

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI index: EUR 30/001/2013
23 January 2013

Amnesty International issues its ten-point Agenda for Human Rights in Italy

One month ahead of parliamentary elections due to take place on 24 and 25 February 2013, Amnesty International released today its Human Rights Agenda for Italy,¹ calling on all candidates to take a stand. The organization has identified ten areas where change is needed urgently and recommended measures that the newly elected leaders of the country should adopt during their tenure.

At a time when political manifestos and public debates are almost exclusively focusing on the state of the economy, Amnesty International reminds candidates that the new parliament and government must put human rights at the core of their activities as they pursue new legislation and policies. Italy's human rights record in the past decade has been poor on many accounts and has been repeatedly criticized by international human rights bodies. Successive governments and parliaments have failed to address problems in the protection of human rights notwithstanding their obligations under international law.

In years of research, Amnesty International has documented serious human rights violations and abuses in many areas. One of them is the lack of accountability of the police, law enforcement agencies and state officials for grave human rights violation, such as torture and ill-treatment. Asylum-seekers escaping the horrors of war, torture and persecution, who were seeking protection in Italy, were exposed to push-backs and expulsions to countries where they were at risk of torture and further serious violations of their rights. To control migration, Italy entered into agreements with countries which were unable to guarantee respect for human rights, including refugees' rights. Many migrant workers were exploited. Despite international criticism, discrimination of Roma continued, with thousands segregated in squalid authorized camps offering no prospect of integration, or targeted by relentless forced evictions which left many families homeless. Roma remained also largely excluded from social housing. Conditions of detention in prisons and identification and expulsion centres remained appalling and well below international standards. Gaps in the protection of LGBTI persons from hate crimes and of women from violence have been well documented but no adequate action by the authorities followed. The crime of torture has still not been introduced in domestic legislation notwithstanding Italy ratified the Convention against Torture in 1989. An independent national human rights institution to protect and promote human rights has yet to be created. Successive governments have also failed to ensure accountability for the human rights impact of operations of Italian multinational companies abroad.

The international and domestic credibility of the new government and parliament will not depend only on their performance in economic and financial affairs, but also on their commitment and ability to respect international law and protect human rights, both at home and abroad.

Italy must urgently see to its human rights' record. Amnesty International urges all candidates to commit, if elected, to:

¹ <http://www.ricordatichedevirispondere.it/i-punti>

1. Ensure police accountability and introduce the crime of torture in domestic legislation
2. Introduce measures to prevent killings of women and protect women from violence
3. Protect refugees, end exploitation and criminalization of migrants and set aside agreements with Libya on migration control
4. Ensure adequate conditions in prisons and respect the rights of those detained and imprisoned
5. Combat homophobia and transphobia and guarantee the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people
6. Stop discrimination, forced evictions and ethnic segregation of Roma
7. Create an independent national institution for the protection of human rights
8. Ensure respect of human rights by Italian multinational companies
9. Fight against death penalty in the world and promote human rights in all foreign policy relations
10. Strive towards control over the arms trade, facilitating the adoption of an international treaty

Amnesty International looks forward to engaging on its human rights agenda with all candidates during the electoral campaign, as well as with the new parliament and government after the elections.

Amnesty International is a global, democratic and self-governing movement, independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and does not support or oppose any government or political system.