

UN Human Rights Council 43: Universal Periodic Review on El Salvador

Madam President,

The United Kingdom welcomes El Salvador's engagement with the UPR. We note the events at the Legislative Assembly in San Salvador on 9 February and welcome actions taken since by all parties to reduce tensions. El Salvador's institutional stability over many years has been a democratic strength, and the continued effective functioning of constitutional institutions is an important prerequisite for further improvements to rule of law, security and respect for human rights.

The UK welcomes El Salvador's support for two of our recommendations, including: to adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting UN treaty body national candidates; and to develop a national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, particularly by gangs, which includes increased institutional capacity for identification and support of victims.

However, we regret El Salvador could not support our recommendation to review laws criminalising the use of abortion, ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services and support for all women and girls, and guarantee women are not criminally prosecuted for suffering a miscarriage. We are concerned abortion is punishable by imprisonment, including in instances where pregnancy threatens the woman's life. It is troubling that women have been jailed despite reliable claims the pregnancies ended because of a miscarriage.

Thank you.