

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

26 March 2014

At today's Summit, EU-US special relationship must put human rights first

At today's Summit, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (US) must put human rights at the centre of their dialogue and action. The EU-US summit represents a crucial opportunity for both sides to explicitly address several key issues of cooperation in relation to their human rights records.

Shared responsibility on closure of Guantánamo and on CIA-led renditions

In June 2009, the EU and the US made a landmark joint statement on the closure of Guantánamo¹; and the EU and member states committed to assist the US by agreeing to receive certain detainees in Europe. Since then, there has been little progress. Five years later, the detention facility is still open, with more than 150 detainees, the majority held without charge or trial.

In his State of the Union address on 28 January 2014, President Obama urged Congress to make 2014 the year "we close the prison at Guantánamo Bay". The EU and its member states should consider again how they can concretely assist the US in this effort. The special relationship between the EU and the US should not trump their shared duty to protect human rights on and beyond their own soil.

At today's summit, Amnesty International urges the EU and the US to uphold their joint commitment to close the Guantánamo detention facility and to discuss concrete next steps, including ensuring accountability and remedy, as well as resettlement of non-European detainees due to be released from Guantanamo who cannot be repatriated to their home states because of the risk of torture or death penalty.

In parallel, EU member states overall have failed to fully investigate alleged human rights violations that have occurred on EU soil as part of the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-led rendition and secret detention programmes.

Despite allegations by several current Guantánamo detainees and others that they were subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in secret detention centres on EU soil, member states' governments have dragged their heels over investigations or refused to hold them at all. This is despite repeated calls for action by the EU's own Parliament (EP)² and credible and mounting evidence of such complicity. With full and proactive cooperation from the US, EU member states must conduct full and impartial human

¹ "Joint Statement of the European Union and its Member States and the United States of America on the Closure of the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility and Future Counterterrorism Cooperation, based on Shared Values, International Law, and Respect for the Rule of Law and Human Rights," 15 June 2009.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/108455.pdf

² "Report on alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA," 2 August 2012. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2012-0266+0+DOC+PDF+VO//EN> ; "European Parliament resolution of 10 October 2013 on alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA," (2013/2702(RSP)).

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2013-0418&language=EN&ring=P7-RC-2013-0378>.

rights-compliant inquiries into allegations of secret detention on EU territory, including in Poland, Lithuania and Romania.

Use of armed drones in targeted killings

Amnesty International also urges the EU and the US to explicitly address US and EU member state responsibilities to uphold human rights in the disclosure about use of armed drones. Amnesty International has urged the US to ensure independent, impartial investigations into credible reports of potentially unlawful deaths from US drone strikes, including killings documented in its report, *'Will I Be Next?' US Drone Strikes In Pakistan*.

To date, the US administration's refusal to acknowledge and fully investigate these cases suggests that secrecy and a lack of accountability will continue to characterise US drone policy. This runs counter to US obligations under international law, and sets a dangerous example on the question of accountability for potentially unlawful killings. On 27 February, the EP passed a resolution with a clear majority on the use of drones, calling for "the EU to develop an appropriate policy response at both European and global level which upholds human rights and international humanitarian law."³ Both the EU and the US must take concrete next steps to achieve this end.

Cooperation to combat the proliferation of conflict minerals

The global nature of modern supply chains means that natural resources that have funded or fuelled some of the world's most brutal conflicts and serious human rights violations are bought and traded internationally, including by EU and US companies. Significant progress has been made in developing laws and standards to regulate the trade in conflict minerals, both at the national and international level. It is vital that the EU and the US do not backtrack on this progress and cooperate to combat the proliferation of conflict minerals.

The size of their markets means that the EU and the US are well placed to influence global supply chains and promote transparent and responsible sourcing in other jurisdictions. The impact of Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Act demonstrates that legislation is required to get companies to take steps towards more responsible supply chains. Amnesty International urges the EU and the US to promote and enforce existing international standards on supply chain due diligence in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law to ensure that businesses operating within their jurisdiction are not causing or contributing to human rights abuses, directly or indirectly, through their business activities.

President Obama's visit to Brussels and today's summit is a real opportunity for the EU and the US to proactively engage in prioritising human rights in all decision-making and to uphold their commitments as credible human rights actors on the global stage.

³ European Parliament resolution on the use of armed drones (2014/2567(RSP)), 27 February 2014.
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2014-0201&language=EN>