

URGENT ACTION

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC DECRIMINALIZES ABORTION

The President of the Dominican Republic promulgated (to put a law into official effect) the new Criminal Code on 19 December following the adoption by the Chamber of Deputies of the observations made by the President seeking the decriminalization of abortion in certain circumstances.

On 16 December the Chamber of Deputies, the lower chamber of the Dominican Congress, adopted the observations to the Criminal Code previously made by President Danilo Medina decriminalizing the abortion where pregnancy poses a risk to the life of a pregnant woman or girl, in cases where the foetus will be unable to survive outside the womb, and in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. The new Code specifies that those exceptions will be regulated in a separate legislation which is yet to be drafted and approved.

President Medina promulgated the new Criminal Code on 19 December which is now supposed to enter into force within a year.

While the decision of the Chamber was welcomed by a wide sector of the civil society and local women groups, it was rejected by some, in particular the Catholic and Evangelical churches' hierarchies, which have been mounting pressure on the Congress to keep the full ban on abortion. Immediately after the Chamber of Deputies decision, some groups announced that they will appeal the decision before the Constitutional Court.

Thanks to all of you for taking action. While we will monitor the upcoming discussion regarding the legislation for the regulation of the exceptions to abortion, no more action is requested at the moment from the network.

Solidarity and congratulation messages can still be sent to Dominican women's human rights groups' network: Colectiva Mujer y Salud (ciudadaniaactivadelasmujeres@gmail.com)

This is the third update of UA 293/14. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR27/018/2014/en>

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