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USA: Response to President Bush

President Bush again failed to address longstanding concerns regarding US detention policies and practices in the context of the "war on terror", Amnesty International said in response to his comments today.

At Guantánamo, the US has operated an isolated prison camp in which people are confined arbitrarily, held virtually incommunicado, without charge, trial or access to due process. Not a single Guantánamo detainee has had the legality of their detention reviewed by a court, despite the Supreme Court ruling of last year.

"Guantánamo is only the visible part of the story. Evidence continues to mount that the US operates a network of detention centres where people are held in secret or outside any proper legal framework — from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond," said Amnesty International.

US interrogation and detention policies and practices during the "war on terror", have deliberately and systematically breached the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Individuals held in US custody have been transferred for interrogation to countries known to practice torture.

"If President Bush and his administration are serious about freedom and human dignity they should recommit to the rule of law and human rights."

Amnesty International continues to call on the US administration to:

- end all secret and incommunicado detentions;
- grant the International Committee of the Red Cross full access to all detainees including those held in secret locations;
- ensure recourse to the law for all detainees;
- establish a full independent commission of inquiry into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and "disappearances";
- bring to justice anyone responsible for authorizing or committing human rights violations

Background Information

When asked to comment about Amnesty International's report during a White House Briefing President Bush said: "I'm aware of the Amnesty International report, and it's absurd. (...) The United States is a country that promotes freedom around the world. When there's accusations made about certain actions by our people, they're fully investigated in a transparent way."

For more information, please see:

"Guantánamo and beyond: The continuing pursuit of unchecked executive power":

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAMR510632005>

"USA: Human dignity denied: Torture and accountability in the 'war on terror' "

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAMR511452004>

Public Document

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