

## **Public Statement**

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### **Italy: Alleged human rights violations during the G8 policing operation in Genoa require an independent public commission of inquiry**

*Amnesty International is renewing its call for the establishment of an independent and comprehensive commission of inquiry into allegations of human rights violations during the G8 policing operation and the conduct of law enforcement and prison officers.*

*The fact-finding parliamentary committee established in August to examine events occurring in the context of the G8 summit in Genoa in July ended in disagreement and acrimony between committee members. Committee members representing the opposition parties in parliament have refused to endorse the text of a report drawn up by the Committee's president, a member of one of the government coalition parties.*

*On Friday, 14 September, after a majority of the Committee indicated support for the president's text, it was passed on to the Constitutional Affairs Committees of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies which are expected to consider it and submit their evaluations to the speakers of both chambers by Thursday, 20 September. However, committee members representing opposition parties have indicated that they will be submitting their own alternative reports to these committees and/or calling for the establishment of an ad-hoc parliamentary commission of inquiry with judicial powers.*

*Given these circumstances, Amnesty International believes the victims of alleged human rights violations during the G8 policing operation, law enforcement and prison officers involved in the policing operation and the general public can have little confidence in the impartiality of reports produced by members of the parliamentary fact-finding committee.*

*In its July letter to the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Amnesty International set out some of the criteria which should inform the establishment of such a commission:*

- it should comprise people of acknowledged probity and impartiality;
- its scope, methods and findings should be made public;
- it should be given jurisdiction to take evidence from victims of alleged human rights violations and that such people be protected against harassment and intimidation;
- it should be empowered to summons and take evidence from law enforcement and prison officers as well as relevant administrators, and to subpoena evidence and records;
- it should file interim reports to facilitate the prompt initiation of any appropriate criminal or disciplinary proceedings, identifying specific instances and individuals whenever possible. AI pointed out that these reports should also facilitate prompt amendments to regulations, laws, training and procedures relevant to law enforcement and prison officers;
- it should be given the authority to recommend that criminal prosecutions or disciplinary proceedings be brought against any officers against whom there is substantive evidence that they have engaged in torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or used excessive force.

In the course of its work -- that included detailed public questioning of a number of key actors in the G8 Genoa policing operation -- the parliamentary fact-finding committee elicited and collected a large amount of valuable information. This should usefully inform any further commission of inquiry.

## **Background**

On 1 August 2001 the Italian parliament, via the Constitutional Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, opted for the establishment of a fact-finding committee to examine events occurring in the context of the G8 summit in Genova in July, including alleged human rights violations by law enforcement and prison officers, rejecting the option of an ad-hoc parliamentary commission of inquiry with full judicial powers.

The fact-finding committee of 36 members, composed of 18 Deputies and 18 Senators, represented the parliamentary political groupings on a proportional basis: its president a deputy from the *Forza Italia*/Come on Italy

party (part of the current coalition government); its two vice-presidents drawn from the *Democratici di Sinistra-Ulivo*/Democrats of the Left/Olive Tree grouping (part of the parliamentary opposition) and *Alleanza Nazionale*/National Alliance (part of the current coalition government).

In the course of its work the Committee interviewed some 40 people, including high-ranking law enforcement and prison officials, current and former government ministers, representatives of local government, of the Genoa Social Forum and the media. It also collected official written reports and relevant documentation, some of it on a confidential basis, and viewed dozens of films and videos.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566. For previous press releases please visit:

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR300022001?OpenDocument>,

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR300042001?OpenDocument> and

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR300062001?OpenDocument>.

The external document: *Italy-Letters to the Italian government* from 3 August is available from:

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR300082001?OpenDocument>

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