

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

AI Index: EUR 15/012/2002 (Public)
News Service No: 174
3 October 2002

Embargo Date: 3 October 2002 05:00 GMT

Bulgaria: Systematic discrimination against people with mental disabilities

"This place is not for human beings. You should close it down. People die here." Resident of a social care home for adults in Bulgaria

The high number of deaths in Bulgarian social care homes testify to medical neglect and a lack of food and warmth. Residents may be physically restrained with chains or straitjackets, or secluded in a small room or a cage for an indefinite period.

In her first trip to the region as Secretary General of Amnesty International, Irene Khan will visit Sofia to launch Amnesty International's report that describes the shocking conditions in Bulgaria's social care homes for people with mental disabilities.

The report *"Bulgaria: Far from the eyes of society. Systematic discrimination against people with mental disabilities"* will be presented at an international forum jointly organized by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International.

Hotel Rodina,
8 bul. "Totleben". 1606 Sofia,
10 October 2002
Media presentation of report: 9:30 - 11:30
Journalists are welcome to attend the forum.

Representatives of the Bulgarian authorities, foreign governments, international organizations and national and international NGOs will attend the International Forum on Discrimination of People with Mental Disabilities.

To see the program for the international forum, please visit
<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/eur150112002>

Amnesty International has produced a 20-minute documentary with a 5-minute B-roll illustrating this issue.

For more information or accreditation to the Forum, please contact:

Amnesty International -- Judit Arenas on + 44 7778 472 188. She can also arrange interviews with Irene Khan and provide advance copies of the report or the video.

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee -- Desislava Simeonova on + 35 92 943 4876 or +35 92 944 0670.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

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