

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Open Letter

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EU-US Troika meeting: Concern about secret detention facilities and US practices of interrogation

Rt. Hon. Jack Straw
President of the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 10 November 2005

Dear Mr. Straw,

EU-US Troika meeting: Concern about secret detention facilities and US practices of interrogation

Prior to the upcoming EU-US Troika meeting, Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to its report which corroborates recent media coverage about secret detention facilities allegedly operated by the US Central Intelligence Agency. The report, *Secret Detention in CIA "Black Sites"*, describes how three Yemeni nationals were detained in secret locations where they were subjected to white noise and interrogated by English-speaking officials. These men "disappeared" from all registers and were kept in complete isolation without judicial review, notice to their family or contact with the outside world. Their testimonies suggest that the clandestine interrogation centres are not reserved solely for high-value detainees and may constitute a more comprehensive and better organised network than previously suspected.

The investigations carried out by Amnesty International suggest that several dozen individuals are being held in such a manner at other secret facilities in various countries, allegedly including Poland and Romania. The suggestion that such detention centres may exist in an EU member state or a candidate country raises very serious questions and should be investigated.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about the growing evidence that the United States, a key EU ally, could be operating secret detention facilities in complete disregard of international human rights standards and national jurisdiction. In this context, it is particularly disturbing to witness the current efforts of the Bush administration to obtain a legal exemption for the CIA to use interrogation methods prohibited under the Convention against Torture.

With reference to the EU Guidelines on torture, we call on you, to use the opportunity of the forthcoming EU-US Troika meeting to ensure that the US Government upholds its obligations under international law

and urgently clarifies the allegations concerning clandestine detention facilities.

Specifically, the US government should be asked to:

disclose the locations of extra-territorial detention centres and refrain from all secret and incommunicado detentions;
immediately halt all use of torture and ill-treatment of detainees;
either bring charges against the persons held in detention or release them immediately.

We look forward to hearing from you about the outcome of your talks on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Oosting
Director, Amnesty International EU Office

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