

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International urges Zambia to respect freedom of expression and assembly and abolish death penalty

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Zambia

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Zambia on 19 March 2018 during its 37th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on [Zambia](#).

Free expression and space for genuine dialogue and debate are essential to achieving respect for human rights and political stability.

Amnesty International welcomes assurances by Zambia during the UPR that it upholds the principles of the UPR mechanism, and spares no effort to promote and protect human rights through its engagement with this mechanism.

Of the 213 recommendations made to Zambia by other states, it is extremely disappointing that 111 of these did not enjoy its support. Amnesty International urges Zambia to reconsider its position on these recommendations with a view to accepting at least some of them. In particular, the organisation regrets that Zambia did not accept recommendations to guarantee the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression, and to abolish the death penalty.

The authorities continue to stifle freedom of the press, targeting journalists, human rights defenders and activists who express dissenting views. Amnesty International denounces all attacks against activists and journalists and are concerned that Zambia has rejected recommendations to guarantee their ability to carry out their work without fear of persecution.

The musician Fumba Chama, also known as Pilato, is facing constant intimidation and threats to his life by state agencies because his music is critical of President Lungu. This would indicate a growing intolerance of free speech.

The organisation is also concerned by the use of criminal libel laws to silence critics of the ruling party. On 10 January, government critic Dr. Kwalela Kafunya was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, including on charges of defamation of the President. It calls on Zambia to drop the charges against Pilato and release Dr. Kafunya.

Amnesty International welcomes Zambia's acceptance of a recommendation to reform the Public Order Act and encourages it to consult with civil society in ensuring it complies with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The organisation also welcomes the reduction in inmates on death row through commutation of death sentences, however, it is also concerned that the death penalty continues to be handed down. Amnesty International calls on Zambia to abolish the death penalty.

Public Document

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