

Concerns in the United Nations with regard to the conditions of detention and ill-treatment of detainees

Geneva-Managua, 4 November 2008 – The United Nations Human Rights Committee made public its recommendations on the human rights situation in Nicaragua in which it expresses its concerns with regard to the high rate of over-crowding, the poor conditions of detention and the cases of ill treatment of detainees by the police.

The Human Rights Committee, after having examined the State Report on the implementation by Nicaragua of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted nearly 20 recommendations. The majority of these recommendations reflect the concerns identified in the report presented to the experts of the Committee by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and four national organisations, Centro Nicaraguense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH), Alianza de Centros de Mujeres, Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia and Coordinadora de Organismos no Gubernamentales que trabajan con la Niñez (CODENI). This report documents among other issues, the situation in detention centres in Nicaragua.

The Committee expresses its concern at the poor conditions of detention generated by over-crowding in the detention centres, especially with regard to insanitary conditions, lack of safe drinking water, insufficient budget for the food, lack of medical care, lack of staff and lack of separation between accused and condemned detainees. The Committee calls upon the State to present within one year information on the progress made to improve the conditions of detention. It also observes with concern cases of ill treatment of detainees by the police, especially during detention in police custody, and calls upon the State to put an end to these abuses and to take all measures to sanction the perpetrators.

The experts also call upon the State to take the necessary measures to end the harassment of human rights defenders by the State and persons related to the State powers and to sanction those guilty of such acts. In this framework, the Committee made a specific reference to women defenders of women's rights and manifest its concern at the criminal investigations against the “nine women defenders” of women's reproductive rights. In that regard, the Committee observes with concern the total prohibition on abortion, including therapeutic abortion, and draws attention to the fact that since the prohibition there have been documented cases in which the death of the pregnant woman was linked to the lack of timely medical intervention. Nicaragua must inform the Committee within one year of the measures taken to bring its national legislation into compliance with international law.

Violence against women, and especially the rise in murders of women linked with domestic and sexual violence, is another issue of concern for the Human Rights Committee, which notes that the perpetrators seem to enjoy impunity. The Committee requires the State to take immediate measures, including in matters of prevention, of protection of the victims of gender violence, of investigation and of sanction of the perpetrators.

The NGOs welcome the fact that the Committee calls upon Nicaragua to prohibit in its national legislation all corporal punishments against children in school and other institutions that provide

protection to children. However, we regret that the Committee does not mention other measures, especially as regards prevention, access to justice and protection for children victims of violence within the domestic context or by law enforcement officers.

OMCT, CENIDH, Alianza de Centros de Mujeres, Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia and CODENI call upon Nicaragua to take all necessary measures to implement the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Committee and to bring the country into compliance with its international recommendations according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

More information:

[The NGOs' alternative report to the Human Rights Committee \(in Spanish\):](#)

[The Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee \(in Spanish\):](#)

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L'OMCT a son siège à Genève, en Suisse. Elle coordonne le réseau SOS-Torture composé de 282 organisations régionales et internationales dans 93 pays sur cinq continents.

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