

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: EUR 05/002/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 121
16 May 2003

Albania and Macedonia should reject impunity agreements on the International Criminal Court

Amnesty International today urged Albania and Macedonia not to bow to US pressure and reject impunity agreements on the International Criminal Court.

On 2 May, the Albanian government signed a bilateral impunity agreement with the United States of America. Meanwhile, the Macedonian government is reportedly under pressure from the USA to enter into a similar agreement committing it not to surrender US nationals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes to the new International Criminal Court (ICC).

Amnesty International urged the Albanian parliament not to ratify the agreement, and called on the Macedonian government not to bow to pressure from the USA.

"No one, regardless of their nationality, should enjoy impunity for the worst crimes known to humanity," Amnesty International said.

"These agreements are illegal as they violate the obligations of all states to ensure that people responsible for these crimes, as the most serious crimes under international law, are brought to justice."

Amnesty International reminds the Albanian parliament and the Macedonian authorities that the guiding principles of the European Union state: "[e]ntering into US agreements - as presently drafted - would be inconsistent with ICC States Parties' obligations with regard to the ICC Statute ..."

"The USA is demanding that any person accused of these crimes should be returned to the USA, without any commitment that they will be prosecuted by US courts and without any recourse if US courts fail to fulfil their responsibilities," Amnesty International said.

"In fact, in many cases US courts will not be able to do so as US law does not include many of the crimes under international law as defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This goes against the EU guiding principles, which state that there should be "no impunity" from international justice."

Background

The US initiative is part of its worldwide campaign to undermine the International Criminal Court and ensure impunity for US nationals. In many cases, the USA is threatening to withdraw military assistance

unless governments sign such agreements. As of 13 May 2003, only 28 states have signed impunity agreements and parliaments in only two states have approved ratification of impunity agreements.

Both Albania and Macedonia are state parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which has been ratified by 89 states.

The International Criminal Court is in the process of being established and will become operational later this year.

Public Document

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