



SUBMISSION TO THE 46TH SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP, APRIL-MAY 2024

PRE-SESSION PRESENTATION

URUGUAY:
HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Good morning. I am Lucía Pérez Chabaneau, Executive Director of Amnesty International Uruguay.

Thank to those present and to UPR Info for organizing the Pre-Session.

Amnesty International expresses its concern regarding the human rights situation on the ground in Uruguay. We want to raise concern about limitations to freedom of the press, and to the right to access to public information, which has a strong impact in State's transparency. Uruguay fell 26 places in the list of countries in the Reporters Without Borders Ranking. In July 2022, the UN Human Rights Committee noted with concern the increase of criminal prosecution and threats to journalists.

Obstacles to access to public information persist in the country, and it is worrying that 15 years after the approval of Law of Access to Public Information, the public agencies, obligated subjects of this law, have not made progress in their institutional policies of transparency and access to public information. Non-compliance with response deadlines, incomplete responses, or positive silence on behalf of the obligated subjects are identified as the main obstacles. During the water emergency that affected the metropolitan area of Uruguay in the first half of 2023, Amnesty International identified obstacles to accessing clear and accurate information about the crisis management and the quality of drinking water and how this affected people's health.

Amnesty International raises with alarm the worsening of prison conditions during the cycle under review. The prison system suffers from a high density of overcrowding, reaching more than 120% since the last review. The prison population has increased steadily, reaching 15.000 inmates.

Amnesty International is extremely worried about the continued escalation of gender-based violence, with a rise in the number of reported femicides and child murders in the last few years. There were obstacles to the implementation of the Gender Based Violence Law because of the lack of resource allocation.

Our organization is also preoccupied with sexual and reproductive rights, in relation to pregnancies of girls and adolescents under the age of 15. The 50% of these pregnancies is the result of sexual abuse; in another 16% of the cases, sexual abuse could not be determined.

We also want to highlight the persistent impunity for crimes against humanity committed during the last civil-military regime (1973-1985), as well as for the lack of substantive progress made in clarifying the fate of those forcibly disappeared under that regime, as no new evidence was found at the excavation zones and no new information was provided for those suspected of criminal responsibility.

In this context, Amnesty International calls the government of Uruguay to:

1. Ensure that journalists can exercise their right to press freedom without any restrictions and that the free exercise of journalistic work is respected.
2. Establish procedures for effective and timely access to information, and to proactively provide information of public interest.
3. Take appropriate measures to reduce overcrowding in prisons and to ensure access to rehabilitation and integration opportunities for those deprived of their liberty.
4. Immediately take all necessary measures to a) access to new valuable information for investigate the fate of forcibly disappeared persons and b) to bring to justice all those suspected of criminal responsibility for crimes under international law, including crimes against humanity, regardless of when they were committed.
5. Allocate necessary budget for the effective implementation of the Gender-Based Violence Law; especially in relation to provide counseling, shelter, and assistance to gender-based violence victims; as well as to investigate and prosecute properly all acts of gender-based violence.
6. Take all necessary steps to guarantee that girls and adolescents can exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, as providing youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, adequate access to contraceptives, abortion, information, comprehensive sexual education, and providing a strong protection from sexual violence and abuse.

Thank you.