

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

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Amnesty International's Secretary General to lead delegation to Middle East 2 - 11 December

Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, is to lead a mission to Lebanon and Israel and the Occupied Territories (including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) to discuss human rights issues with members of the government and civil society.

Announcing the mission, Irene Khan said: "This visit comes at a critical time where principled leadership is of the utmost importance.

"During this climate of heightened tensions in Lebanon there is a risk that human rights could be trampled.

"The conflict in Israel and the Occupied Territories is one of the most entrenched in the world: following the recent violence in Gaza, a fragile cease-fire has created a small opening for leaders to review their strategies and find a way forward.

"As European governments prepare to discuss this conflict at the European Summit on 15 December, Amnesty International is calling for urgent attention to the long-standing human rights concerns."

Itinerary:

Sunday 3 December SOUTHERN LEBANON

The delegation will visit Southern Lebanon to hear from victims and survivors about the impact on civilians of the recent conflict with Israel.

Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 December BEIRUT

Whilst in Beirut the delegation will meet with President Emile Lahoud, President of the Council of Ministers Fouad Siniora and other government Ministers.

On Monday at 17:00 hrs, Ms Khan will deliver a lecture entitled "Confronting today's human rights challenges" at the American University of Beirut (Auditorium B, West Hall).

Wednesday 6 December ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The delegation will visit Sderot to hear from Israeli civilians affected by rocket-firing from Gaza and from Palestinians living under siege in Hebron.

Thursday 7 December JERUSALEM

Amnesty International has requested meetings with the Israeli Prime Minister and other senior government officials and Members of the Knesset, which are awaiting confirmation.

The delegation will visit a bilingual school where Israeli-Arab and Jewish children study together, to see the implementation of the "children to children" human rights education programme of AI Israel.

Friday 8 and Saturday 9 December GAZA STRIP AND WEST BANK

The delegation will visit Beit Hanun and other places to hear about the effects on civilians of Israeli attacks and blockades in the Occupied Territories.

Sunday 10 December WEST BANK AND JERUSALEM

Amnesty International's Secretary General will mark 2006 International Human Rights Day by visiting the fence/wall.

Later that same day, Amnesty International will meet the Israeli human rights community.

Monday 11 December RAMALLAH AND JERUSALEM

Whilst in Ramallah, Amnesty International will meet with representatives of civil society. A meeting has been sought with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority and is awaiting confirmation.

Please note that Amnesty International can make available high resolution photographs for print media and footage for broadcasters.

For further information or to arrange an interview with Irene Khan, please call:

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