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Equatorial Guinea missed the opportunity to accept key human rights recommendations at the UN review

Authorities in Equatorial Guinea have missed an opportunity to take greater steps to promote and protect human rights, Amnesty International said as the country's UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outcome is adopted today in Geneva.

The country has rejected key recommendations notably to protect human rights defenders and women's rights.

Equatorial Guinea provided responses to 221 recommendations made to it by other states and accepted 202 of them including the abolition of death penalty and putting an end to torture.

While recognizing the significant number of accepted recommendations, Amnesty International will closely monitor their implementation as Equatorial Guinea still has a long way to go to fully improve its human rights records.

The country rejected 19 key human rights recommendations. Notably, the country disregarded some key recommendations for the protection of human rights defenders. Human rights defenders in Equatorial Guinea will continue to face dangerous and threatening situations, as Amnesty international recorded in its last [report on the country](#).

Many recommendations to guarantee their safety, to secure their work environment and to approve and implement laws to acknowledge and protect them were rejected. The government also rejected recommendations to investigate threat and reprisals against human rights defenders. Even the call for the effective implementation of the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders was also rejected.

Amnesty International is also concerned by the lack of commitment of the Equatorial Guinean's authorities on women's human rights. During the UPR, they rejected the recommendations to put an end to its policy of banning pregnant girls from attending school. The organization considers this as a discriminatory measure that deprives pregnant girls of their basic right to education.

All the recommendations made by UN member states calling for an invitation to be issued to the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Working Group on arbitrary detention were also rejected by Equatorial Guinea. It is regrettable to see the country continuing to be closed to the scrutiny of its human rights situation by the UN Special Procedures. And this reinforces some concerns about the reality of the willingness of the country to implement the recommendations it has accepted.

Despite the profound disappointment of Equatorial Guinea's rejection of many important human rights recommendations the government did accept some that, if fully implemented, could lead to improvement of the human rights.

Equatorial Guinea continues to demonstrate its commitment to abolish the death penalty, including at this review, by accepting recommendations made by more than 15 states to ratify the Second Optional to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of death penalty. Other recommendations calling directly for the abolition of the capital punishment were also supported by Equatorial Guinea.

Equatorial Guinea has also demonstrated some commitment to ending torture and ill-treatment in the country. A total of seven recommendations were accepted by Equatorial Guinea, including to adhere to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In view of the prevalence of torture and other ill-treatment in the country, the full and effective implementation of these recommendations could lead to important progress.

The government also accepted recommendations calling for the reform of Law 1/1999 which regulates NGO registration. Amnesty International hopes that this legal reform will be agreed with national NGOs and once

implemented will enable their full and independent functioning.

Amnesty International hopes that Equatorial Guinea will respect its commitments to the international community and, before its next review in four years' time, will implement in full all the recommendations it has accepted.

Background Information

Equatorial Guinea's human rights record was examined by the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group for the third time in May 2019 in Geneva. During this review a total of 221 recommendations were made to Equatorial Guinea by other UN member states. Of these, Equatorial Guinea accepted 202 recommendations and rejected 19.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE READ:

Equatorial Guinea: Human rights defenders facing arbitrary arrests, attacks and persecution

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/human-rights-defenders-and-activists-in-equatorial-guinea/> 26 February 2019

Equatorial Guinea: Human Rights Defenders and Activists pay a high price for speaking out

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr24/9793/2019/en/> , 1 February 2019