

Dimitrij Rupel
President of the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 20 June 2008
Our Ref: B786

Dear Mr. Rupel,

Subject: EU-Russia Summit in Hanti-Mansijsk on 26-27 June 2008

In light of the upcoming EU-Russia Summit, Amnesty International has prepared the attached briefing highlighting our main human rights concerns in the Russian Federation.

We call on the EU Presidency to ensure that the issues discussed at the recent EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations are also raised at the highest level during the EU-Russia Summit, mainly the right to freedom of expression and the human rights situation in the North Caucasus. The EU should urge President Medvedev to reaffirm his commitment, upon becoming president of the Russian Federation, that human rights and freedoms will be honoured and protected.

In the briefing, Amnesty International expresses its concerns over the decline of the space for freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly, the ongoing human rights crisis in the North Caucasus, the continuing increase in violent racism, the alleged use of torture and ill-treatment in police custody, the repeated instances of *refoulement* and the failure to address the problem of domestic violence.

Amnesty International is specifically concerned about the crisis in the North Caucasus. Human rights violations such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary and secret detention continue to be reported in several regions of the North Caucasus, such as Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and North Ossetia, while impunity for these violations remains entrenched. Human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists working in the North Caucasus are subjected to threats, harassment and sometimes even enforced disappearances.

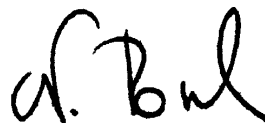
Amnesty International calls on the EU to remind President Medvedev about the obligations Russia took on as a party to international human rights treaties, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and to urge him to ensure steps are taken for the full abolition of the death penalty in law as well as to facilitate the full implementation of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.

We look forward to hearing from you as to the outcome of your discussions with your Russian counterparts.

Yours sincerely,



Nicolas Beger
Director
Amnesty International EU Office



Nataša Posel
Director
Amnesty International Slovenia

Attached: EU-Russia Summit: a briefing on current human rights concerns, June 2008