

Cambridge's Amnesty International Group 'Demand Dignity' for Women in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua all forms of abortion, regardless of the circumstances were made illegal in July 2008. Both women seeking abortions and medical professionals willing to offer them are subject to imprisonment.

This geographically distant problem infiltrated Cambridge town centre on Saturday 23rd January 2010. Cambridge's Amnesty International group took to the streets, giving people something to think about during their Saturday shopping. Drumming, shouting, and carrying banners, as well as a pregnant mannequin, the group made a conspicuous journey to market square. The demonstrators asked passersby to sign petitions, handed out fliers and explained, with the use of a megaphone, the current situation in Nicaragua.



Above: Protesting in Cambridge city centre against the current Nicaraguan ban on abortion.

The implications of the total ban on abortion for the women of Nicaragua are extremely serious. Even where women are vulnerable, or victims of rape or incest, they are unable to undergo abortion legally.

Further, it is illegal to treat pregnant women with any medication or procedure that could endanger their pregnancy. This prevents the treatment of illnesses such as cancer, malaria and HIV, and thus puts the lives of many pregnant women at risk.

The law goes so far as to punish girls and women who suffer a miscarriage because it is often extremely difficult to differentiate between an induced and spontaneous miscarriage.

Amnesty argues this is a violation to these women's rights, because the right to adequate health care is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The concern with the abortion law in Nicaragua is an aspect of Amnesty International's 'Demand Dignity' campaign, which holds the right to safe motherhood as a central aspect.



Above: Protesters gather on Parker's Piece, Cambridge

Amnesty International is calling on the Nicaraguan authorities to repeal the law banning all abortions. Rape survivors and women whose health would be at risk should be guaranteed safe access to abortions.

Even if you missed the demonstration on Saturday it is certainly not too late to take action. Please take the time to send an email to the Nicaraguan president.

Details can be found at http://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions_details.asp?ActionID=624