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**GEORGIA: GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD IMPLEMENT  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

The Georgian Government should implement promptly the recommendations of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee, Amnesty International said today.

The Committee reviewed Georgia's initial report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in New York last month, and issued its concluding observations on 11 April. Amnesty International had submitted its own reports to members of the Committee, detailing its concerns, among other things, about the use of the death penalty, reports of persistent and widespread use of torture and ill-treatment, alleged unfair trials for political prisoners, and poor prison conditions.

"While we welcome Georgia's acknowledgement of shortcomings, we strongly urge the government to move now from such admissions to taking concrete steps to improve its human rights record," Amnesty International said.

Reviewing its findings the Human Rights Committee said that it is deeply concerned by cases of torture inflicted on detainees, including for the purpose of extracting confessions. It deplores the fact that such acts usually go unpunished, causing a lack of confidence in the authorities which deters victims from lodging complaints.

The Committee is also deeply concerned at prison conditions it describes as "disastrous", and stresses that Georgia is not complying with Article 10 of the ICCPR which stipulates that all detained persons should be treated with dignity and respect. The Committee in addition notes with disquiet that court proceedings in Georgia do not meet the fair trial conditions laid down in Article 14 of the ICCPR, in particular with respect to access by a defence counsel and the right of those sentenced to death to have the case reviewed by a higher court.

Amnesty International supports the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee, which include filling the post of human rights Ombudsman as soon as possible; continuing the moratorium on executions and other efforts towards abolition of the death penalty; undertaking systematic and impartial investigations of all complaints of torture and ill-treatment, with those responsible brought to justice and the victims compensated; systematically excluding confessions obtained under duress from judicial proceedings and, given Georgia's admission that torture had been widespread in the past, reviewing all convictions based on confessions allegedly extracted under torture; and taking urgent steps to improve prison conditions.

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