

# GLOBAL MOVEMENT VOTES TO ADOPT POLICY TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS

A crucial vote to protect the human rights of sex workers was passed today in Dublin at Amnesty International's decision-making forum, the International Council Meeting (ICM). Delegates from around the world adopted a resolution which authorized the International Board to develop and adopt a policy on the issue.

"Sex workers are one of the most marginalized groups in the world who in most instances face constant risk of discrimination, violence and abuse. Our global movement paved the way for adopting a policy for the protection of the human rights of sex workers which will help shape Amnesty International's future work on this important issue," said Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

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The resolution recommends that Amnesty International develop a policy that supports the full decriminalization of all aspects of consensual sex work. The policy will also call on states to ensure that sex workers enjoy full and equal legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence.

"We recognize that this critical human rights issue is hugely complex and that is why we have addressed this issue from the perspective of international human rights standards. We also consulted with our global movement to take on board different views from around the world," said Salil Shetty.

The research and consultation carried out in the development of this policy in the past two years concluded that this was the best way to defend sex workers' human rights and lessen the risk of abuse and violations they face.

The violations that sex workers can be exposed to include physical and sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, extortion and harassment, human trafficking, forced HIV testing and medical interventions. They can also be excluded from health care and housing services and other social and legal protection.

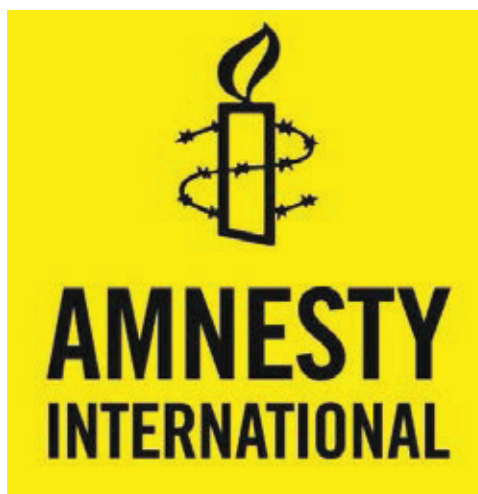
The policy has drawn from an extensive evidence base from sources including UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, UN Women and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health. We have also conducted research in four countries.

The consultation included sex worker groups, groups representing survivors of prostitution, abolitionist organizations, feminist and other women's rights representatives, LGBTI activists, anti-trafficking agencies and HIV/AIDS organizations.

Amnesty International considers human trafficking abhorrent in all of its forms, including sexual exploitation, and should be criminalized as a matter of international law. This is explicit in this new policy and all of Amnesty International's work.

"This is a historic day for Amnesty International. It was not a decision that was reached easily or quickly and we thank all our members from around the world, as well as all the many groups we consulted, for their important contribution to this debate. They have helped us reach an important decision that will shape this area of our human rights work going forward," said Salil Shetty.

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