

Paraguay Under Fire For Forcing Child Rape Victim to Have Baby



Asuncion, June 10 (teleSUR-RHC)-- A regional court has urged Paraguayan authorities to end the pregnancy of a young girl -- only 10 years old -- emphasizing the psychological and physical risks of giving birth at a young age.

Supporting its statement with a medical report, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, part of the Organization of American States (OEA) recommended the executive power to "avoid the double victimization" of the child, whose pregnancy was due to repeated sexual abuses on the part of her step-father.

While the girl already suffered from malnutrition and anemia, she would also be at higher risk of having other infections and could put at risk her reproductive future. The commissioners considered that in such circumstances her case complied with the requirements of an emergency, justifying their request of

protecting her rights and guaranteeing her access to medical treatment.

Although the commission does not have any binding authority, Paraguay was given 72 hours to present a report detailing the protective measures implemented for the girl, or the case could be transferred to the Inter-American Court.

The commission's intervention followed the request introduced on January 20, by the Committee of Latin America and the Caribbean for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM) and Equality Now. Both associations claimed that Paraguay has failed to comply with measures to protect women's rights.

The child's mother reported the sexual assaults earlier in January, but authorities took no action then. A few months later, the hospital finally revealed the girl was pregnant, the mother begged to have her abort, which was denied because of the anti-abortion laws of the deeply Catholic country.

The mother was jailed late April, accused of "failing in her duty of care," and possibly being accomplice of the rape – while the stepfather was on the run until he was caught by police on Saturday. In Paraguay, about 600 girls of 14 or under become pregnant each year – out of a 6.8 million total population. In the United States, thousands of girls would also give birth every year, according to various studies from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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