Public Prosecutor General, Mr. Zbigniew Tadeusz Ziobro

v/ Amnesty International i Norge

Postboks 702 sentrum

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Dear Public Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the conviction of human rights defender Justyna Wydrzyńska for her activism to support access to safe abortion. On 14 March 2023, Ms. Wydrzyńska was sentenced to 8 months’ community service for helping a pregnant woman to access abortion pills. She has appealed the conviction.

I am deeply concerned that Justyna Wydrzyńska appears to have been prosecuted in reprisal for her activism and her legitimate efforts to defend access to safe and legal abortions in Poland. She is a doula and an activist who has been outspoken about her own abortion. She is one of the founders of Abortion Dream Team, an activist collective in Poland that campaigns against abortion stigma and provides evidence-based and non-biased abortion-related information, including on World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on safe self-managed medical abortion.

I would like to stress that laws that restrict access to abortions in Poland – prohibiting abortion except for situations where the health or the life of the pregnant woman is at risk or the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest – and criminalize those who provide help with an abortion, put pregnant people’s health and lives at risk and violate Poland’s obligations under international human rights law and standards. It is precisely because of these harmful laws, that Justyna Wydrzyńska’s support to people whose health needs have been neglected and denied by the Polish health care system are crucial and can save lives. Her work should be applauded, not criminalized.

Justyna Wydrzyńska’s efforts are part of a growing movement of individuals in Poland and around the world who show solidarity and compassion, while helping others to access the sexual and reproductive health and rights they are entitled to. Poland must take urgent action to ensure that abortion is fully decriminalized and that people defending sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe abortion, are able to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals or intimidation.

I therefore urge you to take all necessary measures to ensure that Justyna Wydrzyńska’s unjust conviction is overturned and refrain from bringing any other charges against her for carrying out her legitimate defence of human rights.

Yours sincerely,