

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Afghanistan: NATO must ensure justice for victims of civilian deaths and torture**

NATO leaders must set up a joint body, together with partners in Afghanistan, to pursue justice for civilians whose human rights may have been violated by the NATO-led International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, said Amnesty International ahead of the NATO summit in Riga, Latvia on 28/29 November.

Amnesty International is concerned that the legal basis for the presence of ISAF in the country places it outside Afghan law and beyond the effective reach of justice in members' own countries.

"ISAF has a crucial role to play in securing the rule of law in Afghanistan. We urge NATO leaders to ensure that ISAF does not fall short of international humanitarian and human rights law in pursuing this aim," said Tim Parritt, Deputy Asia Pacific Director at Amnesty International.

"Any civilians who may have suffered human rights violations in the course of ISAF operations deserve to receive justice and we call on NATO to lead the establishment of a body to investigate such claims, ensure the prosecution of those found responsible, and ensure reparation for the victims."

Amnesty International is particularly concerned that:

Aerial bombardments carried out as part of ISAF military operations have resulted in the killing of civilians, according to reports. These attacks may have failed to discriminate between civilians and military targets.

These operations have also contributed to the displacement of up to 90,000 people who have fled their homes because of the violence.

Detention procedures currently used by ISAF may be resulting in the torture or ill-treatment of Afghan nationals who are handed over to Afghan security forces known to use such practices.

NATO should create a joint body together with its Afghan partners and the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) to pursue justice for human rights violations such as these. The body could draw on the Trust Fund called for in UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001) to make any reparations to victims.

NATO members should ensure that ISAF complies fully with international law in the course of its

operations and should cooperate with UNAMA and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in doing this. ISAF should pay particular attention to its arrest and detention procedures, including the handing over of detainees to Afghan custody.

Amnesty International has for many years raised concerns about the use of torture and ill-treatment by Afghan security forces, including the National Security Directorate.

For more information, please see: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110202006>

Public Document

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