

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **USA: Amnesty International concerned at use of tasers in Florida**

Amnesty International is deeply disturbed by video footage showing a student being tasered by police during a meeting held by US Senator John Kerry at the University of Florida yesterday.

The video footage shows Andrew Meyer, 21, being escorted out of the meeting by police after continuing to pose questions to the senator after his time to do so had run out. As he resisted police attempts to remove him, and with one arm already handcuffed, police shocked him as he lay on the ground.

The organization believes that the use of a taser against a non-violent protester who was not posing a threat to himself or others, constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. International standards on the use of force stipulate that officers should apply only the minimum amount of force necessary to obtain a lawful objective, and that all use of force should be proportionate to the threat posed and designed to avoid unwarranted injury or pain.

Amnesty International has consistently raised concern about the use of tasers in the US in routine law enforcement situations, including in some instances, as a weapon of first resort. Electro-shock weapons, which can inflict severe pain at the push of a button, are easy to misuse. There has also been concern about the safety of such weapons and deaths following taser use. Amnesty International has called on police departments to suspend use of tasers or to limit their use to situations involving the threat of death or serious injury, in which officers might otherwise resort to firearms.

#### **Background Information**

Tasers are hand-held electro-shock weapons which fire two barbed darts at a target causing instant incapacitation by delivering a 50,000 volt five-second shock. The weapons can also be applied close-up as "touch" stun guns.