

URGENT ACTION

LIFE OF A PREGNANT 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL AT RISK

The life of a 10-year-old girl who is pregnant after having been raped by her stepfather is in danger. Despite the high risk this pregnancy poses and her mother's request, access to safe abortion has not been yet provided.

On 21 April a **10-year-old girl** arrived with her mother at the Trinidad Maternity and Children's Hospital (Hospital Materno Infantil de Trinidad) in Asunción, the capital of Paraguay, complaining of stomach ache. On examination, a 21-week pregnancy was established. The girl's pregnancy is the result of having been raped by her stepfather.

The director of the hospital publicly acknowledged that the girl's pregnancy was of high risk to her, despite being in stable health condition. A few days later, the Public Ministry ordered the girl to be admitted to a different hospital, the Red Cross Hospital (Hospital de la Cruz Roja), to monitor her health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and health professionals around the world agree that pregnancy poses specific risks to young girls whose bodies are not fully developed and that the risk to their lives is greater. Therefore all options regarding the pregnancy, including safe abortion services, must be made available.

On 28 April the girl's mother submitted an administrative plea (*carta administrativa*) to the hospital requesting an abortion for the girl. Nothing indicates that the hospital is considering an abortion to save her life. On the contrary, according to latest reports, the girl will be sent to a centre for young mothers (*centro de niñas madres*).

In Paraguay, abortion is legal when the life of the woman or girl is at risk, therefore she is entitled to a lawful abortion. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child the best interest of the child has to always be of primary consideration and states have an obligation under the Convention to ensure access to abortion in these circumstances.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the Paraguayan authorities to save the life of this 10-year-old-girl, pregnant as a result of rape by her stepfather, by granting her the abortion her mother has requested;
- Reminding them that according to UN agencies, a pregnancy poses specific risks and potentially long-term consequences for the physical and mental health of girls;
- Urging the authorities to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the rape of the girl and to hold those responsible for the abuse accountable.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 JUNE 2015 TO:

Minister of Public Health and Welfare

Ministro de Salud Pública y Bienestar

Dr. Antonio Barrios

Pettirossi Esq. Brasil

Asunción, Paraguay

Fax: +595 21 207 328

Email: ministro@mspbs.gov.py

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Ministro

Attorney General

Fiscal General

Dr. Javier Diaz Veron

Chile c/ Ygatimí

Asunción, Paraguay

Phone/Fax: +595 21 415 6152

Email: fdiaz@ministeriopublico.gov.py

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Fiscal General

And copies to:

CLADEM Paraguay

Email: coordi@cladem.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Paraguay, the abortion is only permitted when the life of the women or girls is at risk. In any other circumstances, even if pregnancy is the result of rape, incest or when the foetus has a severe malformation, abortion is not permitted. This restrictive abortion law is in violation of international law.

In March 2015 the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights called on Paraguay to review and modify its abortion legislation to ensure its compatibility with other rights such as health and life.

According to recent official data published by UNFPA, In Paraguay 2.13% of maternal deaths correspond to 10-14-year-old girls. Two births a day are from 10 to 14-year-old girls.

Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration”. The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires states, including Paraguay, to ensure girls access to abortion, at a minimum, when their health and life is in danger and in cases of rape and incest.

The World Health Organization in its *Safe Abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems* (2012) to States notes that abortion laws and services should protect the health and human rights of all women, including adolescents. They should not create situations that lead women and adolescents to seek clandestine abortions, and they should pay special attention to the needs of girls, including those who have suffered rape.

Name: 10-year-old girl (name withheld)

Gender m/f: f

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