

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL EU OFFICE

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2007 SHOWS EU IN DENIAL OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS

(Brussels, 23 May) Powerful governments and armed groups are deliberately fomenting fear to erode human rights and to create an increasingly polarized and dangerous world, said Amnesty International on the day it publishes its annual report on the state of human rights in the world. ([Link](#))

“Europe is by no means free of these problems and the EU has no cause for complacency”, said Dick Oosting, Amnesty International’s EU Office Director.

In 2006, violations continued across Europe particularly in the fields of counter-terrorism, racism and discrimination, and asylum and immigration. Significantly, with the exception of one country, all EU member states are included in this year’s report.

Five years after 9/11 Europe still has no proper answer to the challenge of fighting terrorism while respecting rights. The complicity of European states with CIA abductions and illegal extradition amounted to a breakdown of the rule of law in Europe.

“Almost as bad as allowing these acts to occur in Europe has been European governments’ failure to recognize them and to take measures to prevent such abuses from happening again”, said Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International’s EU Office.

“Europe betrays its values if it remains trapped in this denial. It has a leadership role to play but in order to set a credible example outside, it first needs to clean up its act at home,” he added.

Abusive practices in the fight against irregular immigration continued to be another major area of concern affecting many EU member states. The response has been disappointing, showing yet again a pattern of denial.

The lack of long-term sustainable solutions and the discourse of fear that dominates political agendas have led to disturbing manifestations of racism and discrimination in Europe. The current climate encourages the stigmatization of foreigners and suspicion of Muslims and members of other religious communities.

At the same time, it does not help improve the on-going discrimination towards Roma nor the current of homophobia that in some countries is present at the highest official level. Inability to solve these serious problems has in practice created thousands of “second class citizens” in Europe.

“Just as global warming requires global action based on international cooperation, the human rights meltdown can only be tackled through global solidarity and respect for international law” said Amnesty International’s Secretary General, Irene Khan, at the presentation of the Annual Report 2007.