

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: AMR 43/003/2010

9 June 2010

Nicaragua: Amnesty International deplores government's rejection of recommendations to repeal of abortion ban which risks the health and life of women and girls

United Nations Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Nicaragua

Amnesty International welcomes Nicaragua's immediate support of 68 of the recommendations at the time of the review in February this year, including to uphold freedom of expression, assembly and association; to ensure that human rights defenders may work without harassment; and that national laws comply with international human rights obligations. Among the 41 recommendations Nicaragua undertook to further review are some concerning the total ban on abortion introduced in 2006 and subsequently enforced through new criminal laws introduced in 2008.

No less than 12 states¹ made recommendations to Nicaragua to repeal or reconsider the total ban of abortion. These calls to reform the law follow recommendations already made by four of the UN treaty bodies, namely the Committee against Torture, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Amnesty International is very disappointed that Nicaragua is unable to support these consistent calls. 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.

Amnesty International urges the Nicaraguan Government to work to build support for a change in legislation, over time, at the national level. It is essential that girls and women in Nicaragua should not be obliged to continue with pregnancies as a consequence of rape, or to continue pregnancies which place their lives and health at risk.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Nicaragua on 9 June 2010 during its 14th 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 for the review through its submission on Nicaragua: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR43/010/2009/en>

Public Document

¹ Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, and UK

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org
