

Georgia pressured on rights, torture

by UPI

TBILISI, Georgia -- Three rights groups called on the national government of Georgia Thursday to speed up its abolition of torture and abuse of prison inmates. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Penal Reform International issued the call in response to a newly released report by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, known as CPT. It is a monitoring body of the Council of Europe. Among concerns in the report was the government investigation of an inmate uprising in Tbilisi Prison No. 5 on March 27, 2006. Security personnel opened fire with regular automatic weapons and ammunition as well as rubber bullets and witnesses said there was no attempt was made to use non-violent means of control. Seven prisoners were killed and at least 17 others suffered serious injuries, the report said. Three months later, the government announced an investigation but there have been no official reports of its progress, the CPT said. "The March 27 investigations are taking too long, raising concerns about the authorities' commitment to uncover the truth," said Holly Cartner, director of the Europe and Central Asia division at Human Rights Watch.

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