

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: EUR 36/001/2010

17 March 2010

Norway: Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Norway: Amnesty International welcomes action to address violence against women and to protect rights of detainees and refugees

Amnesty International is pleased to note that the issue of gender equality and violence against women featured prominently in the review of Norway. In this regard, the organization welcomes Norway's support of recommendations to undertake training programmes for law enforcement and the judiciary to prevent gender-based violence, to strengthen preventative measures in the areas of rape and domestic violence, and to strengthen efforts to combat domestic violence and violence against women.¹ Norway also committed to further examine recommendations to undertake comprehensive analysis of the scale and character of violence against women and children, to set up a comprehensive database on victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, and to toughen liability for sexual crimes, rape and child abuse.² Norway's stated support for two of these recommendations is welcome in light of recent reports that only 16 percent of cases of rape against women reported to the police ever progress to court – and of these, only 12 percent result in a conviction.³

Several states brought up the issue of pre-trial and preventive detention. Amnesty International is pleased to note that Norway has already indicated its support for recommendations to ensure that pre-trial detention is dealt with in conformity with international standards and that all detainees and prisoners have access to appropriate care, including transfer to psychiatric hospitals for the mentally ill.⁴ Recent reports in national media indicate that one in five persons arrested in Oslo is held in basic police cells (Sentralarresten) for more than 48 hours, some for up to a week, in violation of domestic legislation and without access to the necessary facilities, such as showers, hygiene articles and necessary medicines or medical treatment.⁵

Amnesty International is concerned that two groups of rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers were forcibly returned to Baghdad on 6 December 2009 and 26 January 2010, contrary to UNHCR recommendations not to return them to Baghdad and four other central provinces in Iraq.⁶ The organization welcomes Norway's support of recommendations to respect the rights of refugees and to guarantee proper analysis of each petition on a case-by-case basis.⁷ It notes Norway's partial support of the recommendation to show flexibility and understanding for refugees and asylum-seekers who are often in an irregular situation and may face expulsion.⁸

In closing, Amnesty International wishes to acknowledge the very positive contribution of Norway to the Durban Review Conference and encourages it to pursue efforts to address racism.

¹ A/HRC/13/5, paragraph 105, recommendations 4, 29, 30, 31.

² Ibid, paragraph 106, recommendations 31, 32, 33 and Addendum.

³ "Case closed. Rape and human rights in the Nordic countries", Summary report, Amnesty International Publication, 5 March 2010.

⁴ A/HRC/13/5, paragraph 105, recommendations 23-25.

⁵ *Aftenposten*, 24 February 2010.

⁶ *Aftenposten*, 6 December 2009 and 26 January 2010.

⁷ A/HRC/13/5, paragraph 105, recommendations 37-38.

⁸ Ibid, paragraph 106, recommendation 43 and Addendum.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Norway on 17 March 2010 during its 13th 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 for the review through its submission on Norway: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR36/001/2009/en>

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