

28th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
23 March, 2015

Item 8: Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

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

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was critical for the advancement of women's human rights. However, state and non-state actors continue to employ various means, subtle and direct to attack women human rights defenders and organisations working to advance human rights.

- Diane Marie Rodríguez Zambrano, an LGBTI rights activist and the first transwoman to stand for public office in Ecuador, is currently living in a safe-house following death threats because of her work promoting the rights of the transgender community.
- This month, a journalist verbally attacked human rights defender Maximilienne Ngo Mbe, during a radio broadcast in Douala, Cameroon, calling on the public to mobilise against her and her organisation Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme de l'Afrique Centrale (Central African Network of Human Rights Defenders), for supporting equal rights for homosexuals and accusing them of being agents of foreign states.
- In the US state of Texas, 13 out of 21 reproductive healthcare clinics that assist women in exercising their right to abortion face the risk of closure because of stayed law HB2 which imposes impossible to meet requirements on both providers and facilities, and is being vociferously defended by the state.
- Over the International Women's Day weekend this month, a number of women human rights defenders were arrested across China in advance of the intended launch of a national campaign against sexual harassment on public transportation. Five women's rights defenders reportedly remain in detention.

We urge the Council to take note of these and other attacks on women human rights defenders, and take necessary action so that the commitments made in Vienna are truly fulfilled.

Thank you.