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EU/Russian Federation: Human rights must be the agenda

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On the eve of the new EU/Russian Federation summit Amnesty International is calling on the participants to put human rights on the top of their agenda.

Amnesty International members in Belgium are staging a demonstration on Monday afternoon to coincide with the talks Russian President Vladimir Putin is going to have with European Union leaders. A placard depicting Russian soldiers among the ruins of civilian building asks the question whether the European Union and the Russian Federation share the same values. Amnesty International appealed to EU leaders to break the silence on Chechnya in their talks with President Putin. "Both sides in the conflict commit atrocities, but it is of paramount importance that the EU confronts Russian policy on Chechnya," said Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office.

The organisation is deeply concerned about the effects of the backlash following last month's tragic events concerning the hostage crisis in Moscow and calls on the Russian authorities among other things to ensure the protection of civilian population from the impact of security force operations. (See **EU-PUTIN SUMMIT AND CHECHNYA: A TEST OF EU CREDIBILITY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGENT APPEAL**, available on www.amnesty-eu.org; (Russian translation - www.amnesty.org/russia/russian).

Background

Amnesty International has launched a worldwide campaign for justice for everybody in the Russian Federation exposing the vicious cycle of abuse and impunity which affects the basic rights of ordinary people throughout the country.

Presenting the Amnesty International's report Denial of Justice in Moscow, Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, said: "President Putin must show international political leadership and not commit the same mistakes of the USA by curtailing human rights in the name of combatting 'international terrorism'."

Amnesty International members around the globe -- from Japan in the east to Alaska in the west and from Iceland in the north to South Africa in the south have been staging events -- signing petitions, lighting candles, organising press conferences and lecture tours - to bring to the attention of ordinary

people, politicians and media to the climate of impunity in which human rights are violated in the Russian Federation, and to insist on accountability of the perpetrators.

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More information is available on our Russia campaign website at www.amnesty.org/russia

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