

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International appalled as Nicaragua once again chooses to ignore international pressure to uphold women and girls' human rights

Amnesty International is very disappointed that Nicaragua has rejected the recommendations made by 12 States to change or reconsider the law imposing a total ban on abortion. The recommendations were made during the review in the UPR Working Group of Nicaragua's human rights record at the United Nations.

So long as the total ban on abortion remains in place, victims of rape and incest – many of them still children themselves – are compelled to bear children or risk their health and imprisonment if they seek an illegal abortion. A further consequence of the total ban on abortion is that medical professionals, fearful of prosecution, delay or deny life-saving medical treatment to women and girls who suffer complications during pregnancy.

Since the introduction of the abortion ban in 2006, UN experts have repeatedly condemned the law and urged its revision, including UN treaty bodies such as the Committee Against Torture. Today, sadly, Nicaragua refused once again to heed these important recommendations.

"The Nicaraguan Government's refusal to support these recommendations shows contempt for its obligations under United Nations treaties to protect women and girls from human rights violations and a chilling indifference to the plight of women and girls in their country", said Guadalupe Marengo, Deputy Director for the Americas Programme at Amnesty International.

"It is appalling that the Nicaraguan authorities, despite being in full knowledge of the consequences of the total ban, seem determined to ignore its cruel impact on women's and girl's lives and to reject these recommendations to work for a change in law. Today, sadly, the Nicaraguan government missed another opportunity to right this terrible wrong."

"Amnesty international will continue campaigning on this fundamental human rights issue, alongside other NGO's working with women and girl victims of rape and professional medical associations."

"The Nicaraguan Government must urgently respond to the plight of women and girls affected by this cruel law and comply with their international treaty obligations. It is essential that girls and women in Nicaragua should not be obliged to continue with pregnancies as a consequence of rape, or pregnancies which place their lives and health at risk," said Guadalupe Marengo.

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