

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 19/002/2006 (Public)
News Service No: 228
3 September 2006

Hong Kong: Immediate actions needed for realisation of women's human rights

Amnesty International today urged the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) promptly to take steps for the full implementation of the recommendations by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The recommendations were released on 31 August 2006, following the Committee's review of Hong Kong's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in connection with the Committee's consideration of China's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports under the Convention, which took place in a public meeting in New York earlier in August.

Pertaining to the HKSAR, the Committee expressed concerns inter alia on the low prosecution rate of domestic violence, the situation of women asylum seekers and refugees, discriminatory provisions contained in the Small House Policy and the electoral system, as well as the situation of female foreign domestic workers.

Amnesty International echoes the Committee's concerns, particularly its call for a strengthened effort to combat domestic violence by the HKSAR government.

Amnesty International welcomes the initiatives by the HKSAR government to amend the Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO), as presented to the Committee by government representatives during the hearing earlier in August. Amnesty International, however, is deeply concerned that the proposed amendments of the DVO, which include 1) the incorporation of non-physical abuse into the definition of "violence"; 2) the extension of the scope of application; and 3) the extension of the duration of the injunction order, are inadequate to preventing gender-based violence in the family.

In particular, Amnesty International urges the Hong Kong government to:

- ensure the safety of victims of gender-based violence in the family;
- ensure the provision and management of shelter services, economic assistance, and housing
- ensure timely and adequate reparation for victims of gender-related violence, including fair compensation, medical care and comprehensive recovery practices;
- create a centralised database to standardize the compilation of official figures on violence against women and make these figures publicly available;
- ensure sufficient resources to implement measures that address gender-based violence

Furthermore, the organization also remains disappointed with the government's repetitive refusal to extend the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees to Hong Kong and echoes the recommendation by the Committee to extend this Convention to Hong Kong in order to ensure that women asylum-seekers and

refugees can fully benefit from its protection.

Background

Prior to the Committee's consideration of the HKSAR government report during its 36th session in August 2006, Amnesty International submitted written briefings to the Committee focusing on gender-based violence in the home. The organization sent a three-person delegation to attend the hearings, which took place in New York on 10 August 2006, and delivered an oral intervention on the problems facing female refugees and asylum seekers in Hong Kong.

In the context of the Committee's examination of state reports during the 36th session, Amnesty International also submitted written briefings to the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in Georgia and in Mexico.

For Amnesty International's submissions on Hong Kong to the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, please see:

Briefing (AI Index: ASA:19/001/2006): http://www.amnesty.org.hk/materials/HK_briefing_CEDAW_text.pdf

Executive Summary of the briefing:

http://www.amnesty.org.hk/materials/HK_briefing_CEDAW_exe_sum.pdf

Oral intervention: http://www.amnesty.org.hk/materials/CEDAW_oral_int_refugee.doc

To see the full Concluding Observations of the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, please go to:

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw36/cc/CHINA_advance%20unedited.pdf

For more information of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Committee, please see:

CEDAW text: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

General Recommendation 25:

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20(English).pdf)

For more information, call Si-si Liu Pui Shan (Chairperson) on (+852) 9193 7216 or Tan Kong Sau (AI delegate to UN CEDAW 36th Session) on (+852) 9732 1382