

Human Rights Council – 28th session – March 2015

Item 6: Consideration of the Islamic Republic of the UPR Outcome of EGYPT

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with Sexual Rights Initiative.

We acknowledge that Egypt has accepted a number of recommendations related to eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including child, early and forced marriage, and amending, adopting and effectively implementing legislation to ensure that cases of sexual violence and harassment faced by women protesters and human rights defenders will be promptly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

However, we are deeply concerned that the government continues to refuse to respect, protect and fulfil women's right to access safe abortion services, as recognized in international human rights law.

We urge the government to recognize women's right to abortion as a human rights issue, not only as public health concern, and take the following steps:

1. At minimum, amend the existing law to legalize abortion in cases of rape and incest, and guarantee access to safe abortion when pregnancies threaten women's lives and health, and to victims and survivors of rape and incest;
2. Ensure that the state is held accountable for deaths resulting from unsafe abortions by putting in place proper monitoring and evaluation systems;
3. Incorporate article 29 of the physicians' Code of Ethics - which permits a physician to carry out an abortion to protect the pregnant woman's health and life - into the Penal Code, and eliminate the need for approval by two other specialists;
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5. Revoke article 262 of the Penal Code which penalizes a woman who seeks an illegal abortion;
6. Strengthen the provision of post-abortion care by mainstreaming the use of manual vacuum aspiration in public hospitals and by integrating family services into post-abortion care; and
7. Conduct national surveys on the rate and reasons behind induced abortions, and on the methods used, amongst married and unmarried women, and make the results publically accessible.

Thank you.