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Trinidad and Tobago: Withdrawal of American Convention on Human Rights - eroding 50 years of human rights progress

The announcement by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago this week to withdraw as a party to the American Convention on Human Rights undermines 50 years of human rights protection, Amnesty International said today.

In withdrawing from the Convention the government has taken the unprecedented decision that, as of 26 May, it will deny all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago protection under an international treaty which legally obliges the government to respect a range of fundamental rights and freedoms and to comply with the decisions of an international tribunal.

Amnesty International is alarmed that the government's apparent reason for this decision is its desire to be able to execute people in conditions which would escape international accountability.

"Not only would such a measure, if implemented, deny all those within the territory of Trinidad and Tobago the protection afforded by the American Convention, but it would also constitute a major blow to the aims and objectives of the inter-American system for the promotion and protection of human rights," Amnesty International said.

This year marks the 50th anniversary the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Declaration of Human Rights. On the eve of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in Venezuela, Amnesty International is calling on governments and the OAS to condemn this step, to work together to strengthen the inter-American system for the protection of human rights, and to join in urging Trinidad and Tobago to reverse this retrograde decision.
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