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MEDIA ADVISORY

UN Torture Committee to review reports by Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

The Committee against Torture will review the periodic report of the Governments of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan during its forthcoming 23rd session. The meeting will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 8 to 19 November 1999.

The review of reports by the Committee provides a good opportunity for press discussion, both in national and international media, on the contents of the report, the questions posed by the Committee, the government's answers, and the Committee's recommendations.

The examination takes place in public, when the Committee poses questions to the government representatives and makes comments and conclusions about implementation of the Convention. Members of the public, the media and non-governmental organizations are allowed to attend but are not allowed to participate in the proceedings.

You can attend the examinations. Television cameras are allowed into the meeting rooms and experts and government representatives can be interviewed before and after the examination. If you are unable to attend, the UN issues press releases on the day of, or the day after, the session. These are available from the Secretary to the Committee or from the UN website.

As governments' reports can be subject to last minute changes and postponement, you are advised to be in close contact with the Secretary to the Committee in advance of the consideration. The secretary can be contacted at: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais Wilson, Geneva, Switzerland, tel: + 41 22 917 9316, fax: + 41 22 917 9002. Alternatively, you can check on the UN website at: <http://www.unhchr.ch>.

Additional information

The United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture) is an international human rights treaty aimed at protecting all person against torture and ill-treatment. Governments which ratify the Convention against Torture, referred to as "states parties", agree to be legally bound by its provisions and to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under their jurisdiction. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as a justification for torture.

States parties to the Convention against Torture also undertake to ensure that all acts of torture are offences under their criminal law. In addition, the Convention against Torture

provides for a system of universal jurisdiction which means that a state party is obliged to prosecute or extradite anyone on its territory alleged to have committed torture. States parties are not to expel, return or extradite a person to another state where there are substantial grounds for believing that s/he would be in danger of being subjected to torture. The Convention against Torture also obliges states parties to keep rules and methods of interrogation under systematic review, as well as to provide training and education regarding the prohibition of torture for law enforcement officials and others engaged in similar professions.

States parties to the Convention against Torture are to ensure that a victim of an act of torture obtains redress and has an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation.

Implementation of the Convention against Torture is overseen by a 10-member body of independent experts known as the Committee against Torture (the Committee).

As states parties to the Convention against Torture, the Governments of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are obliged to submit reports on the legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures undertaken to implement the provisions of the Convention.

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