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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

PRESS RELEASE

August 15, 2006

Amnesty International Seeks Information About "Ghost" Detainees and Secret Detention Sites Under FOIA

Group Partnering with Others to Get Answers

(Washington, DC) -- Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Amnesty International and the International Human Rights Clinic of New York University School of Law jointly submitted requests to various federal departments for records concerning "disappeared" detainees including "ghost" and unregistered prisoners. These detainees are individuals who are -- or have been -- held by, or with the involvement of

the United States government, where there is no public record of the detentions. Such individuals have also often been subjected to the practice commonly known as extraordinary rendition.

"Despite the evidence of secret sites and unlawful rendition of suspects that Amnesty International, other NGOs and the media have uncovered, the United States government has 'so far' declined to discuss that such a program exists," said Curt Goering, Senior Deputy Executive Director for Amnesty International USA. "In addition, they decline to discuss secret detention and the existence of 'black sites.' How many more former detainees' testimonials, breaking stories and U.N. condemnations will it take for the United States to end its worst practices and abide by the rule of law?"

The FOIA requests were filed earlier this year to the U.S. Departments of Justice, Defense, State, Homeland Security and the Central Intelligence Agency. Several responses have been received, but they have provided very little information.

"We are certain that more records exist, and we hope that all agencies involved will disclose the documents they hold," said Margaret L. Satterthwaite, Assistant Professor of Clinical Law at New York University School of Law and Amnesty International Board member. "It is a violation of human rights to withhold information about the fate and whereabouts of individuals deprived of their liberty. These FOIA requests are an attempt to end that part of the violation and to force the U.S.

government to fully own up to its illegal actions."

While Amnesty International has not yet received substantive replies from all agencies with whom it filed FOIA requests, from past experience, Amnesty International expects to encounter resistance in receiving all the information requested from the U.S. government agencies.

"We are hopeful that it will not be necessary to take legal action, however, the United States' continued defiance in not providing the truth may not leave us any other option," said Goering.

Amnesty International is represented in this matter by the law firm of Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering, Hale & Dorr.

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