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MEDIA ADVISORY

GREAT LAKES REGION

Press Conference to launch a report on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): War Against Unarmed Civilians

International Press Club
Boulevard Charlemagne 1/53
1041 Brussels
Belgium
2pm local time, 23 November 1998

Amnesty International is launching a new report on the Great Lakes Region. In this report the organization addresses that all parties in the escalating conflict in the DRC are waging a war against civilians. "Thousands have been massacred and many others have "disappeared" or been abducted, tortured, raped or unlawfully detained since the outbreak of the recent fighting on 2 August."

The organization points out that almost nothing has been said or done about the atrocities inflicted on the unarmed civilian population despite the fact that, as one local activist puts it, "every hour a person is arrested, a person is illegally detained, a person is tortured, a person is raped".

The panel will include Philippe Hensmans, director of Amnesty International Francophone Belgian Section, Godfrey Byaruhanga, researcher on DRC, Alison Dilworth, researcher on Burundi, Guillaume Ngefa, president of *Association Africaine de Défense des Droits de l'Homme* (ASADHO), African Association for the Defence of Human Rights. Members of the panel will be available for one to one interviews after the press conference.

Amnesty International has regularly published documents regarding human rights abuses in the Great Lakes region in the past few months. The most recent one is *Burundi: Insurgency and counter-insurgency perpetuate human rights abuses* (AI Index: AFR 16/34/98), published on 18 November.

For more information on the press conference or on any Amnesty International documents related to the Great Lakes Region, please contact Marie Noel, from Amnesty International Francophone Belgian Section in Brussels on: 02 538 8177 or Amnesty International's Press Office in London on: 44. 171.413 5566/5831. Amnesty International has now an ISDN line for quality-studio radio interviews from their office in London, please phone for further details.