



United Nations Development Programme

# PRESS RELEASE

## UNITED NATIONS EXPERT ON TORTURE TOURED GEORGIA TO ASSESS THE SITUATION

The Special Rapporteur on torture of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Manfred Nowak undertook a fact-finding mission to Georgia from 19 to 25 February 2005 at the invitation of the Government. The situation regarding torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment— these were issues that the Special Rapporteur intended to examine in Georgia.

Mr. Nowak was appointed Special Rapporteur of the Commission on 1 December 2004. He is Professor of Constitutional Law and Human Rights at the University of Vienna and Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. As Special Rapporteur, Mr. Nowak is independent from any government and serves in his individual capacity. The mandate covers all countries, irrespective of whether a State has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The visit was intended to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the situation prevailing in this country, where torture cases were allegedly rearing its head. He held meetings with the President of Georgia, the Ombudsman, other relevant government officials, as well as representatives of the international community and civil society bodies. The Special Rapporteur visited the Tbilisi-based penitentiary and pre-detention facilities and police lock-ups.

The Special Rapporteur visited Abkhazia, where he met, among others, with the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia. He also visited Tskhinvali region.

At the press conference held on February 25 at UN House, Mr. Nowak will summarize the results of his visit and focus on progress/drawbacks in questions relevant to torture.

The Special Rapporteur will present his preliminary findings orally to the next session of the Commission in April, and will submit a comprehensive written report the sixty-second session in 2006.

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