

Federica Mogherini  
EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Vice President of the European Commission  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**European Institutions Office**

Brussels, 15 April 2015

Our Ref: B1675

Dear High Representative Mogherini,

### **THE EU NEEDS TO ACT NOW TO BREAK THE SILENCE ON TORTURE IN UZBEKISTAN**

I am writing to you about Amnesty International's concerns on human rights in Uzbekistan and to ask you to schedule a Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) discussion and conclusions on Uzbekistan.

Today, we publish our report [\*Secrets and lies: Forced confessions under torture in Uzbekistan\*](#) (enclosed with this letter), which exposes the vast extent of torture carried out by security forces. It provides critical new information about torture practices, unfair criminal trials and other ongoing human rights violations perpetrated by the Uzbekistani government and its agents, and updates key cases and concerns that Amnesty International has documented since 1992.

Despite systematic and brazen denials by the Uzbekistani authorities, torture and other ill-treatment are persistent and endemic in the country; security forces and prison guards routinely commit violations during arrests and transfers to detention facilities, in police custody, pre-trial detention and in prisons. Amnesty International's research shows that torture and other ill-treatment continue to be used to extract confessions and other incriminating information and to intimidate and punish detainees and their families. Those at particular risk include individuals perceived by the authorities as a threat to national security, including human rights defenders.

Following the mass killings in Andizhan in May 2005, human rights benchmarks were established and the human rights situation was assessed annually by EU foreign ministers. The last FAC conclusions on Uzbekistan, adopted on 27 October 2010, stressed that the EU "remains seriously concerned by the overall situation regarding human rights, democratisation and the rule of law in Uzbekistan and by the lack of substantial progress" and underlined that "the depth and quality of the cooperation and dialogue at all levels continue to depend on Uzbek reforms and progress in the areas mentioned above". The conclusions also contained the commitment to "continue to follow the situation in Uzbekistan closely".

Despite this assurance, no further discussion on Uzbekistan has taken place between EU foreign ministers since 2010 and there have been no further FAC conclusions adopted. Given the continuing extensive violations in the country, the lack of any progress on the ground since 2010, the failure of the EU-Central Asia Strategy review process to adequately prioritise human rights change, and the upcoming tenth anniversary of the Andizhan mass killings, we believe it is high time human rights in one of the most repressive and authoritarian states in the world are put back on the agenda of the FAC.

Specific recommendations to the EU and the Uzbekistani government can be found at the end of the report. We look forward to your reply and stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Ivorna McGowan

Director of Programmes  
Acting Director