



Hello, my name is Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, I'm the president of Stop Violence, the only association fighting for women's rights in Andorra.

Reports issued by the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) already show their concern for a lack of an independent body in Andorra that controls or prevents abuse of police force, nor that protects women in the face of violence. Indeed, we share this concern with the Committee as at grassroots level we suffer the lack of mechanisms to control police force.

Before delving into the violations of rights, we wanted to update and report on police official's malpractice in gender-based violence cases during the COVID-19 confinement. We have witnessed how the protocols for action or the resources for women that face violence have **not been activated**. Indeed, from our association we have helped women to report violence when not finding the adequate services. After asking the government to initiate investigations and open disciplinary proceedings they publicly accused our Association of lying.

Also the technical department from the government in charge of assisting this women, which we work together during the confinement, has also witness this police malpractice.

Without a sensitive and competent police team, no treaty, no law, no service for women will be effective. We want the structural violence in which we live to be made public. Particularly, this same Committee (CAT) in its 2018 report asked Andorra to provide information on the measures adopted to modify Andorra's regulation in order to decriminalize abortion, particularly in some circumstances, like rape. I can tell you no such measures have been adopted so far.

We would like to highlight that in Andorra there is no law or any official document that includes what are the sexual and reproductive rights of women and we need it urgently. In relation to these rights, we need the amendment of article 108 that penalizes abortion. We think this is a possible solution and no change in our constitution will be necessary.

The only body created to silence international demands is the service called SIAD, created this march 2020 by the government, to inform and help women that want to abort (outside the country). Note that our association in 2018 had already started the "Xarxa la Meri", a secure, specialized and respectful network for women, where we provide information to women in need and accompany them to have an abortion in Catalonia (Spain).

**However, we have serious doubts as to the adequacy and transparency of the SIAD service** as their action protocol is not public. During the confinement, SIAD told us that they assisted 6 women, but we don't know the type of needs or what aid was given. But we know that abortions have not been paid, not even when a fetus was not viable outside the womb of the woman, since in Andorra is not allowed.

It is a shame that the government duplicates services, in their case without the proper gender approach.

Finally, to culminate the structural violence striking Andorra, and stemming from the defense of women's rights which we are advocating for, **our government has requested the public prosecution to investigate parts of the report we presented during the 74th session of the CEDAW**. Accusing us and myself as president of stop violence as responsible of "damaging the image of the country".



**On this, after publicly requesting the prosecutor's office to confirm if the petition of investigation has or not been accepted, we have received no answer.**

**Because of all the above mention, we encourage our government to;**

- 1. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**
2. Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappears.
3. We reiterate the need to decriminalize abortion following international recommendations

**THANK YOU**