

URGENT ACTION

SALVADORAN WOMAN SUFFERING ILL-TREATMENT

Salvadoran woman “Mery” is being denied access to her legal counsel and the medical treatment she urgently needs. She is suffering cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment.

Abortion is criminalised in all circumstances in El Salvador. In March 2012, “Mery” (27) sought a clandestine induced abortion using medication at her eighth week of pregnancy. She also sought medical assistance after taking the medication, as she was worried some of the symptoms she was experiencing were out of the ordinary. Various medical staff at the hospital where she sought medical assistance reported “Mery” to the police and she was arrested immediately. She was in a state of high distress and panic. Despite her physical and mental condition, she was handcuffed to the stretcher and kept under police guard.

“Mery’s” mental health was very delicate and deteriorating. On 28 August “Mery” was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison for an induced abortion. The judge insisted she serve her sentence in prison, which prevented “Mery” from receiving the psychological treatment and support she required.

Whilst in the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Women in the City of Ilopango, Department of San Salvador (*Centro de Readaptación para Mujeres de la Ciudad de Ilopango, Departamento de San Salvador*) on 3 September, “Mery” attempted suicide by using a rusty nail to cut her wrists. She was transferred to the Psychiatric Department of the Arce Polyclinic-Hospital (*Servicio de Psiquiatría del Hospital Policlínico Arce*), where she currently remains handcuffed and under 24-hour guard. Some of the guards have insulted her, calling her a “murderer”. They, and other state officials, have prevented her from gaining access to legal counsel and psychological support. The permanent use of handcuffs is also having a negative impact on “Mery’s” mental health and her mental and physical condition is deteriorating.

“Mery’s” case and real name are known to the authorities.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release “Mery”
- Calling on the authorities to prevent any further ill-treatment and order the immediate unfettered access by “Mery” to legal counsel, psychological and medical treatment, as well as the immediate removal of the handcuffs;
- Urging the authorities to decriminalise abortion in all circumstances.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 DECEMBER 2012 TO:

Minister of Justice and Public Security
Gen. David Munguía Payés
Ministerio de Justicia y Seguridad Pública,
Alameda Juan Pablo II y 17 Av. Norte
San Salvador, El Salvador
Fax: +503 2281 5959

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr Ministro

Director of Social Security
Dr. Leonel Flores
Director General del Instituto Salvadoreño
del Seguro Social
Alameda Juan Pablo II y 39 Avenida Norte,
Edificio El Salvador, San Salvador, El
Salvador
Fax: +503 22 61 14 36 (say “tono de fax”)
Email: comunicaciones@issss.gob.sv

Salutation: Dear Dr / Estimado Dr

And copies to:

The Citizens Group for the Decriminalisation
of Therapeutic, Ethical and Eugenic
Abortion
Agrupación Ciudadana por la
Despenalización del
aborto terapéutico, ético y eugenésico
Fax: +503 2226 0356 (say “tono de fax”)
Email:
agrupacionporladespenalizacion@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sexual and reproductive rights are grounded in human rights that are recognized in international human rights treaties, regional standards, national constitutions and other relevant human rights standards. The realization of sexual and reproductive rights requires respect for rights relating to physical and mental integrity, including the rights to life, to liberty and security of person; to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and to privacy and respect for family life, as well as rights related to freedom of conscience and expression and freedom from discrimination. These rights correspond directly to the principles underpinning sexual and reproductive rights – the physical and mental integrity of the individual, his or her autonomy, and the principle of non-discrimination on grounds such as gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic status.

Sexual and reproductive rights are central to the realization of every individual's human rights. Respect for these rights is essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being. Their fulfilment enhances life and personal relationships and helps to achieve gender equality and empowerment. All people must be allowed to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

In June 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women expressed grave concern at the situation of violence against women in El Salvador, and warned that government inaction on the investigation, prosecution and reparation for such crimes had led to a situation of impunity for gender based violence.

In her report the UN Special Rapporteur also urged the government to review the laws which ban abortion in all circumstances, even where the life or health of the woman or girl is at stake or she is a victim of rape.

Name: "Mery" (real name known to authorities)

Gender m/f: f

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