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EU MUST PRESS FOR GUANTÁNAMO CLOSURE, SAYS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

For immediate release

(Brussels, 10 January 2006) The European Union must urge the US Government to close its detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, says Amnesty International, four years after the first prisoners were transferred to the naval base where hundreds continue to be detained without charge.

In an open letter (available at www.amnesty-eu.org), Amnesty International asked the Austrian Presidency of the EU to follow the steps of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and demand that the illegal detention centre is shut down.

“Four years are four years too many of a shameful legal black hole which has been tolerated by the EU” says Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International’s EU Office.

The human rights organisation has also presented new, corroborated testimonies, which confirm earlier reports of torture at Guantánamo Bay.

“We are hearing of abuses similar to those of Abu Ghraib and yet Guantánamo is not being condemned in the same way”, said Dick Oosting.

Amnesty International is concerned by the wider pattern of abuses committed in the name of the “war on terror”, of which Guantánamo Bay is just one part.

Given the recent disclosures of CIA activity in Europe, Amnesty International considers it urgent that the EU takes a stand on Guantánamo Bay.

For further comment/background and interviews:

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