

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI index: ASA 44/001/2009  
25 September 2009

### **Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Vanuatu: Amnesty International welcomes new Family Law**

Amnesty International welcomes many of the recommendations made by states to Vanuatu, including those concerned with the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles; the improvement of detention conditions for prisoners under the age of 18; addressing current rules and customs that continue to discriminate against women; and the adequate access to health care and safe drinking water for the population.

Amnesty International welcomes the progress made towards ensuring that human rights are promoted and protected in Vanuatu, including through the enactment by Parliament of the Family Protection Act in June 2008, which is the first dedicated domestic violence legislation in Pacific Island countries. Amnesty International now urges the government to proceed with the implementation of the Act, including through training programmes for stakeholders and the allocation of adequate resources (A/HRC/12/14, paragraphs 15-16).

Amnesty International also welcomes steps being taken to consolidate various family laws, including those relating to maintenance and matrimonial property, into a single family law for Vanuatu. Vanuatu must now ensure that there is adequate public consultation in the review of the new family law (A/HRC/12/14, paragraph 17). The International community should provide the necessary assistance to Vanuatu to ensure that such public consultation takes place.

While Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the government is in the preliminary stages of ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment, it encourages Vanuatu to also ratify International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. That would send a strong statement to the people of Vanuatu and the international community that the government is committed to addressing poverty-related issues. Amnesty International urges the International community to assist Vanuatu in addressing poverty, lack of access to health services, clean water and adequate housing.

#### **Background Information**

The 12<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council today adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Vanuatu. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

ENDs/