

Andorra | Drop charges against Vanessa Mendoza and guarantee safe and enabling environment for women human rights defenders

06.11.2020

Vanessa Mendoza, the president of Associació Stop Violències, is demanding that all women in Andorra are able to enjoy their rights to sexual and reproductive health, in particular the decriminalisation of abortion. Due to her advocacy including with the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), she is facing intimidation, judicial harassment and defamation.



Vanessa Mendoza, President of Associació Stop Violències, is facing at least two judicial proceedings related to her activism. In one case where she received formal notification, she is facing charges of slander against the government, defamation against the co-princes and crimes against the State institutions due to statements she made to the media and her engagement with CEDAW. These charges carry up to four years imprisonment. In a separate case in relation to organising a protest in September 2019 calling for decriminalising abortion, she was brought before the police to testify in November 2019, but has not yet received a formal notification of the charges she is facing

During the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Andorra, which took place on 5 November 2020, the State delegation of Andorra said that Mendoza 'is not risking in any case a jail sentence'. ISHR urges Andorra to drop all charges against Mendoza, provide assurances that she will no longer face any intimidation, threats or judicial harassment, and guarantee her right to an effective remedy for the reprisals that she was subjected to.

ISHR welcomes the Netherlands' and Luxembourg's statements at the UPR raising concerns about the reprisals against Mendoza for her engagement with CEDAW, and recommending that the Andorran government 'stop the judicial harassment, the reprisals and intimidation against human rights defenders in relation to the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and engagement with the UN', and "guarantee rights in the area of sexual and reproductive health by providing access without obstacles to information, education and services on sexual and reproductive health, ensuring that persons in this sector can work without fear of reprisals", respectively.

The UN Secretary-General, in his 2020 [annual report](#) on reprisals, documented that the Andorra Government is taking 'disproportionate measures' against Stop Violències and its President for their participation with the CEDAW.

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