

UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

/Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

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SUBMISSION: WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS

The Danish Institute for Human Rights presents its compliments to the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

On behalf of the working group, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has by email of 27 July 2020 requested contributions for the preparation of the thematic report on women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in situations of crisis to be presented to the 47th session of the Human Rights Council.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has only a few comments to the call.

The Institute does not as such have information on any general restrictions on the services to women and girls in relation to reproductive health and related topics in situations of crisis.

During the COVID-19-pandemic in Denmark, various planned and non-acute public health services in Denmark have been limited, postponed or restricted, including some pre- and post-natal care and other pregnancy-related services as well as fertility treatment. Whereas most services are offered again, some restrictions remain.

An example from the Region of Southern Denmark¹: In general, the same services as normal are offered, with some exceptions:

- General pre-natal seminars are online webinars

¹ Webpage of Odense University Hospital, <http://www.ouh.dk/wm513388> (in Danish), last visited 28 July 2020.

- Some pre-natal consultations have been phone consultations instead of physical consultations
- Partners to the pregnant person can still be present at pre-natal examinations and scans at hospital/by the midwife, however cannot be present in the waiting area but must wait outside until the time of the examination
- There are limitations as to the number of visitors in hospitals after giving birth
- Further restrictions apply, if the mother or father is experiencing symptoms or is tested positive for COVID-19.

The Danish Health Authority has issued guidelines as to the handling of COVID-19 in relation to people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including pregnant women. According to these guidelines, pregnant women in the last trimester of the pregnancy who work in the healthcare, eldercare or social sectors or with children aged 0-6 years, and who come into close contact with patients, citizens or children should be working away from the public/from home or granted leave of absence.²

The Danish Institute for Human Rights avails itself the opportunity to renew to the OHCHR the assurances of its highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Lise Garkier Hendriksen

CHIEF LEGAL ADVISER

² Danish Health Authority, FAQ on outbreaks of pneumonia caused by novel coronavirus/COVID-19 -> People at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 -> 7. Particularly about pregnant women and newborns, <https://www.sst.dk/en/English/Corona-eng/FAQ> (in English), last visited 28 July 2020.