

URGENT ACTION

WOMAN DENIED LIFE SAVING MEDICAL INTERVENTION

Beatriz is a 22-year-old woman with a high risk pregnancy who is being denied access to life saving medical treatment that she urgently needs in El Salvador. Her life is at risk and she is suffering cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Beatriz suffers from health problems that put her life at risk while she is pregnant. She has a history of lupus, a autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the person's own tissue. She also has other medical conditions, including kidney disease related to the lupus, and she suffered serious complications during her previous pregnancy. Beatriz has been diagnosed as being at high risk of pregnancy-related death if she continues with the pregnancy. Three scans have confirmed that the foetus is anencephalic (lacking a large part of the brain and skull). Almost all babies with anencephaly die before birth or within a few hours or days after birth.

Beatriz has been requesting the recommended medical intervention for over a month. Beatriz wants to live and has requested an abortion. She is now 4 and a half months pregnant. The medical professionals have not acted in accordance with her wishes as yet because they feel unable to terminate her pregnancy without the express assurance from the Salvadoran government that they will not be prosecuted for administering the life saving treatment she needs. Abortion is criminalised in all circumstances in El Salvador. Under Article No. 133 of the Penal Code, anyone who provides, or tries to access, abortion services can face lengthy prison sentences.

The health professionals responsible for Beatriz's care have requested permission from the authorities to proceed with the treatment. As yet no response has been given. Anxiety and suffering increase for Beatriz and her family every day as concerns for her survival grow. Beatriz has a one year old son. The physical and mental anguish she is experiencing is contributing to her health condition.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to prevent any further denial of treatment and ill-treatment and order the immediate unfettered access by Beatriz to the life saving treatment she needs, in accordance with her wishes and the recommendations of medical staff;
- Urging them to immediately ensure that the health professionals are enabled to provide the treatment necessary to save Beatriz's life without the threat, risk or fear of criminal prosecution for doing so in accordance with Beatriz's wishes.
- Urging them to decriminalise abortion in all circumstances and ensure safe and legal access by women and girls to abortion services necessary to preserve their life or health, or if they are pregnant as a result of rape.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 MAY 2013 TO:

Minister of Health

Dra. María Isabel Rodríguez
Ministerio de Salud
Dirección postal: Calle Arce No.827,
San Salvador, El Salvador
Fax: +503 2221 0991
Email: mrodriguez@salud.gob.sv

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimada
Ministra**

President

Mauricio Funes
Presidente de la República de El
Salvador
Dirección postal: Alameda Dr. Manuel
Enrique Araujo, No. 5500, San
Salvador, El Salvador
Fax +503 2243 6860

Salutation: Dear Mr/ Estimado Sr

And copies to:

The Citizens Group for the
Decriminalisation of Therapeutic,
Ethical and Eugenic Abortion
Fax: +503 2226 0356 (say "tono de
fax")
Email:
agrupacionporladespenalizacion@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sexual and reproductive rights are grounded in human rights that are recognized in international human rights treaties, regional standards, national constitutions and other relevant human rights standards. The realization of sexual and reproductive rights requires respect for rights relating to physical and mental integrity, including the rights to life, to liberty and security of person; to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and to privacy and respect for family life; as well as rights related to freedom of conscience and expression and freedom from discrimination. These rights correspond directly to the principles underpinning sexual and reproductive rights – the physical and mental integrity of the individual, his or her autonomy, and the principle of non-discrimination on grounds such as gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic status.

Sexual and reproductive rights are central to the realization of every individual's human rights. Respect for these rights is essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being. Their fulfilment enhances life and personal relationships and helps to achieve gender equality and empowerment. All people must be allowed to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

In June 2011, the UN Special expert on Violence against Women expressed grave concern at a situation of violence against women in El Salvador, and warned that government inaction on the investigation, prosecution and reparation for such crimes had led to a situation of impunity for gender based violence.

In her report the UN Special Expert also urged the government to review the laws which ban abortion in all circumstances, even where the life or health of the woman or girl is at stake or she is a victim of rape.

Name: Beatriz

Gender m/f: f

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