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Council of Europe Secretary General proposes new international legal instruments to prevent human rights abuses in the fight against terrorism

Strasbourg, 07.09.2006 - Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, today made public his proposals on how European governments should reinforce the protection of human rights in Europe and close the gaps identified by his investigation of the so-called rendition flights.

The proposed measures include drawing up minimum standards to prevent human rights abuses by security services, in particular allied foreign security services active on the territory of a Council of Europe member state, mechanisms to enforce existing human rights obligations with respect to transiting aircraft, and a legal instrument permitting diplomatic immunity to be waived in cases of serious human rights violations.

The proposals were sent to the governments of the 46 Council of Europe member states on 4 July, but were kept confidential until the first exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers yesterday.

"Yesterday's statement by President Bush acknowledging the existence of secret CIA prisons adds urgency to the need to prevent any such human rights violation in the future. Secret prisons are not only wrong, they are also counterproductive. The fight against terrorists can only be effective if it is as fair as it is robust" said Terry Davis.

The documents containing the Secretary General's recommendations to the governments and the findings of his inquiry under Article 52 of the European Convention on Human Rights are available on www.coe.int.

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