

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Morocco: Comprehensive legal reforms needed to uphold human rights

The Moroccan authorities must seize the unique opportunity afforded by current judicial reforms to launch a complete overhaul of the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure with a view to upholding human rights, said Amnesty International. In September 2013, Morocco's Minister of Justice and Liberties unveiled the Moroccan authorities' plans to reform the justice system, with a view to strengthening the judiciary's independence as well as harmonizing national laws with the Constitution and the international human rights treaties to which Morocco is a state party. In the coming months, Parliament is expected to discuss and adopt draft laws to amend the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure.

The Moroccan authorities have taken a series of positive human rights initiatives in recent years, including the adoption of a new Constitution which enshrines key human rights guarantees, the accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as well as the amendment of Article 475 of the Penal Code so that rapists can no longer escape prosecution by marrying their victims if they are aged under 18. However, Amnesty International continues to document reports of human rights violations as a result of shortcomings in Moroccan legislation and practice.

Now is the time for the Moroccan authorities to match their stated commitment with comprehensive human rights reforms.

In a [leaflet](#) published today, the organization calls on members of Parliament to adopt key legal reforms consistent with Morocco's human rights obligations which:

1. Enshrine safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment
2. Respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly
3. Strengthen the independence of the judiciary and the right to a fair trial
4. End discrimination
5. End violence against women
6. Respect and protect the right to freedom of religion
7. Uphold the right to life

Background

On 8 March 2014, Amnesty International launched a global campaign entitled *My Body, My Rights*. The campaign calls on governments to recognize the right of women and girls to physical integrity and to a life free from sexual violence. These are universal human rights, recognized in international law as sexual and reproductive rights, and States must ensure that they are respected, protected and fulfilled.

In May 2014, Amnesty International launched its global Stop Torture campaign to ensure that everyone be protected from torture. In the thirtieth anniversary year of the UN Convention Against Torture, the organization is building on more than 50 years of experience to insist that governments live up to their promises and respect international law. It is urging people all over the world to demand a stop to torture.

Public document

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