

UPR 19, May 7, 2014  
Recommendations of Canada

## Nicaragua

### Question

In 2012, Nicaragua adopted the Comprehensive Law on Violence against Women (law 779), which was widely commended despite a lack of sufficient resources for full implementation. Reforms to the law adopted in September 2013 allow judges to recommend mediation between women who are victims of violence and their abusers for crimes carrying sentences of up to five years, overturning the former automatic initiation of prosecution processes against aggressors. This could threaten victims' protection and decrease accountability for such crimes due to an increased probability of victims dropping their cases. Could the Delegation of Nicaragua explain what measures are being taken to guarantee access to justice and protection for victims of gender-based violence?

### Recommendations

Canada recommends that Nicaragua :

1. Take all necessary measures to ensure separation of powers and due independence of the judiciary to secure the right to free and fair judicial processes.
2. Implement fully the bill on access to information and take effective measures to protect freedom of the press by investigating all reported incidents of intimidation or harassment of journalists.
3. Ensure the full protection of the freedom of expression of its citizens, including the right to peaceful protest, and refrain from and condemn actions intended to intimidate or repress citizens exercising this right.

### Observations

Canada welcomes the progress made by the Government of Nicaragua on a number of economic and social rights, including in its decisive strides in poverty reduction, especially extreme poverty; increasing the minimum wage, improving food security; and expanding coverage of the social security scheme. In addition, we would like to commend the Government of Nicaragua for meeting the Millennium Development Goals on reducing extreme poverty and hunger by half.

With 28% of Nicaraguan women aged 20 to 24 years having given birth before the age of 18 years, Nicaragua has the highest adolescent pregnancy rate in the Americas. Adolescent pregnancy is directly related to child, early and forced marriage; at 41%, Nicaragua has the highest rate of child, early and forced marriage amongst girls in the Americas.

Despite advances in maternal and child health, greater resources and efforts are required to advance the rights and empowerment of women and girls and to prevent early pregnancy and child, early and forced marriage.