

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

AI EU PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: IOR 61/001/2007 (Public)

Date: 11 January 2007

AMNESTY RECOMMENDATIONS TO GERMAN PRESIDENCY: GUANTANAMO ANNIVERSARY IS A GRIM REMINDER FOR EU TO CLARIFY RENDITIONS

Don't allow another Guantánamo anniversary to go by, says Amnesty International as it presents its recommendations to the German Presidency of the EU on the day that marks the fifth year since the infamous US prison was opened.

It took four years for the EU to ask for the closure of Guantánamo. Since it did so last year, it has not even repeated this call. Instead, it is now evident that some of the people held arbitrarily at the US base are there thanks to the help of EU Member States.

Disturbing evidence demonstrating the involvement of EU Member States in CIA extraordinary renditions is an even stronger reason why the EU has to ensure that those held unlawfully at Guantánamo and in secret prisons elsewhere receive a fair trial or are released.

The EU has not lived up to this challenge so far but over the next six months Germany can change this. Taking responsibility in relation to well-documented abductions involving German citizens would be a first step that would set a powerful example.

"I hope to receive clarifications from the German government as to what it is doing to prevent new CIA flights," said the Secretary-General of Amnesty International's German Section, Barbara Lochbihler, in Berlin, during a seminar on human rights policy of the EU.

In its recommendations to the new Presidency, Amnesty International highlights other key issues that it hopes the German Presidency will address in order to shape a coherent human rights policy for the EU:

- ensure that human rights are upheld rigorously in EU and Member States' counter-terrorism efforts;
- address the problematic human rights impact of the fight against irregular immigration;
- press Russia, China and the USA at the highest levels to remedy their human rights deficiencies and to fulfil their responsibilities in international affairs.
- further enhance the central role of human rights in conflict prevention and in the EU's crisis management operations.

- lead the EU to assume a strong, constructive role to advance global governance in the UN Human Rights Council and in the elaboration of an international arms trade treaty.

“This year’s 50th anniversary celebrations of the EU will fail to impress its citizens if the EU continues to apply double standards at home and in its external relations,” said Amnesty International’s EU Office Director, Dick Oosting in Berlin.

“The German presidency offers the EU a new chance to assume a leadership role in international human rights policy. We call on the German government to make a visible contribution towards the protection of human rights,” added Barbara Lochbihler.

For further comment/background and interviews:

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