

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International echoes UN calls to Barbados to abolish the death penalty and to decriminalize same-sex relations

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Barbados

Twelve states made recommendations to Barbados related to the death penalty, including to remove mandatory death sentences, to commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment, and to abolish the death penalty in law.¹ While Amnesty International welcomes the fact that no executions have been carried out in Barbados in the past 29 years, it is nonetheless concerned that death sentences continue to be handed down and that six people were on death row at the end of 2012.

Amnesty International welcomes that new legislation has been drafted to provide for the abolition of mandatory death sentences,² and hope the government will move swiftly to enact it. The organization also urges Barbados to commute all death sentences to prison terms, and as the country approaches three decades without executions and call on the government to declare a formal moratorium on executions, with a view towards abolition of the death penalty.

Seven states made recommendations during the review pertaining to discrimination based on sexual orientation, in particular to decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual relations.³ Amnesty International regrets that Barbados has rejected all of these recommendations.

During the review, the government stated that although the law on “buggery” remains on the statute books, no one is in fact prosecuted for their sexual preferences in Barbados.⁴ Amnesty International is concerned, however, that the continued existence of legislation that criminalizes consensual same-sex relationships between adults may contribute to creating a discriminatory environment in which LGBT people are not able to fully enjoy their human rights. Moreover, by continuing to criminalize consensual same-sex conduct Barbados is in violation of its international obligations to non-discrimination under the treaties to which it is a party. The organisation therefore urges the government to repeal this legislation as a step towards combating discrimination against LGBT persons and the stigma surrounding same-sex relations.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Barbados 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 Barbados: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR15/001/2012/en/ec4dda53-4e50-412d-9c11-ea696d4d9aab/amr150012012en.pdf>

¹ A/HRC/23/11, paragraphs 102.57-102.70 (Australia, Brazil, France, Italy, Argentina, Norway, Namibia, Chile, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Hungary)

² *Ibid*, paragraph 20

³ *Ibid*, paragraphs 102.96-102.102 (Canada, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Norway, Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay)

⁴ *Ibid*, paragraph 21

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