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## **Czech Republic: UN Committee against Torture's conclusions and recommendations**

The conclusions and recommendations of the United Nations Committee against Torture confirm our own findings and recommendations to the Czech authorities, Amnesty International said today.

"We urge the Czech authorities to implement the Committee's recommendations as a matter of urgency," the organization added.

In March 2001 Amnesty International called on the Czech authorities to take steps to ensure that law enforcement officials respect the rights of people deprived of their liberty and to put in place a system for the prompt and impartial investigation of all complaints of torture and ill-treatment.

At the time, the Czech Minister of the Interior declined Amnesty International's invitation to discuss its concerns that Czech police might have violated the rights of hundreds of people detained in Prague following protests against the IMF/World Bank meeting in September 2000. Two months later, the organization has still not received any official acknowledgement from the Czech authorities that they are seriously considering its report.

"We hope that, in the light of the Committee's conclusions, the Czech authorities will finally give serious consideration to our concerns about allegations of torture and ill-treatment and their apparent failure to thoroughly investigate them," Amnesty International said.

In its recommendations -- adopted on 14 May after considering the second report submitted by the Czech Republic -- the Committee instructed the Czech authorities to:

- ensure the independence and thoroughness of investigations of all allegations of ill-treatment in general, and in connection with the IMF/World Bank meeting in September 2001 in particular, and to include in their next periodic report to the Committee information on the findings and measures taken, including prosecutions and compensation to victims;

- ensure the independence of investigations into offences committed by law enforcement officials by introducing external control mechanisms;

- ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty be guaranteed the right to notify a close relative or third party of their choice, to have immediate access to a lawyer of their choice, and to have access to a doctor of their choice in addition to any medical examination carried out by police authorities;

The Committee further expressed concern, *inter alia*, about:

- instances of racism and xenophobia in society, including the increase in racially motivated violence against minority groups, as well as the increase in groups advocating such conduct;

- continuing incidents of discrimination against Roma, including by local officials, and particularly about reports of degrading treatment by the police of members of minority groups, and continuing reports of violent attacks against Roma;

- the alleged failure on the part of police and judicial authorities to provide adequate protection to the victims and to investigate and prosecute racially motivated crimes;

- the lenient treatment of perpetrators of such crimes;

- the lack of legal regulation of external inspections of the prison system, and in particular about the legal provisions on civil inspection having been rescinded without replacement during the period under review, and the lack of effective mechanisms for processing prisoners' complaints;

- inter-prisoner violence and bullying in various institutions -- including prisons, the army and educational institutions -- as well as the presence of male guards in women's prisons where this may lead to an abuse of their authority.

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