

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Congo: Amnesty International calls for end of the use of torture

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Congo

Following recommendations accepted in its 2013 UPR, Congo abolished the death penalty in its Constitution. However, the Criminal Code has not yet been reformed to align it with the Constitution, and Congo has still not ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Amnesty International therefore welcomes Congo's acceptance of recommendations to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The organization urges Congo to immediately and effectively take steps to implement these recommendations.

Amnesty International is concerned by the use of torture and other ill-treatment in Congo. Although the government accepted recommendations previously to complete a review by 2014 of legislative codes on preventing and punishing torture, and to establish a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, these recommendations have not been implemented. Cases of torture in detention facilities continue to be reported.

Amnesty International therefore welcomes Congo's acceptance of recommendations to investigate effectively all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and to bring the suspected perpetrators to justice in fair trials and provide effective remedies and adequate reparations to the victims.

In May 2018, several activists from the citizen movement, Ras-le-bol, were arrested while peacefully protesting and calling for the release of political prisoners. Amnesty International is concerned by such impermissible restrictions on the right to freedom of expression in Congo.

Amnesty International therefore regrets that Congo rejected the recommendation to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience arrested solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Congo should reconsider its decision and support and accept this recommendation.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Congo on 14 March 2019 during its 40th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement.

Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Congo: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr22/8655/2018/en/>

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