AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Presentation to the Citizens’ Assembly on the Eighth Amendment

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Amnesty International is a global membership-based human rights organisation. In Ireland we have 20,000 members. We are independent of any political, religious or other ideology.
The international human rights legal framework was created by states, including Ireland.
Women and girls have a human right to access safe and legal abortions.
International human rights law does not apply before birth - but states are entitled to protect foetal interests.
Abortions will always be needed – abortion bans do not actually stop abortions.
There is no conflict between women’s rights and others’ freedom of religious belief or conscience.
We need to start trusting and empowering women to make decisions about their own reproduction.
What is a human rights compliant abortion framework?
Abortion should be decriminalised.
Legislation framed around ‘minimum grounds’ to access abortion will not guarantee effective access.
Look to the emerging consensus on best practice models for human rights compliant abortion provision.
States may regulate abortion in later stages of pregnancy.
Conscience-based refusal must be regulated so it does not jeopardise women’s and girls’ rights.
Context: historical suppression and control of women’s sexuality and reproduction
Conclusion: The Eighth Amendment must be repealed ... not amended