

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Jamaica: Amnesty International welcomes commitment to investigate allegations of human rights abuses by security forces and urges Jamaica to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and to abolish the death penalty

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Jamaica

In a statement to the UN Human Rights Council on 17 March 2011, Amnesty International welcomed Jamaica's commitment to carry out independent and transparent investigations into the deaths that occurred during police operations in Tivoli Garden between 24 and 28 March 2010, to make the outcome public, and to bring the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice.¹ The organization encourages Jamaica to support the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into this incident.²

Amnesty International notes Jamaica's support of a number of recommendations to improve the training and oversight of the security forces³ and to investigate allegations of human rights abuses by them, including through supporting the newly established Independent Commission of Investigations.⁴ It believes that the ratification of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol⁵ would further enhance Jamaica's stated commitment to prevent and punish human rights violations by the security forces.

Amnesty International is disappointed that Jamaica has rejected a wide range of recommendations made by many states regarding the death penalty, including to establish a moratorium on executions, to commute all death sentences to prison sentences and to abolish the death penalty.⁶ While it is encouraging that there have been no executions since 1988, the organization is concerned that death sentences continue to be handed down and that the authorities justify the retention of the death penalty as the will of the people.

Amnesty International also urges Jamaica to express its unequivocal support for a number of recommendations aimed at combating discrimination based on sexual orientation,⁷ and to reconsider a number of recommendations made during the review to repeal legislation that criminalize consensual same-sex activities and to include in the Charter of Rights Bill, currently before Parliament, a specific prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.⁸

¹ A/HRC/16/14, paragraph 99.25 (Spain).

² *Ibid*, paragraph 100.17 (UK).

³ *Ibid*, paragraphs 99.2-99.4 (Canada, Malaysia, Turkey) and 99.15-99.24 (Belgium, Canada, France, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia).

⁴ *Ibid*, paragraphs 98.23 and 98.24 (Australia, UK).

⁵ *Ibid*, paragraphs 100.2 and 100.3 (Portugal, USA, Sweden, Moldova, Slovakia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Ecuador, Maldives, Brazil).

⁶ *Ibid*, paragraphs 101.6-101.16 (France, Belgium, Norway, Spain, Hungary, Australia, Mexico, Italy, Portugal, Argentina).

⁷ *Ibid*, paragraphs 100.21-100.23 (Canada, Netherlands).

⁸ *Ibid*, paragraphs 101.18-101.25 (Netherlands, USA, Belgium, Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, France, Australia).

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Jamaica on 17 March 2011 during its 16th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Jamaica: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR38/001/2010/en>

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