

AI Index: PRE01/368/2011
26 July 2011

Italy fails to adopt measures to tackle hate crimes

Italy has failed to take action to protect minority groups from discrimination, Amnesty International said today, after the parliament rejected a bill on homophobic and transphobic crimes.

The bill was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies on Tuesday by 293 votes to 250.

"The Italian Parliament has wasted an opportunity to take a step in the right direction," said Nicola Duckworth, Amnesty International's Director for Europe and Central Asia Programme.

Italian law already allows hate crimes based on grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality and religion to be punished. If passed the new bill would have included homophobic and transphobic crimes too.

"The number of homophobic and transphobic attacks reported in the last few years in Italy remains a matter of concern," said Nicola Duckworth.

"Hate crimes have a deep impact not only on the immediate victim but also on the group with which that victim identifies."

Amnesty International urges Italy to ensure the adequate implementation of existing anti-discrimination legislation and to ensure that legislation criminalizing hate crimes does not leave out certain groups.

"In addition to passing the right laws, authorities and politicians should set the example. They should promote equality and non-discrimination and refrain from and condemn derogatory and discriminatory remarks that foster a climate of intolerance," Nicola Duckworth said.

"The Italian authorities should promote diversity and engage in awareness-raising initiatives aimed at addressing negative stereotypes and prejudices on LGBT people, as well as other groups at risk of discriminatory attacks."