

News Service: 068/00

AI Index: EUR 46/26/00

11 April 2000

CHECHNYA: Amnesty International calls for an international inquiry

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, in a joint statement on Chechnya today, said that they *“firmly believe that only an international Commission of Investigation established by the United Nations will provide the necessary resources and strong guarantees for a thorough, independent and transparent process of systematic collection of evidence. It may also foster the important process of national investigations and prosecutions.”*

During a discussion on Chechnya at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva today most member governments expressed widespread support for a national commission of inquiry, led by the Russian government, into human rights violations in Chechnya.

“How can the international community have faith in a process such as a national inquiry led by Russian authorities when the government’s representative attacked, in an unprecedented manner, the methods used by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, Mary Robinson?” Amnesty International asked.

Vladimir Kalamanov, the special representative of the Russian President on human rights in Chechnya, at a press conference in Geneva today, stated that victims and witnesses of torture, including rape, by Russian forces in secret “filtration camps” in Chechnya interviewed by Amnesty International were “too stressed” and as a result were not credible.

/ENDS...

For further information please contact Amnesty International’s press office in London on 44 171 413 5566, or consult our web site <http://www.amnesty.org>.