DENMARK
HUMAN RIGHTS IN REVIEW:
2011-2015

Amnesty International
Submission to the UN Universal
Periodic Review, January - February 2016
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission was prepared for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Denmark taking place in January-February 2016. In it, Amnesty International evaluates the implementation of recommendations accepted by Denmark in its previous UPR, assesses the national human rights framework in Denmark and the Faroe Islands and the situation of human rights on the ground, and makes a number of recommendations to the Danish and the Faroese authorities to strengthen human rights protection and address human rights challenges at the national level.

Amnesty International notes with regret that Denmark has not incorporated the full spectrum of international human rights obligations into national legislation and has yet to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. We also note with regret that the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons do not apply to the Faroe Islands due to the territorial exclusions entered upon ratification.

With regard to the human rights situation on the ground, Amnesty International is concerned about human rights violations in the context of counter-terrorism, management of asylum cases which fails to ensure the best interests of the child, and the detention of asylum-seekers and vulnerable persons while awaiting deportation.

Amnesty International also draws attention to the high rate of sexual violence and the failure to effectively prosecute alleged perpetrators.

FOLLOW UP TO THE PREVIOUS REVIEW

During the first UPR of Denmark in May 2011, reviewing states made recommendations relating to counter-terrorism;\(^1\) asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants;\(^2\) and violence against women.\(^3\) Amnesty International welcomes the government's acceptance of most of the recommendations, as well as its decision, in June 2014, to accept a further 20 recommendations which it had previously rejected.

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1. The UPR of Denmark includes also the autonomous province of Faroe Islands.
3. A/HRC/18/4 and A/HRC/18/4/Add.1, recommendations 106.102 (Turkey), 106.103 (France), 106.116 (Greece), 106.117 (Switzerland), 106.125 (Netherlands), 106.126 (Republic of Korea), 106.127 (United Kingdom), 106.128 (Brazil), 106.129 (Sweden), and 106.131 (Slovakia).
4. A/HRC/18/4 and A/HRC/18/4/Add.1, recommendations 106.34 (Norway), 106.35 (Switzerland) and 106.36 (Belgium).
Denmark has implemented many of the recommendations, including raising the age of criminal responsibility from 14 to 15 years, and acceding to both the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, Amnesty International does not consider that all the accepted recommendations have been adequately fulfilled and several of the human rights concerns raised during the first UPR of Denmark remain relevant. For example, Denmark has stated that the recommendation to assess the United States Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) alleged use of Danish territory in the context of the CIA’s rendition program has been fulfilled through the investigation carried out by the Danish Institute for International Studies. Amnesty International considers this investigation to be inadequate: that investigation focused exclusively on the territory of Greenland, relied entirely on written documents and did not collect any new information or use data dating back later than 2008.

THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Amnesty International regrets the government’s decision to not incorporate the full spectrum of international human rights obligations into national legislation despite recommendations to this effect by a government appointed Committee of Experts. It is also disappointing that the government has not ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as agreed to during its first review. The Ministry of Justice has said that it is currently

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5 Mid-term Progress Report 2014 - Update by Denmark on follow-up of the recommendations of UNHRC under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism (Mid-term Progress Report 2014), recommendation 106.99 (Kyrgyzstan).
6 See Minister of children, gender equality, integration and social affairs, Denmark has acceded to the Optional Protocol for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, http://english.sm.dk/en/international-priorities/bilateral-agreements/denmark-has-acceded-to-the-optional-protocol-for-the-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities and Mid-term Progress Report 2014 - Update by Denmark on follow-up of the recommendations of UNHRC under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism (UPR), recommendations 106.3 (Spain), 106.6 (Austria), 106.7 (France), 106.8 (Australia), 106.9 (United Kingdom), and 106.10 (Burkina Faso).
7 Mid-term Progress Report 2014, recommendation 106.132 (Switzerland).
9 In December 2012, the government appointed a Committee of experts with the task of considering the positive and negative implications of incorporating human rights instruments into Danish law and formulating recommendations. The Expert Committee concluded its work in 2014. The majority of the non-governmental members and independent experts of the committee were in favour of incorporation. Mid-term Progress Report, 2014, recommendation 106.3 (Spain), 106.22 (Ecuador).
10 Mid-term Progress Report 2014, recommendations 106.4 (Spain), 106.11 (France),
assessing whether amendments to Danish law are required to ensure conformity with the Convention.\textsuperscript{11} Amnesty International is not aware of any such obstacles and hopes the Convention can be ratified without further delay.

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK**

**SPECIAL OFFICE FOR CHILDREN**
In 2012, Denmark established the Special Office for Children,\textsuperscript{12} which is a welcome step in the protection and enhancement of children’s rights. The Office is charged with carrying out supervision and inspections of care-centers and open and closed institutions for neglected children and children displaying criminal behavior.\textsuperscript{13} However, due to restrictions in its mandate and powers, the Office is unable to fulfill its role effectively.

Firstly, the Office is restricted to considering only the legality of a decision regarding a child. Whether that decision is in fact "the best decision" in a given situation is outside its mandate. The Office is primarily mandated to investigate and identify procedural flaws which, in many cases, is not the primary concern.

Secondly, the Office cannot consider a complaint until all administrative remedies have been exhausted, making it difficult for children to access the Office. As a result, the Office has had to inform approximately 93\% of the complainants that it is presently not able to look into their cases. Amnesty International acknowledges that, despite this restriction, the Office can signpost the child complainant to the relevant administrative complaints mechanisms, and does in fact do so, but it is not mandated to accompany or further support the complainant through these processes.

**FAROE ISLANDS: EFFECTIVE REMEDY**
Amnesty International is concerned that the police complaint system in the Faroe Islands is not adequate. Complaints are initially examined by the Local Board, which decides whether a complaint should be forwarded to the State Prosecutor for further investigation or be dismissed. The Local Board is comprised of the Head of the Police in the Faroe Islands, two police officers and four members of the Faroese Government, which means that the process is neither impartial nor objective.

Pursuant to the Faroese Administration of Justice Act, there is no time limit for pre-trial detention, and this applies also to cases of detention in solitary confinement. Under Faroese law, pre-trial detention can be prolonged indefinitely.

**ID NUMBER ON POLICE UNIFORMS**
In October 2014, the Minister of Justice announced the introduction of ID numbers on Danish police uniforms to enable the identification of police officers in case of complaints. The Independent Police Complaints Mechanism had called on the Ministry of Justice to introduce ID numbers because of the large number of complaints that are closed without further action every year because the police officer in question cannot be identified. Amnesty International welcomed this

\textsuperscript{11} Mid-term Progress Report 2014, recommendation 106.4 (Spain)
\textsuperscript{12} Folketingets Ombudsmands Børnekontor
decision, which would improve access to legal remedy for complainants and reduce impunity. Since then, however, there has been little progress in introducing ID numbers.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION ON THE GROUND

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

In 2011, the Danish government announced that it would carry out an evidence-based review of counter-terrorism legislation. An expert group has recently been appointed to carry out this task; however, Amnesty International is concerned that further legislation has been passed, before the review has even been carried out.

ACCESS TO FAIR REMOVAL AND DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS

The Danish Aliens Act and the Administration of Justice Act allow for expulsion and deportation of foreign nationals suspected of involvement in terrorism-related activities, on the basis of judicial procedures that allow for the use of secret evidence to support expulsion on “national security grounds”. The documentation is not disclosed to the individual concerned, nor to his or her lawyer of choice.

When the authorities wish to expel or deport foreign nationals on “national security grounds”, based on such secret material, the court appoints a “secret” lawyer from a list of pre-approved security-cleared lawyers to act for the individual concerned. That lawyer has access to the secret material during closed hearings, but is barred from discussing the evidence with the individual concerned or his or her lawyer of choice in the open part of the proceedings. Consequently, the individual is unable to effectively challenge the secret material or the allegations based on it. Amnesty International is concerned that these measures breach Denmark’s obligation to provide due process and equality of arms and deny the individual the right to a fair process.

WEAKENED LEGAL SAFEGUARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

The introduction of a number of bills has disproportionately restricted the right to privacy and - by weakening legal safeguards - has eroded judicial protection of this and other rights, including the right to a remedy for violations. Since 2006, a series of amendments to the Administration of Justice Act and other laws have also

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14 Aliens Act Part VIIb, and in particular sections 45b, 45e and 45f.
15 Until 2009 the regime was exclusively administrative, and as such the judicial oversight represents an improvement – with regard to independent oversight and the right to effective remedy. In 2011, the Supreme Court found that the evidence presented to a Tunisian citizen (one of the individuals that gave rise to the Bill of 2009 establishing the above system) was not sufficient to enable him to defend himself effectively, given that it did not give an adequate representation of the evidence presented by the prosecution in the closed track. Hence, the Court found that the Tunisian had not been granted a fair trial and effective remedy.
16 Bill 217 of 31 March 2006 on amendments of the Penal Code, the Act on Administration of Justice and various other laws, Bill 124 of 4 February 2009 on amendment of the Act on Administration of Justice, Bill 192 of 2 May 2014 on amendments of the Act on Centre for Cyber Security.
Weakened independent judicial oversight of police access to private and confidential information.

Of particular concern is an amendment allowing for the tapping of telephones and computers of a number of individuals, including relatives, acquaintances, colleagues, and neighbours, who are themselves not under investigation, but who are in some way connected to an individual under investigation for involvement in terrorism-related activities, drugs-related crimes or homicide. This can be done on the basis of a single warrant, i.e. the warrant pertaining to the individual under investigation.

The Parliament also granted the Police Intelligence Agency the power to compel any public authority, doctor, psychiatrist or other individual working in an official capacity to hand over confidential or private information pertaining to individuals under investigation, without judicial oversight or control. In Bill 161 of 27 February 2013 on the Police Intelligence Agency (and a parallel Bill on the Military Intelligence Agency), the Danish Government and Parliament established a new supervisory body to monitor the collection of data by the Intelligence Agencies about individuals and legal persons through tapping of telephones and computers. While the supervisory body has access to all information, it can only present opinions on the practices of the Intelligence Agencies. It cannot compel the Agencies to stop a surveillance activity nor can it submit its observations to Parliament or to the judicial system. If the Police Intelligence Agency decides to ignore a recommendation from the supervisory body, the Police must notify the Ministry of Justice; however, the notification does not have any legal consequences or ramifications. An individual who suspects that he or she is or has been subject to an illegal investigation or tapping can lodge a complaint with the supervisory body. The supervisory body is empowered to investigate the case and to compel the police or the Police Intelligence Service to stop any illegal or unwarranted investigation, but it cannot inform the complainant if he or she was in fact subjected to illegal investigation. As a consequence, the individual does not have means of legal redress and effective remedies.17

ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In 2014, Parliament adopted an amendment to the Aliens Act, providing temporary protection to certain foreign nationals fleeing widespread human rights violations and abuse (e.g. Syrian nationals).18 In the first instance, protection is granted for one year and thereafter reviewed to see if the circumstances that gave rise to granting residence permit still pertain. However, those granted protection as “war refugees” (krigsflygtninge)19 are only entitled to family reunification after one year,

17 Since 2009 the reduced judicial control was applied with 11 additional criminal offences in the Penal Code.
18 Note: L 72 of 14 November 2014 on amendment of the Aliens Act. The protection granted to war refugees from Syria does not expand the field of protection, nor does it lower the threshold with regard to the definition of “persecution”. The commentary notes emphasize this fact and state that the protection granted pursuant to the new section 7, subsection 3, would otherwise have to be granted pursuant to section 7, subsection 2.
19 “War refugees” (krigsflygtninge) is a the term used in common parlance in Denmark to describe the situation of people given “temporary protection status” as a consequence of a particularly serious situation in the country arising from armed conflict (L 72 of 14 November 2014 amending the Aliens Act.
contrary to those granted refugee status in Denmark under standard procedures. This one year provision does not take into account that war refugees (e.g. Syrians) are under additional pressure knowing that their families are struggling to survive in camps in the midst of a civil war and humanitarian crisis. The government has dismissed these concerns, arguing that the one-year rule is justifiable and proportionate given that newly arrived war refugees (e.g. Syrians) are unlikely to have ties to Denmark, and that it is necessary to maintain effective control of migration. The need to maintain effective immigration control, however, should not pertain to people fleeing persecution.

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
Current practice in asylum cases fails to ensure that sufficient consideration is always given to the best interests of the child.\textsuperscript{20} If parents do not meet the requirements for asylum on grounds of persecution, the whole family is rejected and ordered to leave the country. The effect of the rejection on the child is not considered in such decisions even in situations where the family is likely to experience extreme hardship in supporting itself, including the children.

DETENTION OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS
In its 2013 report, the Medical Group in Amnesty International Denmark examined a number of rejected asylum-seekers who were in detention while awaiting deportation from Denmark.\textsuperscript{21} Of the 43 individuals examined, 22 were found to have been subjected to torture in their country of origin. Amnesty International is concerned that an appropriate monitoring system is not in place to ensure that victims of torture and other vulnerable persons are not detained. However, the government considers that the general medical check performed by a nurse on all newly arrived asylum-seekers is sufficient to identify any torture victims.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
LACK OF PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF RAPE IN DENMARK
In 2013, the Criminal Code provisions on rape and other forms of sexual abuse were strengthened. The law now penalizes as rape non-consensual sex with a victim in a “helpless state”,\textsuperscript{22} and all provisions to reduce or exclude punishment for rape or sexual violence within marriage have been removed.\textsuperscript{23} The attrition rates of reported rapes, however, remain high.

On an annual basis, 400-600 cases of rape are reported to the police. The number of actual rapes committed is estimated to be around 3,600 per year.\textsuperscript{24} According to a report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 19% of all Danish

\textsuperscript{20} Cf. article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
\textsuperscript{22} “Helpless state” refers to victims who are unable to defend themselves e.g. due to illness, self-imposed intoxication, disability, paralysis etc.
\textsuperscript{23} Act no 633 of 12 June 2013.
women had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. This would indicate that only a minority of rapes committed are actually reported to the police.

Furthermore, only one in five reported rapes results in a conviction. The vast majority of cases are closed by the police or the prosecution and never reach trial. Most cases are closed due to “the state of the evidence”. However, in almost half of these cases, the victim had suffered physical injuries. The failure to effectively prosecute the alleged perpetrators of rape would indicate that Denmark does not fully comply with its responsibilities to protect women from gender-based violence.

**FLAWS IN RAPE LEGISLATION IN THE FAROE ISLANDS**

Although Denmark has now improved its provisions on rape, the Faroe Islands Penal Code lags behind: Faroese legislation penalizes non-consensual sex with a victim in a “helpless state” as sexual abuse rather than rape and stipulates a much lighter penalty for such acts. In certain instances, it also reduces the level of penalty for rape and sexual violence within marriage, or provides for exclusion of punishment altogether.

**RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTER-SEX PERSONS**

**TRANSGENDER PERSONS**

Since June 2014, transgender persons are able to obtain official documents reflecting their gender identity without having to undergo surgery or being diagnosed with a mental disorder. Amnesty International welcomes these simplified procedures to obtain a legal sex change, but remains concerned that the regulations for medical treatment counteract the move towards recognizing transgender persons' innate sense of their own gender identity. The health authorities have laid down a number of procedural rules on access to hormone treatment and corrective surgery. Any hormone treatment must be agreed to by the doctors at the Sexology Clinic at the National Hospital; independent medical specialists have been barred

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27 Faroese Penal Code (Chapter 24): http://logir.fo/Lovbekendtgorelse/215-af-24-06-1939-af-Straffeloven-som-senest-aendret-ved-anordning-nr-1139-af-4#chapter-94aa2710-2856-4994-a303-6b3db328c9be. The penalty relating to offences where the victim is considered to have been in a “helpless” state is half of the penalty for “rape”. The penalty for rape is 8 years maximum (§2016) and there is a 4 years maximum penalty for non-consensual sex with a victim in a “helpless state” (§2018).

28 For example, non-consensual sex with a “helpless” victim is not considered a crime if the victim and the perpetrator are married (Article 218), and if the perpetrator enters into or continues a marriage with his victim the punishment for rape can be reduced or remitted (Article 227). Faroese Criminal Law (Chapter 24): http://logir.fo/Lovbekendtgorelse/215-af-24-06-1939-af-Straffeloven-som-senest-aendret-ved-anordning-nr-1139-af-4#chapter-94aa2710-2856-4994-a303-6b3db328c9be

29 Rigshospitalet, also referred to in English, including in Amnesty International reports, as
from providing this treatment. This has resulted in long waiting lists and a drawn-out diagnostic process during which the transgender person must convince a multidisciplinary medical team that he or she is indeed transgender and not primarily suffering from a mental illness. Consequently, it may be several years before a transgender person is given access to hormone treatment.

FAROE ISLANDS: EQUAL RIGHT TO MARRIAGE
Legislation legalizing same-sex marriage in Denmark does not extend to the Faroe Islands, where persons of the same gender are not permitted to marry.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE STATE UNDER REVIEW

Amnesty International calls on the government of Denmark to:

International human rights framework


National human rights framework

▪ Provide the Special Office for Children with a mandate and additional powers to enable it to provide advisory and legal assistance in a wider range of cases;
▪ Introduce ID tags on the police uniforms without further delay.

Counter-terrorism

▪ Conduct a comprehensive and fully independent investigation of Denmark’s role in the CIA rendition program;
▪ Postpone the introduction of new counter-terrorism legislation until the government-appointed expert group has completed its review of current legislation and ensure that current as well as any new legislation complies with its human rights obligations;
▪ Reform the deportation process, stipulated in the Aliens Act and the Administration of Justice Act, to guarantee due process and equality of arms in national security cases.

Asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants

▪ Grant family reunification rights to “war refugees” and their families upon their recognition as “war refugees” in Denmark;
▪ Ensure that the best interests of the child are fully considered when deciding on asylum cases;
▪ Establish a monitoring system, with the participation of medical specialists, including psychiatrists, to effectively identify any torture survivors among the Copenhagen University Hospital.
asylum-seekers and ensure that such individuals are not placed in detention.

**Violence against women and girls**

- Establish an independent monitoring mechanism to systematically analyze all rape investigations that have been closed before coming to trial;
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive action plan to prevent and combat rape and other forms of sexual violence.

**Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex persons**

- Adopt regulation to establish reasonable time limits for the provision of hormone treatment, to reinstate the right of independent doctors to carry out hormone treatment, to remove “transsexualism” from the official list of diagnosable mental illnesses, and to adjust the medical treatment to clarify that transgender persons are not mentally ill or unstable, but persons with a physical disorder.

**Amnesty International calls on the government of the Faroe Islands to:**

**International human rights framework**

- Remove any legal barriers to the application of international human rights treaties to meet the obligations under of these instruments.

**National human rights framework**

- Amend the Faroese Administration of Justice Act, including to establish a time limit for how long a person can be held in pre-trial detention;
- Produce regular statistics on how many people are held in pre-trial detention and for how long;
- Urgently establish an independent police complaints mechanism.

**Violence against women and girls**

- Amend the Penal Code to ensure that the definition of rape is brought in line with international standards and that rape is criminalized in all circumstances, including within marriage.

**Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex persons**

- Ensure compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including with regard to the right to non-discrimination, and in particular amend the Marriage Law to allow same sex marriages.
ANNEX

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS FOR FURTHER REFERENCE


Danmark: Case Closed – Rape and Human Rights in the Nordic Countries (Index: ACT 77/001/2010).


30 All of these documents are available on Amnesty International’s websites: https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/denmark/ and https://www.amnesty.dk