

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Lithuania: Amnesty International urges the reopening of the criminal investigation into Lithuania's involvement in the US-led rendition and secret detention program**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Lithuania***

Amnesty International welcomes Lithuania's support of recommendations to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination,<sup>1</sup> and to refrain from violating their right to freedom of expression<sup>2</sup> or criminalizing homosexual relations.<sup>3</sup> In order to ensure meaningful implementation of these recommendations, Amnesty International urges Lithuania to urgently repeal current discriminatory legislation, including the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information, or to amend it in line with international human rights law.<sup>4</sup>

Legislation has been proposed to restrict the definition of family in the Constitution of Lithuania. Amnesty International is concerned that this proposed amendment could be discriminatory and calls on Lithuania to refrain from introducing further discriminatory legislation.

Amnesty International welcomes Lithuania's support of the recommendation to investigate the human rights implications of counter-terrorism measures such as secret detention programs, with a view to identifying instances of alleged torture or ill-treatment.<sup>5</sup> The organization calls on Lithuania to take a first step towards implementing this recommendation by immediately reopening the criminal investigation into its involvement in the US-led rendition and secret detention program, which was closed prematurely in January 2011.<sup>6</sup> Following a parliamentary inquiry in December 2009, the Lithuanian government admitted hosting secret CIA detention facilities between 2002 and 2006. However, an effective and meaningful investigation into human rights violations alleged to have been committed by the Lithuanian authorities has yet to take place. Moreover, new information suggests new critical lines of inquiry that have not been pursued. This includes information suggesting that Abu Zubaydah, currently detained at Guantanamo Bay, may have been held in a CIA black site in Lithuania.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/19/15, recommendations 88.23 (United States of America), 88.24 (Argentina), 88.25 (Sweden), 88.27 (Ireland) and 88.31 (Slovenia).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., recommendations 88.4 (Belgium), 88.33 (Australia) and 88.34 (Slovenia).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., recommendations 88.4 (Belgium) and 88.5 (Slovenia).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., recommendations 90.10 (Belgium), 90.11 (Switzerland), 90.13 (Denmark), 90.15 (Slovenia). The Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information as it currently stands contains discriminatory restrictions on public information on homosexuality and violates the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom from discrimination. Similarly, the Law on Provision of Information violates the right to freedom of expression and could be applied in a discriminatory manner against LGBT people.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., recommendation 88.43 (Brazil).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., recommendation 90.18 (Switzerland).

<sup>7</sup> See Amnesty International, *Unlock the Truth in Lithuania: Investigate Secret Prisons Now*, AI Index: EUR 53/002/2011, September 2011, pp. 21-22, available at:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR53/002/2011/en/dd6dc600-25ea-4299-8aec-1d3d16639d4c/eur530022011en.pdf>.

In closing, Amnesty International urges the government to fully co-operate with the European Parliament initiative investigating the alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA – including by receiving a visit to Lithuania by a Parliamentary delegation.

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Lithuania on 16 March during its 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Lithuania: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/united-nations/universal-periodic-review/countries-under-review/lithuania>

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