



*Press Release from Amnesty International EU Office
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**EU-China Summit:
EU leaders must highlight deteriorating human rights situation in
China**

Amnesty International calls on the European Union to uphold its own human rights principles by raising China's deteriorating human rights record at the highest level during the EU-China summit in Brussels on Wednesday 5 September.

Amnesty International's EU Office has released an open letter (see attached) to the Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, the European Commission President Romano Prodi, and the Council Secretary-General and High Representative CFSP, Javier Solana, urging the European Union to use the summit with China to convey its serious concerns.

This follows the release of an Amnesty International Briefing (see attached) entitled "Human rights in China - A New Step Backwards"

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(August 2001) which states:

"Developments in the human rights situation in China over the past few months represent a major set back for human rights and the "rule of law" and a new step backwards since the deterioration in human rights which started in late 1998."

"In 2001, the Chinese authorities have continued to show willingness to adhere on a pro forma level to the international human rights regime. At the same time, however, they have pursued domestic policies resulting in serious human rights violations on a large scale."

"A significant deterioration in the human rights situation in China is apparent, as evidenced by developments over the past few months," says Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office.

The most important developments listed by Amnesty International include:

- Record numbers of death sentences and executions, many believed to have been carried out after summary trials, as part of a newly intensified "strike hard" anti-crime campaign, since April 2001.
- Reports that the authorities are for the first time sanctioning widespread violence against members of the Falun Gong spiritual

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movement.

- A new wave of arrests and forcible repatriation of North Korean asylum seekers since June 2001 in violation of the principle of non-refoulement laid down in the 1951 Refugee Convention to which China is party.

In addition, new restrictions have been imposed on the media, and numerous incidents of arbitrary detention, torture and other human rights abuses have been reported across the country.

For further comment/background and interviews:

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Attachments: Amnesty International Open Letter to EU Leaders

Amnesty International Briefing: Human rights in China in 2001