

Brussels, 13 May 2009

Open letter to the EU on fourth anniversary of mass killings in Andizhan

On the fourth anniversary of the mass killings in Andizhan in 2005, Amnesty International calls on the EU to use all opportunities available to continue to demand an independent international investigation into these events.

On 13 May 2005, Uzbekistan's security forces killed hundreds of individuals, including women and children when they opened fire on mostly unarmed demonstrators gathered in the centre of Andizhan. Since then there has been a serious deterioration in the human rights situation in the country despite claims to the contrary by the authorities.

The call for an investigation was at the centre of the EU's decision to establish targeted sanctions on Uzbekistan in October 2005. However, despite the fact that these sanctions were part-lifted in October 2008, there has still been no commitment from the Uzbekistani authorities to allow such an investigation.

The investigations that have taken place, including the two rounds of expert talks with the EU in December 2006 and April 2007, cannot substitute an independent international investigation. The Uzbekistani authorities have stated that they consider the matter closed, most recently during the UN Universal Periodic Review of the country in December 2008. However, the expert talks did not meet the international standards for an effective, independent and impartial investigation, including the UN Principles on the effective prevention and investigation of extra-legal arbitrary and summary executions.

Therefore, as preparations are made for the forthcoming ministerial meeting with all Central Asian countries (29 May) and the next round of the Human Rights Dialogue with Uzbekistan (10 June), the EU must send a strong public signal to the Uzbekistani authorities that the EU has not forgotten the events of May 2005 and still expects an independent investigation to take place.



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