

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International welcomes the Bahamas' commitment to ratify several UN Conventions, but deeply regrets its rejection of recommendations to abolish the death penalty

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Bahamas

Amnesty International welcomes the Bahamas' commitment to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.¹ The organization is disappointed, however, that the Bahamas has rejected a recommendation to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers,² having stated it would consider doing so during its first UPR in 2008.

The organization welcomes the support of a recommendation to establish a fully independent oversight body to investigate complaints of police misconduct.³ The deaths in suspicious circumstances of two men in police custody in February 2013 underline the urgent need for greater accountability for police abuses and for investigations to be carried out in a thorough, independent, and timely manner.

Amnesty International deeply regrets that the Bahamas has rejected recommendations from 12 states regarding the death penalty.⁴ This is particularly disappointing in view of the fact that there have been no executions in the Bahamas since 2000, that no death sentences were handed down in 2012, and that only one person is currently on death row. The organization wholly rejects the government's view that there is "no international consensus on the issue of the death penalty"⁵, recalling that only 39 out of 185 states voted against the UN moratorium on executions in November 2012. In response to the claim that the death penalty must be retained to deter violent crime,⁶ Amnesty International stresses that a more effective strategy would be to enhance the criminal justice system and tackling the root causes of crime and violence more effectively. The organization continues to urge the Bahamas to establish an official moratorium on executions, to commute all death sentences to prison sentences, and to abolish the death penalty in law.

Amnesty International welcomes the Bahamas' support of recommendations to combat violence against women and girls⁷ and also notes that the Bahamas will continue to consider recommendations to criminalize marital rape,⁸ having previously rejected such

¹ A/HRC/23/8, paragraph 92.3 (Portugal)

² *Ibid*, paragraph 92.8 (Indonesia, Philippines)

³ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.75. (Canada)

⁴ A/HRC/23/8, paragraphs 92.45-92.53 (Italy; Norway; Slovakia; Portugal; Estonia; Spain; Uruguay; Chile; Australia; France; Ecuador; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

⁵ A/HRC/23/8/Add.1, comment on paragraph 92.45

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.26 (Viet Nam), 92.56 (Turkey), 92.59 - 92.62 (Chile, Algeria, France, Mexico)

⁸ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.35-92.36 (Norway, Ireland) and 92.61 (France)

recommendations during its 2008 UPR. Amnesty International hopes that this will lead to necessary reform of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Bahamas on 6 June 2013 during its 23rd session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Bahamas: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR14/001/2012/en/27b1fa86-606e-4e1a-8225-d3182a2e6126/amr140012012en.pdf>

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