

18 March 2009

Human Rights Council
Tenth Session

Item 6
"Consideration of UPR reports"

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International on the Bahamas

Thank you Mr President,

Amnesty International welcomes the Bahamas' prompt ratification of the two Covenants, following the announcement in the UPR Working Group of its intention to do so.¹ We also note the Bahamas' willingness to consider acceding to other human rights instruments, including the Convention against Torture, its Optional Protocol, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.²

We are very disappointed, however, that the Bahamas rejected a wide range of recommendations by many states regarding the death penalty, including to establish a moratorium on executions, to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to abolish the death penalty.³ While it is a most welcome trend that no executions have been carried out for the past nine years in the Bahamas, Amnesty International is concerned that death sentences continue to be handed down and that the authorities have recently voiced support for a resumption of hanging. We take this opportunity to reiterate our call to the government to repeal all provisions allowing for the death penalty and to declare a moratorium on executions.

Mr President,

Amnesty International welcomes the endorsement by the Bahamas of recommendations to ensure full and effective implementation of the Domestic Violence (Protection Order) Act and to address the problem of rape.⁴ Amnesty International recognizes that recent legislation has increased the penalty for serious sexual crimes to life imprisonment, but is concerned that recommendations by several states to criminalize marital rape were rejected.⁵

¹ A/HRC/10/70, paragraph 18

² Ibid, paragraph 52, sub-paragraph 2.

³ Ibid, paragraph 54, sub-paragraph 2.

⁴ Ibid, paragraph 52, sub-paragraphs 5 and 6.

⁵ Ibid, paragraph 54, sub-paragraph 2.

Finally, Amnesty International welcomes the undertaking by the Bahamas to respond promptly to concerns raised by several Special Procedures regarding conditions in the Carmichael Road Detention Centre.⁶ Recent reports indicate that abuses continue to take place at the facility, and Amnesty International urges the Bahamas to act swiftly on this undertaking and conduct an independent investigation into recent allegations of ill-treatment.

Thank you, Mr President.

⁶ Ibid. paragraph 52, sub-paragraph 9.