



# Only Rights Can Stop the Wrongs

## NSWP STATEMENT

### **NSWP WELCOMES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S POLICY ON PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS**

NSWP welcomes Amnesty International's [Policy on State Obligations to Respect, Protect, and Fulfill the Human Rights of Sex Workers](#).

Amnesty International calls for the decriminalisation of all aspects of adult consensual sex work including all laws which criminalise sex workers, clients, and third parties.<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International also calls for the end of the discriminatory enforcement of other laws against sex workers, such as vagrancy, loitering, and immigration requirements.

Amnesty International joins [The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS \(UNAIDS\)](#), [UNFPA](#), [WHO](#), [UNDP](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), the [Global Commission on HIV and the Law](#), [the World Bank](#), [Open Society Foundations](#), the [Global Network of People Living with HIV](#), the [Global Forum on MSM and HIV](#), the International Women's Health Coalition, the [Association for Women in Development](#), the [American Jewish World Service](#), the [Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women \(GAATW\)](#), [The Lancet](#), The Global Fund for Women, the Elton John Foundation and the [International Community of Women Living with HIV](#) in the call for the decriminalisation of sex work.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'third parties' includes managers, brothel keepers, receptionists, maids, drivers, landlords, hotels who rent rooms to sex workers and anyone else who is seen as facilitating sex work.



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Amnesty International also state they are committed to ensuring the rights of sex workers are integrated into all areas of their work. They confirm that all of their policy positions to date, including those on gender equality, gender-based violence, sexual violence, non-discrimination, rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI) people, human trafficking, sexual and reproductive rights, access to justice, rights at work and the right to adequate housing, apply equally to sex workers as to any other individual facing human rights abuses.

NSWP is a sex worker-led global network with 262 member organisations across 77 countries from Africa, Asia Pacific, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America, representing tens of thousands of sex workers from diverse cultures and experiences. NSWP members have documented the human rights violations experienced by sex workers due to criminalisation for decades. The criminalisation and penalisation of sex work violates sex workers' right to associate and organise, right to be protected by the law, right to be free from violence, right to be free from discrimination, right to privacy and freedom from arbitrary interference, right to health, right to move and migrate, and finally, their right to work and free choice of employment. These rights are outlined in NSWP's [Consensus Statement on Sex Work, Human Rights, and the Law](#).

For example, according to Amnesty International's research in Norway sex workers continue to be evicted from their homes/workplaces. Landlords who rent property to sex workers are threatened with prosecution, which criminalises renting out premises used for selling sex.

NSWP member [PION](#) stated, "sex workers are evicted, they are not protected by other laws. People are put out on the street on the same day. Police say it's a civil case, not a criminal case [and] if landlords don't evict, the police will launch a criminal case against them. [So] sex workers lose their deposit and rent paid. We've seen a lot of cases of this. Landlords can use notice periods, but in practice they don't. The police are encouraging landlord to take the law into their own hands and enforce it themselves."

NSWP welcomes Amnesty International's policy and their accompanying research on [Norway](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Hong Kong](#), and [Argentina](#). Amnesty International encourages states to refocus sex work laws and policies towards ones that provide protection for sex workers from acts of exploitation and abuse. NSWP is concerned that states could introduce laws and policies that do not prioritise the voices and experiences of sex workers, and reproduce some of the same harms as previous criminalised models.

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The sex workers' rights movement is committed to opposing the legal oppression of sex work in the belief that it will help sex workers organise to eliminate exploitation, oppression and violence, address unfair and abusive working conditions instituted by state and non-state actors and support sex workers in their struggle for labour rights and justice. Amnesty International's [policy](#) is a welcome addition to the growing number of international bodies that call for the decriminalisation of sex work as the best way to uphold the human rights of sex workers.