

14 March 2013

Amnesty International

Oral statement at the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

We welcome the focus in this year's CSW on ending and preventing all forms of violence against women and girls. They are urging to you -Member States -to send a clear signal of global resolve and

2. Acknowledge and respond to the lived realities of all girls and women.  
The agreed conclusions should call on States to respond to the needs of all girls and women, to benefit from prevention and response mechanisms to gender-based violence, and to ensure that references in the agreed conclusions to specific groups of girls and women, including those who experience discrimination, including those who are in need of special attention, are given priority. The agreed conclusions must therefore call for effective implementation of human rights. There is no doubt that cultural, religious and traditional values and norms can be used to support efforts to eliminate and prevent violence against women and girls. However, where standards are clear: custom, tradition, religious or other

groups, including adolescents. It must be comprehensive in all its aspects, and not exclude, for instance, safe and legal abortion as an option for girls and women pregnant as a result of rape.

#### 5. Support and protect women human rights defenders

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about violence committed against women human rights defenders (WHRDs). They are an essential part of any healthy civil society, as they challenge structures, norms and traditions that discriminate against and marginalise so many. WHRDs are targeted both because of their gender and because of their work defending all human rights, including women's human rights. WHRDs, their colleagues and their families can face violence in their homes, their communities and by state and non-state actors. And too often the perpetrators of these violations enjoy impunity for their actions. Amnesty International urges all Member States to use this CSW as an opportunity to affirm their commitments to support and protect WHRDs so that they can carry out their important work without fear of reprisals, coercion, intimidation or attacks.

In closing, we stress that despite the commitments made, progress has been too slow in eradicating violence against women and girls. The CSW is an important opportunity for States to show they're ready to redouble their efforts, through clear, practical, concrete, measurable and binding commitments, as required by their legal obligations. We owe it to women and girls around the world to show resolve in ending violence once and for all.

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