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RUSSIAN FEDERATION: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UN COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

Amnesty International today urged the Russian Government to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Committee against Torture which on 12 November examined the second periodic report submitted by the Russian Federation.

Amnesty International had submitted its own report to the members of the Committee detailing its concerns about allegations of systematic and widespread use of torture and ill-treatment in Russia. The human rights organization also held a meeting with the Russian delegation in which measures planned by the authorities were discussed.

The findings of the Committee against Torture confirmed Amnesty International's concerns: soldiers have been brutalized by older soldiers in the army without the authorities taking appropriate remedial measures; the authorities have failed to establish an effective machinery for the prompt examination of prisoners' complaints; the process of harmonizing domestic legislation with human rights is progressing slowly; the police and prison personnel lack training; people facing extradition do not enjoy appropriate safeguards; the widespread reported abuses of human rights in the conflict in Chechnya, including torture, are not being investigated promptly and effectively.

Amnesty International strongly supports the recommendation of the Committee that the Russian Federation adopt a comprehensive action plan to stop torture. The plan includes:

- the criminalization of torture
- the expediting the process of training of personnel, including medical personnel, of all agencies engaged in the enforcement of the law and detention of prisoners;
- the adoption of programs to inform detainees and the public of their rights and the legal means to protect them;
- the establishment of an effective machinery to monitor the conditions under which investigations of crimes are conducted, the conditions under which persons are held in custody and conditions in prisons;
- the establishment of an appropriate process for the prompt investigation of complaints of suspects, detainees and prisoners and the prosecution of the offenders;
- the radical improvement of conditions in prisons;
- the abolition of acts, rules and regulations allowing remand in custody for longer than 48 hours without judicial authorization;
- the abolition of acts, rules and regulations limiting access to legal assistance; and
- the establishment of an independent Committee to investigate allegations of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment committed by the military forces of the Russian Federation and Chechen separatists with a view to bringing to justice those against whom there is evidence of their involvement or complicity in such acts.

ENDS/