

Amnesty International

*Oral statement on the outcome on the United Kingdom under the
Universal Periodic Review*

*10 June 2008
Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes many of the recommendations made by states to the United Kingdom, including the call to review all counter-terrorism legislation to ensure that it complies with the highest human rights standards; to reduce, rather than extend still further, the maximum period of pre-charge detention for terrorism suspects; and to recognize that all persons arrested or detained by UK armed forces, wherever and whenever that may be, should be entitled to the full protection of the human rights instruments to which the UK is a party.

Given the prominence of the issue of counter-terrorism in the interactive dialogue, it is surprising that recommendations did not more specifically refer to the UK's reliance on so-called 'diplomatic assurances' to facilitate the return of individuals to states where they face a risk of grave human rights violations, including torture or other ill-treatment. Amnesty International believes that the use of such assurances undermines the absolute prohibition of torture and has urged the UK and others not to rely on such assurances.

Amnesty International would also like to take this opportunity to call on the UK to carry out effective, independent and impartial investigations into incidents where the actions of the police and other state agents may have led to violations of the right to life or of the right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International is particularly concerned at the longstanding failure to instigate a genuinely independent investigation into the killing of human rights lawyer Patrick Finucane in Northern Ireland in 1989. Amnesty International urges the government to commit to repealing the Inquiries Act 2005 and to creating, in its place, a genuinely independent mechanism for judicial inquiries into serious allegations of human rights violations.

Thank you Mr. President.

MORE INFORMATION

- See a representative from Amnesty International deliver this statement at the Human Rights Council. Watch the video on:
<rtsp://webcast.un.org/ondemand/conferences/unhrc/eighth/hrc080610am2-eng.rm?start=00:16:24&end=00:18:34>
(UN webcast - www.un.org)
- This oral statement is based on a written statement prepared by Amnesty International to the 8th session of the Human Rights Council. See the statement at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR45/009/2008/en>