

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Guinea-Bissau: Amnesty International welcomes commitment to criminalize female genital mutilation and urges Guinea-Bissau to end the prevailing impunity for human rights violations committed by armed forces

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Guinea-Bissau

Amnesty International welcomes Guinea-Bissau's engagement with the Universal Periodic Review and its support for a number of important recommendations, including to adopt a law criminalising female genital mutilation.¹ It further welcomes Guinea-Bissau's statement that two recommendations to prohibit discrimination against women by law and in the Constitution are in the process of being implemented.²

Amnesty International encourages Guinea-Bissau to reconsider and support the recommendation to take measures to combat harmful traditional practices, such as forced and early marriage.³

Amnesty International welcomes Guinea-Bissau's support for recommendations to ratify international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The organization urges Guinea-Bissau to proceed to their ratification and implementation in national law without delay.⁴

Amnesty International regrets that Guinea-Bissau did not support five key recommendations, among them, to make human rights education and training a prerequisite to joining the armed forces, to send a clear signal that human rights violations committed by the armed forces will not be tolerated, and to bring to justice members of the armed forces responsible for violations, without exception and regardless of rank.⁵

These recommendations are particularly pertinent given the impunity enjoyed by members of the armed forces for human rights violations. The political killings that occurred in March and June 2009, including of former President Vieira and General Tagme na Waie, remain unpunished. Moreover, soldiers continue to arbitrarily arrest, detain and torture civilians as well as other military personnel. Former Chief of Staff Vice-Admiral Induta Zamora has been held incommunicado and without charge since his arrest on 1 April 2010. Amnesty International urges Guinea-Bissau to end the prevailing impunity as a matter of urgency.

¹ A/HRC/15/10, paragraphs 65.46-65.48, and 65.53-65.55

² Ibid, paragraphs 66.1 (France) and 66.2 (the Netherlands)

³ Ibid paragraph 67, recommendation 67.4 (Norway)

⁴ Ibid, paragraphs 65.1-65.12 (Algeria, Brazil, Nigeria, Spain, Mexico, Hungary, Argentina, UK, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, DRC, Philippines)

⁵ Ibid, paragraphs 67.2 (Spain) and 67.5 (Canada)

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Guinea-Bissau on 1 October 2010 during its 15th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Guinea-Bissau: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR30/007/2009/en>

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