

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: PRE 01/398/2009
18 November 2009

Afghanistan: President Karzai must commit to human rights

Amnesty International urges Afghanistan's newly re-elected President Hamid Karzai to prioritize human rights and the rule of law in his second term in order to strengthen the country's stability and security.

"Afghans from around the country continue to tell us that they suffer from poor governance, endemic corruption, a weak and inept justice system and lack of respect for human rights and rule of law," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific director. "All these factors weaken support for the government and its international allies."

Amnesty International noted that the recent presidential elections were marred by human rights abuses by the candidates as well as the Taliban's increasing attacks against civilians. The organization raised concerns that the upcoming parliamentary elections, currently scheduled for August or September 2010, faced potentially even greater human rights violations as well as Taliban violence.

"Government officials and parliamentarians suspected of serious human rights violations and war crimes are enjoying blatant impunity. Many are also widely believed to be involved in corruption and criminal activities, but are rarely held accountable," said Sam Zarifi.

"In order to rebuild the trust of the Afghan people and the international community, government officials and parliamentarians suspected of serious human rights violations must be kept out of the election process and held to account."