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EU SUMMIT: ACKNOWLEDGE, REPAIR AND PREVENT CIA RENDITIONS

(Brussels, 20 June) As Heads of State and Government of the EU's 27 countries prepare to meet in Brussels to discuss treaty reform Amnesty International once again appeals for EU action in response to the serious accusations of complicity in illegal activities by several EU member states in the context of counter-terrorism.

"In trying to chart the EU's future, EU leaders cannot ignore this key issue which more than anything puts into question the EU's credibility. Today, when it criticizes human rights abuse in Russia or China the EU is reminded of European complicity in CIA renditions" says Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office.

New revelations of the existence of secret prisons in Romania and Poland by the Council of Europe are only the latest in a series of findings that over the past two years have seriously damaged the EU's credibility internationally as well as at home.

Recently Amnesty International together with other major human rights organizations released a report naming 39 men who remain missing and are believed to have been subjected to enforced disappearance by the US authorities. (*Off The Record – Secret CIA Detention* is available at web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-070607-features-eng)

The likelihood that EU member states were implicated in at least some of these cases is high. The likelihood that several of these men may have been detained and tortured on EU soil is also real in light of the Council of Europe's report.

And yet the response of EU leaders to these extraordinary facts has been silence. There has not been a single declaration of acknowledgement, or denial, for that matter. Instead, as findings pile up the debate is repeatedly turned to the issue of "proof".

"The debate on whether or not there is enough proof can go on indefinitely but it will not make this issue go away. The EU ought to look at Canada and the Maher Arar case and learn from a country that at least acknowledged the problem and took political responsibility", said Oosting.

"The grave nature of the accusations alone should be serious enough to engage EU political responsibility. Yet we are still waiting for one EU leader to stand up and say it *is* the EU's business to stop and prevent kidnapping, torture and disappearances in Europe" added Oosting.

In a letter to EU leaders (available at www.amnesty-eu.org) Amnesty International expressed its disappointment and concern for the lack of leadership to tackle this issue and called on the EU and its member states to:

- Ø Acknowledge its responsibilities;
- Ø Stop ongoing violations;
- Ø Ensure reparations to victims;
- Ø Bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations;
- Ø Prevent further serious breaches of human rights in the future.

**For further comment/background and interviews:
Amnesty International EU Office (Brussels)**

Tel: +32-2-5021499

Fax: +32-2-5025686

Email: AmnestyIntl@aieu.be

Web-site: <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>

Take action to stop secret CIA detention!

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/usa-070607-action-eng>
