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US withdrawal: determination of international community is "victory for international justice and the rule of law," says AI

(New York) -- Amnesty International (AI) applauds the determination of the international community, which led the US to withdraw its proposal for a further renewal of Security Council Resolutions 1422 and 1487 to exempt peacekeepers from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

"This is a victory for international justice and the rule of law," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International. "The world community has sent an unequivocal message that it will not stand for continued efforts to undermine the International Criminal Court."

However, Amnesty International is concerned that the US continues to oppose the ICC, and negotiate impunity agreements with individual countries, ensuring that US nationals will not be subject to the ICC's jurisdiction. Amnesty International believes that this undermines international justice, and is unnecessary as the ICC can only exercise jurisdiction if states are unable or genuinely unwilling to prosecute the worst possible crimes under international law.

"We hope that today's decision will prompt the US to review its opposition to the ICC and join the world community in reaffirming the primacy of international law," said Irene Khan. "The treatment of Iraqi prisoners is an example of the blatant disregard being shown for the rule of law, and the Bush Administration should be doing everything in its power to support the principles embodied in the ICC."

Amnesty International has analyzed Resolutions 1422 and 1487, and has concluded that these resolutions and any renewals are unlawful as they seek to undermine the Rome Statute, the Charter of the United Nations and other international law.

"These resolutions have no place in the new system of international justice, which seeks to insure that no one can have impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," Ms. Khan concluded.

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