



Center for Reproductive Rights' Statement on Tanzania's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Process

Mr. President,

I make this statement on behalf of the Center for Reproductive Rights. We would like to draw attention to the inadequate access to safe abortion and post-abortion services in Tanzania.

It is estimated that 25% of maternal deaths in Tanzania are due to complications from unsafe abortions. Women with unplanned and unwanted pregnancies are often forced to resort to unsafe abortions from unskilled providers or to attempt to perform the abortion themselves, resulting in preventable injuries and deaths. Adolescent girls are particularly at risk of unsafe abortion—one-third of incomplete abortion cases that turn up in health facilities involve adolescents.

Tanzania's high rate of unsafe abortion is in part due to the laws on abortion which are inconsistent, unclear and widely misunderstood. While the Penal Code states that abortion is criminalized except to save the life of a pregnant woman further detail on other circumstances in which abortion may be permitted is absent. The lack of clarity regarding the applicable legislation on the legal status of abortion creates a fear of being prosecuted among women and health care providers and results in denial of access to abortion, even when legal. As a result of the lack of access to safe abortion services, in one year, about 66,640 women received treatment in health care facilities for unsafe abortion-related complications.

We encourage the Government of Tanzania to accept and implement the recommendation made during the Twenty-fifth Session of the UPR, “ **to integrate into its national legislation comprehensive reproductive rights including access to safe medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest and where the life of the mother or the fetus is in danger.**”

Thank you