

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

5 July 2019

Index: AMR 27/0687/2019

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES MUST BE PROTECTED

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on the Dominican Republic

Amnesty International welcomes the Dominican Republic's acceptance of recommendations to fight all forms of discrimination, including by approving a comprehensive anti-discrimination bill and encourages the government to be among the first Caribbean independent states to pass legislation guaranteeing the right to equality and non-discrimination for all.

In acting on these recommendations, the government must ensure that such a law is widely consulted with civil society and consistent with international human rights standards, to protect historically marginalized groups against institutionalized and societal discrimination.

Amnesty also welcomes the Dominican Republic's acceptance of recommendations to enhance the protection of sexual and reproductive rights. This a step in the right direction towards ensuring that all women and girls in the country have access to safe and legal abortion services.

Although the Dominican Republic has committed to investigate human rights violations committed by law enforcement officers, it is regrettable that it rejected specific recommendations to guarantee access to justice for victims and end impunity in these cases.

Amnesty International has documented that the police routinely rape, beat and humiliate cisgender and transgender women who engage in sex work, as a form of punishment. These violations by state officials may amount to gender-based torture and ill-treatment.

Amnesty urges the government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to develop a national protocol for the investigation of allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol.

Regrettably, the Dominican Republic rejected recommendations to guarantee the right to nationality and access to proper identity documentation for Dominicans of foreign, mostly Haitian, descent. The government still fails to acknowledge the problem of statelessness. Law 168-14, intended to mitigate the harsh effects of Judgment 168-13, has proved insufficient as a response to the statelessness crisis created by years of discriminatory policies and practices.

Amnesty calls on the government to issue identity documentation for all those falling within Group A under Law 168-14, without administrative barriers or unfounded differential treatment, and to work with civil society to design solutions for the thousands who remain stateless.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of the Dominican Republic on 5 June 2019 during its 41st 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 the Dominican Republic: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr27/9486/2018/en/>

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