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Freedom Network Stands in Support of Amnesty International Policy and Report Release

Today, Amnesty International released its policy calling on states to decriminalize consensual sex work, including supporting research documenting the human rights abuses that are inextricably linked to the criminalization of consensual sex work. The Freedom Network USA, the largest collaboration of service organizations and advocates working directly with and on behalf of survivors of human trafficking in the US, commends this bold step in support of the rights and safety of everyone in the sex trade.

We commend Amnesty's commitment to listening to the first-hand accounts of sex workers, trafficking victims, and impacted communities in formulating their policy. Based on two years of in-depth and thoughtful research, these reports highlight the benefits of decriminalization for marginalized communities. We see this research process as a robust example of what is possible with a staunch commitment to policies informed by impacted populations and grounded in a rights-based framework.

"It is critical that we bring consensual sex workers out of the margins, providing the services, support, options and protection needed by all workers. It is only when consensual sex work is safe that victims of sex trafficking can be more quickly identified and supported," stated Freedom Network USA's Executive Director, Jean Bruggeman.

The Freedom Network USA stands in support of the decriminalization of consensual sex work, as the most effective approach to protecting the human rights of both sex workers and victims of human trafficking. Our approach to combating human trafficking centralizes voluntary, non-judgmental assistance with an emphasis on self-determination. Our advocacy is driven by our experience working directly with victims of trafficking. Amnesty's research across the globe reflects our experience with trafficking victims here in the US. Criminalization, whether of sex workers, buyers, or facilitators, harms everyone in the sex trade. It makes law enforcement an adversary instead of an option, creating vulnerability and marginalization instead of protection and support.

We share Amnesty International's vision for the full realization of human rights for those who trade sex, including trafficking victims and commend their commitment to this ideal.

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