest in a string of favorable court rulings for the gay rights movement in Colombia. In the last two years the Constitutional Court has ruled in favor of inheritance rights, pension rights, and health and social security rights for same-sex couples.

Canada, Uruguay and Colombia are the only countries in the Western Hemisphere that recognize same-sex unions.

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