

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **UN Summit: Human rights betrayed by a failure of leadership**

Amnesty International condemns the apparent capitulation of world leaders to pressure from a small minority of states leading to the exclusion of almost all meaningful human rights reforms from debate at tomorrow's UN Summit in New York.

The proposed text on the Human Rights Council is woefully inadequate in failing to call for minimum elements essential for an improved and more authoritative human rights body. It offers people around the world little more than the discredited Commission on Human Rights with a different name.

"It is totally unacceptable that a small number of countries with deeply troubling human rights records led by China and Russia are being allowed to block the creation of a new, stronger, more effective and authoritative Human Rights Council. The United States of America and the United Kingdom also bear a particular responsibility by failing to stand up for a strong Human Rights Council at crucial moments in the negotiations," said Yvonne Terlingen, Amnesty International's UN representative.

Amnesty International appeals to all governments to put a credible human rights reform package before world leaders at tomorrow's Summit. The Summit must call for the creation of a Human Rights Council by a fixed date that will:

- meet regularly throughout the year
- have the mandate to address any matters relating to the protection and promotion of human rights
- regularly examine the human rights record of all countries and deal with urgent situations
- retain the unique rules and practices for participation by NGOs and its system of independent experts called Special Procedures.

The Outcome Document must also provide the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with the bare minimum of resources sufficient for the High Commissioner to fulfil her mandate. It must include a commitment to double the Office's resources from the regular budget over the next five years.

"If world leaders do nothing more than adopt a broad, vague text that defers all substantive decisions to the General Assembly, they will have squandered a historic opportunity. Such a damning failure of global leadership will cast a dark shadow over the whole summit and represent a betrayal of millions of the world's most vulnerable people," said Yvonne Terlingen.

#### **For further information please contact:**

Yvonne Terlingen,

Tel: +1 212 867 88 78 Ext. 2

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566  
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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