

The World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) Statement on the USA Rejection of UN Resolution of Violence Against Women

As reported by several sources, the USA has recently rejected a resolution proposed to the UN Human Rights Council that has the stated goal of reducing violence against women because of a provision related to access to safe abortions. This follows USA President Trump's executive order to reinstate and tighten the Global Gag Rule, which prohibits international sexual and reproductive health organizations from receiving USA funding if they provide, counsel, refer or advocate for abortion services. The Rule prohibits these activities even if organizations carry them out with their own non-USA funding, and even if abortion is legal in their own country.

The World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) condemns the rejection of this resolution and reaffirms its denouncement of the Global Gag Rule. Beyond its patent violation of human rights recognized by international statutes concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights, and UN Sustainable Development Goals, WAS considers that obstacles to access to safe abortion will cause an increase of illegal and unsafe abortion which will cause serious harm to women and families. Unsafe abortion is among the main causes of maternal mortality in the countries, where abortion is illegal.

Article 12 of the WAS Declaration of Sexual Rights (2014) * states that everyone has the right to make reproductive decisions on their own terms, and that right includes unimpeded access to sexual health services including safe abortions.

The proposal rejected by the USA brought attention to the heightened risk of violence for women in conflict, war and post-war environments. The lives of many women may be threatened due to the lack of support from the USA delegation to this important statement. We fully stand behind the UN's continued effort to support and sustain sexual health policies including access to sexual health services including abortion.

*The WAS Declaration of Sexual Rights (2014) can be downloaded in various languages at the following URL: <http://www.worldsexology.org/resources/declaration-of-sexual-rights/>



Pedro Nobre
President of the World Association for Sexual Health