

20 March 2009

Human Rights Council  
Tenth Session

Item 6  
"Consideration of UPR reports"

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International on Uzbekistan

Mr President,

Amnesty International welcomes Uzbekistan's stated support of recommendations by several states to establish a national independent mechanism to monitor all places of detention and to consider complaints.<sup>1</sup> In our view, and as recommended by several UN mechanisms, such a mechanism would significantly contribute towards protecting individuals deprived of their liberty from torture or other ill-treatment.

Amnesty International is dismayed, however, that Uzbekistan considers as inconsistent with its obligations under international human rights standards calls by several states to establish an independent international investigation into the events of May 2005 when hundreds of individuals, including women and children, were killed when security forces opened fire on mostly unarmed demonstrators gathered in the centre of Andizhan, and as they subsequently fled. During the interactive dialogue, Uzbekistan rejected as "unfounded" reports that excessive and disproportionate force had been used. Referring to visits by EU experts in 2006 and 2007 related to these events, the government stated that it considered the issue as closed. Amnesty International takes this opportunity to reiterate its belief that these visits do not constitute an international investigation which we consider should be urgently undertaken in accordance with Uzbekistan's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>2</sup>

Mr President,

Amnesty International also urges Uzbekistan to reconsider its rejection of recommendations by several states to release all detained human rights defenders.<sup>3</sup> According to information available to Amnesty International, at least 10 human rights defenders remain in prison and those released in 2008 were not freed unconditionally.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/10/83, paragraph 104, sub-paragraphs 11 and 12.

<sup>2</sup> As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Uzbekistan is obliged, including under Article 2(3), to ensure an independent, impartial and thorough investigation into the events of May 2005. In its General Comment 31 of 29 March 2004, the Human Rights Committee noted that failure to do so "could of itself give rise to a separate breach of the Covenant" (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13).

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/10/83, paragraph 107.

Only last month, a human rights defender was detained on charges which appear to be politically motivated. Amnesty International urges Uzbekistan to ensure that everyone, including human rights defenders, can peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression in conformity with Uzbekistan's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.