

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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While welcoming Tonga's commitment to the Universal Periodic Review, Amnesty International regrets its rejection of recommendations to abolish the death penalty and decriminalize consensual same-sex conduct

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Tonga

Amnesty International welcomes the demonstrably committed engagement of Tonga with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Among the foundations and forces of the UPR are its cooperative character, its reliance on inclusive engagement with stakeholders and its universality.

It is not equally easy for every UN member state to engage in the UPR process. Tonga's high-level engagement in its examination and today's outcome adoption is an example to other states, small and large, distant and near, developed or developing.

Amnesty International welcomes the substantive response of Tonga to the recommendations outstanding at the conclusion of the review on 21 January 2013. The substantive responses to the outstanding recommendations, even those not supported, provide a good basis for ongoing dialogue and cooperation.

Amnesty International regrets that Tonga has not supported recommendations aimed at the abolition of the death penalty. Contrary to what is asserted in Tonga's response, there is no evidence that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime. The organization encourages Tonga to remain abolitionist in practice and encourages it to pursue further reflection aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

Amnesty International also regrets that Tonga has not supported recommendations to decriminalise consensual same-sex conduct and encourages Tonga to pursue the robust and comprehensive dialogue that it described in its response with a view to decriminalisation.

Amnesty International is pleased to see the support expressed by Tonga for ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and other human rights treaties and its expressed readiness to examine ratification of the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR and other treaties. The organization further encourages Tonga to proceed with the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as soon as possible.

In conclusion, while Tonga has yet to take important measures to improve its human rights situation, Amnesty International welcomes the commitment that it has shown in its positive engagement with the Universal Periodic Review process, and encourages Tonga and its international partners to actively pursue the fruits of that engagement in the period leading up to Tonga's review in the third round.

Background

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

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