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Ghana: Amnesty International issues human rights agenda for new President

As John Evans Atta Mills takes office after a hotly contested election in Ghana, Amnesty International today released a seven-point human rights agenda for the new President.

“We call on Mr Atta Mills to make human rights central to his political programme and to commit himself and his administration to a clear human rights agenda now that he has taken office,” said Véronique Aubert, Amnesty International’s Africa Deputy Programme Director.

The areas that Amnesty International included in its human rights agenda for the new President are:

- abolition of the death penalty;
- significant reductions in the severe level of over-crowding in Ghana’s prisons and other places of detention;
- eradicating the widespread violence against women and legislative reforms to ensure equal rights for men and women;
- stop and prevent the practice of forced evictions that have deprived hundreds of men, women and children of their homes and, in most cases, livelihoods;
- ending illegal detention and ensuring prompt and fair trials for the thousands of prisoners awaiting trial – often for periods longer than the maximum sentence prescribed for their alleged offence;
- putting an end to mob violence, which has led to the killings of dozens of people over the last year;
- full compliance with Ghana’s international and regional human rights obligations and commitments, as explicitly set out in the treaties it has ratified.

“This is a critical moment for Ghana when it comes to its human rights reputation around the world,” said Véronique Aubert. “We hope that the new administration will grasp this opportunity to build on the human rights advances that have taken place over the last decade and take the Ghana’s human rights record to a whole new level.”