

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Amnesty International urges Guatemala to step up efforts to strengthen the judiciary and end to protect human rights defenders.**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Guatemala***

Amnesty International welcomes Guatemala's support of 21 recommendations related to strengthening protection measures for human rights defenders.<sup>1</sup> Defenders operate in an extremely hostile environment in Guatemala, with 483 attacks against them recorded in 2017 by local NGOs. The organization urges Guatemala to implement these recommendations and to adopt a public policy for their protection, in line with Guatemala's international obligations.<sup>2</sup>

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about intimidation and attacks against judges and prosecutors. The recent attempt to expel the Head of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) shows that efforts to fight impunity may be at risk. Amnesty International welcomes Guatemala's acceptance of nine recommendations<sup>3</sup> to strengthen the effectiveness and independence of the justice system and urges their full and early implementation.

Regrettably Guatemala rejected six recommendations addressing enforced disappearances.<sup>4</sup> In the vast majority of the 45,000 disappearances perpetrated during the internal armed conflict, the families have not been able to locate their relatives, and those responsible have yet to be brought to justice. Amnesty International urges Guatemala to create a National Commission for the Search for Victims of Enforced Disappearance.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons face high levels of attacks and discrimination in Guatemala based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Amnesty International is disappointed at Guatemala's rejection of eight recommendations to end discrimination against LGBTI persons,<sup>5</sup> and strongly urges the State to adopt and implement policies to prevent all forms of violence against them.

The level of violence against women in Guatemala remains alarming, with high numbers of violent deaths of women reported each year. Amnesty International welcomes Guatemala's

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 111.40 (El Salvador), 111.42-111.45 (Georgia, Germany, Greece), 111.48-111.50 (Ireland, Italy, Lithuania), 111.52 (Luxembourg), 111.54-65 (Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, Unites States of America, Australia, Belgium, Canada), 111.67 (Chile).

<sup>2</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Human Rights Defender et al vs Guatemala*, 28 August 2014.

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 111.68-111.70 (Germany, Netherlands, Republic of Korea), 111.72-111.77 (Venezuela, Canada, UK, Lithuania, Sweden, Australia).

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 112.4 (Ukraine), 112.8-10 (Iraq, Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Uruguay, Ecuador), 112.14 (El Salvador), 112.34 (Mexico).

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 112.16-20 (Israel, Uruguay, France, New Zealand, Slovenia, Chile), 112.50-51 (New Zealand, Australia).

acceptance of 29 recommendations to prevent such violence and to ensure adequate protection of children,<sup>6</sup> and urge their early implementation.

Amnesty International regrets Guatemala's rejection of 15 recommendations related to the abolition of the death penalty.<sup>7</sup> This is despite the decision by the Constitutional Court in November 2017 to *de facto* abolish the death penalty for all crimes; the organization strongly encourages Guatemala to abolish the death penalty in law.

## **Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Guatemala on 15 March 2018 during its 37<sup>th</sup> 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 country:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/6554/2017/en/>

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<sup>6</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 111.103-104, 111.106-110, 111.112, 111.114-116, 111.20, 111.122-123, 111.126-127, 111.129-131, 111.137-146 (Uruguay, Bahrain, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, Portugal, Singapore, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ecuador, Maldives, Morocco, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, France, Greece, Holy See, Libya, Panama, Slovakia).

<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/37/9, recommendations 112.1-112.5 (Montenegro, Georgia, Spain, Ukraine, Venezuela), 112.24-112.33 (Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, Angola, Australia, Cote d'Ivoire).