

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index EUR 30/002/2001 - News Service Nr. 120

Embargoed for : 17/07/2001 10:00 GMT

## **Italy: Policing of demonstrations during the Group of Eight (G8) Summit must respect human rights standards**

*Italian authorities should ensure that law enforcement officials engaged in policing operations at the G8 summit in Genoa next week, are aware of, and act at all times in accordance, with relevant international human rights and standards, Amnesty International said today.*

*These include:*

*International standards relating to the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials;*  
*the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly;*  
*the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, and*  
*the rights of people deprived of their liberty.*

*Amnesty International has been concerned about alleged human rights violations by law enforcement officials during recent demonstrations in Italy. Similar allegations have been made against law enforcement officials in several other countries in the context of demonstrations around inter-governmental meetings.*

*In a letter to the Italian Government last week, Amnesty International renewed the call it had addressed to the previous government in April 2001 for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate fully and impartially police tactics and behaviour during the mass demonstration which took place in Naples on 17 March 2001, during the Third Global Forum meeting.*

The Naples demonstration degenerated into violent clashes between groups of demonstrators and law enforcement officials, and resulted in injuries to both officers and demonstrators, as well as damage to property. However, numerous reports from various sources, including witness and victim accounts and photographic evidence, presented a disturbing picture of widespread abuses and violations of international human rights standards perpetrated against non-violent demonstrators and others by members of the State Police, *Carabinieri* and *Guardia di Finanza*.

Amnesty International's concern at the government's failure to establish an independent commission of inquiry, and to provide information on the progress of the administrative investigation into the Naples incidents, has been exacerbated by further allegations of the use of excessive force by law enforcement officials during a demonstration in the Port of Naples on 6 July 2001. The demonstration was connected to the presence in the port of the ship *European Vision*, prior to its departure for Genoa where it is destined to accommodate a number of G8 participants.

"Amnesty International does not condone violence aimed at police or property, nor does it oppose the lawful use of reasonable force by law enforcement officials. However, policing must be carried out in such a way as to protect the rights of people engaged in peaceful protest," the human rights organization said.

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Further information on Amnesty International's concerns on police response to demonstrations around international summits is available on the web:

Prague - at <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/eur710012001>.

Davos - at <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/eur430022001>

Quebec - at <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/eur200032001>

Naples - at <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/eur300012001>

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