

8 Things to know about Amnesty's Draft Proposal on Sex Work

Confused about the Amnesty Draft Proposal? We've broken some of the major points here

1.) The proposal does not support forced and underage involvement in the sex trade:

Amnesty supports criminal laws against trafficking, coercing individuals into the sex trade, and soliciting sex from minors. Quoting the draft proposal "Amnesty International considers children involved in commercial sex acts to be victims of a grave human rights abuse. Under international law states must ensure that offering, delivering or accepting a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation is covered under criminal or penal law, and must take all appropriate measures to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children."

2.) The proposal does not support "wholesale decriminalization of the sex trade"... and Amnesty is not inherently opposed to state regulation of adult, consensual sex work.

Quoting Amnesty's draft position: "...regulation should respect the agency of sex workers and guarantee that all individuals who undertake sex work can do so in safe conditions, free from exploitation, and are able to stop engaging in sex work when and if they choose. Additionally, such restrictions must be for a legitimate purpose, appropriate to meet that purpose, proportionate and non-discriminatory. States should also ensure the participation...in the development of any regulatory frameworks."

3.) The proposal explicitly supports labor rights and fair labor relationships.

Amnesty's draft proposal explicitly supports fair labor relationships, and states that countries must "respect and protect the right of sex workers to just and favorable conditions of work, including fair wages, safe and healthy conditions and limits on working hours" and "ensure that sex workers are entitled to equal protection under the law and are not excluded from the application of labour, health and safety and other laws"

4.) The proposal recognizes the link between intersectional discrimination and oppression and compulsion into the sex trade.

Quoting the proposal: "Amnesty International recognises that intersectional discrimination and oppression have an impact on the lives of many sex workers and can play a role in an individual's decision to engage or remain in sex work and their experiences whilst in sex work. Systems of oppression such as gender discrimination, racism, socio-economic inequality and legacies of colonial occupation, deny people power and lead to poverty and deprivation of opportunity..."

5.) The draft proposal takes a strong position against economic compulsion into the sex trade, and advocates for expanding options for marginalized groups.

Amnesty's draft proposal recognizes how economic inequality and discrimination of certain groups lead individuals with few viable options of meeting economic needs. "Amnesty International considers that policies which aim to support and improve the situation of marginalised people must focus on empowering individuals and groups and not devalue their decisions, compromise their safety and/or criminalise the contexts in which they live their lives."

They propose "provid[ing] appropriate support, employment and educational options that actively empower marginalised individuals and groups, respect individual agency and guarantee the realisation of human rights" and taking "necessary



measures to eradicate discrimination against marginalised individuals and groups who are commonly represented in sex work, including discrimination in employment"

6.) Amnesty supports voluntary, non-coercive programming for individuals who want to leave the sex trade.

The proposal asserts that "states have an obligation to ensure that no person continues to sell sex against their will and that everyone can leave freely when and if they choose"

Quoting the draft proposal: "In the same way that intersectional discrimination and oppression can limit employment options for people considering selling sex, it can also curtail individuals' ability to leave sex work when they want to. States have an obligation to ensure that no person continues to sell sex against their will and that everyone can leave freely when and if they choose."

7.)The proposal calls for an end to direct criminalization of sex workers.

The draft proposal condemns laws that "seek to punish sex workers through sanctions such as criminal prosecution, detention and/or fines because of their involvement in sex work."

8.) The safety and human rights of sex workers, not the interest of clients and third parties, drive the call to end indirect criminalization of sex work

Laws against demand, and many third party laws, increase vulnerability to violence, "violate sex worker's human rights, including their rights to security of person, to just and favourable conditions of work and to health."

The full draft proposal can be found at:

http://tasmaniantimes.com/images/uploads/Circular_18_Draft_Policy_on_Sex_Work_final.pdf