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Beijing +10: No rollback on rights

On the eve of the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Amnesty International is calling on all governments attending the session to uphold and protect women's human rights.

As part of its Stop Violence Against Women (SVAW) campaign, Amnesty International's research has shown that women's human rights continue to be grossly violated despite government commitments to promote and protect them. Today Amnesty International is launching a report, *No turning back -- full implementation of women's human rights*, in which the organization draws attention to violations of women's human rights in a number of countries and urges governments to take immediate steps to end such abuse and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"Governments must be held to account and resist any attempts to go back on earlier commitments," said Hilary Fisher, Director of the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign.

The CSW session, which begins on 28 February, will review and appraise governments' progress toward implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA), adopted at the Fourth United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women in September 1995 in Beijing, China. The review will focus on assessing the implementation at the national level of these documents as well as of the outcome document from the five-year review by the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2000.

Together with other NGOs based at the UN in New York, Amnesty International is calling on governments to universally reaffirm all three of these human rights documents, to re-commit to full and prompt implementation at the national level, and to emphasize the integral connection between respecting women's human rights and realizing the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. This powerful call from civil society to governments in the form of a global sign-on letter is available at <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/Beijing10%20SignOnLetterB10.html>.

In partnership with other NGOs, Amnesty International will host a number of events on the fringes of the CSW session, including an activist workshop on due diligence, a panel on discriminatory legislation, and a third event with partner organisations Oxfam and International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) around the launch in Johannesburg of the SVAW & Control Arms Campaign report "The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives", which shows that women are paying an increasingly heavy price for the unregulated billion-dollar trade in small arms.

For a full copy of the report *No turning back -- full implementation of women's human rights* please go to:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGIOR410022005>

Background

In June 2000, the UN General Assembly convened in Special Session to review the progress achieved and remaining obstacles to implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action. Amnesty International and other NGOs were dismayed at the rollback of progress made on women's human rights, including in other international forums, such as the World Conference on Human Rights, by the Special Session. Some states challenged the basic premise that women's rights are human rights, questioned the responsibility of states to protect the human rights of women, and succeeded in removing references to human rights treaties from the outcome document for the session.

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