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News Flash

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USA: Statement by Irene Khan, Amnesty International Secretary General

I note with interest President Bush's statement that he is exploring all alternatives on Guantanamo and urge him to close the prison and charge the detainees under US law in US courts or release them, as this prison is a disgrace to American values and international law. He should order full disclosure of US policies and practices on detention and interrogation of prisoners and support a independent investigation into abuses. This would reassert the basic principles of justice, truth and freedom in which Americans take so much pride.

However President Bush's claim that prisoners at Guantanamo Bay "are being treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention" is belied by his own Executive Order of February 7, 2002 in which he ordered such treatment "to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity." The enormous loophole he authorized gave a green light for abuse, from the use of stress positions for up to twenty-hour hours to prolonged isolation, the use of dogs and sexual humiliation. To cite just one example, in December 2002 Donald Rumsfeld personally approved those unlawful techniques for use during interrogations at Guantanamo Bay. The President also denied prisoners a hearing on their status in front of a "competent tribunal" as required under Article 5 of the Third Geneva Convention.

Public Document

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