

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Trinidad and Tobago: Amnesty International welcomes the commitment to combat violence against women and girls but regrets the rejection of recommendations relating to the death penalty**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Trinidad and Tobago***

Amnesty International welcomes Trinidad and Tobago's support of recommendations to combat violence against women and girls.<sup>1</sup> The organization encourages the government to finalize and implement the draft National Policy on Gender and Development<sup>2</sup> and to enact and implement the Human Trafficking Bill 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Amnesty International regrets that Trinidad and Tobago rejected recommendations from 12 states regarding the death penalty.<sup>4</sup> While the organization welcomes the fact that there have been no executions since 1999, it rejects the government's view that the death penalty must be retained as a response to violent crime levels and due to public opinion.<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International believes that public opinion on capital punishment is overwhelmingly based on a desire to be protected from violence and to be freed from fear of crime. Given the low conviction rates in Trinidad and Tobago, a more effective strategy to address crime levels would include improving the capacity of the police to detect and solve crimes, enhancing the criminal justice system, and tackling the root causes of crime and violence more effectively. Amnesty International recalls that the death penalty violates the right to life as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UN bodies and mechanisms have repeatedly called on Member States to restrict and suspend the use of the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition. The organization urges Trinidad and Tobago to establish a moratorium on executions, to commute all death sentences to prison sentences and to abolish the death penalty.

Amnesty International welcomes Trinidad and Tobago's support of recommendations to promote and protect the rights of lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.<sup>6</sup> However, the continued existence of legislation which criminalizes consensual same sex relationships between adults contributes to creating a discriminatory environment where LGBT people are unable to fully enjoy their human rights.<sup>7</sup> The organization urges the government to take steps to combat discrimination against LGBT persons and the stigma surrounding same-sex relations by repealing this legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/19/7, recommendations 86.4 (Argentina), 86.5 (Brazil), 87.3 (Chile), 87.8 (South Africa), 87.9 (Spain), 87.10 (New Zealand), 87.11 (Malaysia), 87.12 (Uruguay), 87.13 (Slovakia), 87.14 (Israel), 87.15 (United States) and 87.16 (Canada).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., recommendation 87.3 (Chile).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., recommendation 87.15 (United States).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., recommendations 89.3 (Canada), 89.4 (Brazil), 89.5 (Uruguay), 89.6 (Romania), 89.7 (Australia), 89.8 (United Kingdom), 89.9 (France), 89.10 (Turkey), 89.11 (Slovakia), 89.12 (Chile), 89.13 (Spain) and 89.14 (Germany).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., paragraph 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., recommendations 86.10 (Canada) and 87.23 (United States).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., recommendations 88.48 (France), 88.49 (New Zealand), 88.50 (Germany) and 88.51 (Spain).

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Trinidad and Tobago on 15 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 Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR49/006/2011/en>

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