

11 January 2008

**Amnesty International EU Office  
Statement on the sixth anniversary of the opening of the Guantánamo detention centre**

**Guantánamo: six years on, the human rights scandal continues**

Six years ago today, the US authorities transferred the first 'war on terror' detainees to the detention centre at Guantánamo Bay. To mark the occasion Amnesty International delivered to the US government over 1,100 signatures from parliamentarians in Europe and around the world calling for the closure of the detention facility. The closure of Guantánamo is a crucial step to end the wider use of unlawful detention practices in the war on terror.

It was not until the EU-US Summit in 2006 that the EU first conveyed to the US that it should close the Guantánamo detention centre as soon as possible. Senior figures in the US administration, including President George W. Bush himself, have since stated that they too consider this desirable. However, despite these declarations and the widespread international condemnation, hundreds of people remain locked up without charge or trial in the legal black hole of Guantánamo. What is more, five new detainees were even transferred there in the course of 2007.

Amnesty International has consistently condemned acts of terrorism that have left thousands of civilians dead or maimed. However real security from terrorist attacks can only be achieved through strengthening the human rights framework, not through undermining it by resorting to unlawful practices.

While it is clearly the responsibility of the US administration to find a solution to the closure of Guantánamo that is in full compliance with international human rights law and standards, many countries, including EU Member States, have been involved in the transfer of prisoners to Guantánamo.

Amnesty International therefore calls on the EU and its Member States to:

- increase pressure on the US to close down Guantánamo and end all unlawful detention practices;
- offer the necessary support in bringing about the fair trial or release of detainees, including by considering favourably the resettlement of detainees that cannot be returned to a safe country. Released detainees must not be forcibly sent to any country where they may face serious human rights abuses, including torture or other ill-treatment; and
- acknowledge and address European complicity in the human rights violations committed in the context of the US-led rendition programme.

**For further comment/background and interviews:**

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