

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

News Flash

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Russian Federation: Amnesty International expresses condolences

Moscow - Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan offered her condolences to all those who have suffered in the hostage-taking ordeal in Moscow, as she arrives in the city today.

"I would like to express my deepest condolences and sympathy to the relatives who have lost loved ones."

Amnesty International reiterates its fullest condemnation of the taking of hostages, which is a violation of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

Those responsible for the terrifying ordeal in the Moscow theatre must be held accountable for these violations of international humanitarian law, and also must be treated in full accordance with the law.

Amnesty International welcomed the statement made by President Vladimir Putin yesterday, in which he cautioned against a surge in anti-Chechen sentiment. The organization urged the Russian authorities to ensure that Chechen and other ethnic minorities are not victims of arbitrary treatment.

The operation for the release of the hostages carried out by Russian security forces was reportedly triggered by the execution of two hostages by the captors. A number of hostages appear to have died in the operation and the majority of the hostage takers were reportedly killed.

Irene Khan will be in Moscow between 26 October and 1 November. She will discuss human rights issues with representatives of the Russian government and NGO community. She will also meet victims of human rights violations. Ms Khan will hold a press conference on Tuesday 29 October at 1200 hrs, local time, at the Central House of Journalists, 8a Nikitskii Boulevard, Moscow 121019.

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