11 September 2001 - 11 September 2004: Open letter to the next president of the United States

USA

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Description:

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During the last mandate, peace and global security were extremely shaken. Terrorist threat, now perceptible on every continent did not cease to increase, with subsequent innocent victims. On this day of commemoration of the terrible attacks which casted gloom over your nation three years ago, it is a particular moment to remember the victims of New York and Washington, but also the numerous victims of the terrorist acts which have occurred since then. It is necessary to reiterate that such acts are international crimes and that there is an absolute necessity to punish the perpetrators.

In the last three years, the multiplication of such attacks deliberately aiming civilian people, the last one of which took place in North Ossetia, leading to the death of several hundreds children, parents and teachers, oblige us to wonder about the efficiency of the answers brought to such terrorist actions as well as their causes.

Military interventions in Afghanistan then in Iraq, supposedly aimed at putting an end to terrorism and at democratizing these countries, ended in a human and politic disaster. Presently, chaos and insecurity prevail in both these countries, favouring the multiplication of terrorist groups, who are the first to benefit from this huge disorder. Civilian populations are still the first victims, both of armed interventions and terror maintained by the Talebans in Afghanistan and by terrorist groups and common law criminals in Iraq. International and humanitarian organizations are not spared.

A number of states are reacting to the terrorist attacks through an increased use in arbitrary measures, using the fight against terrorism for political purposes and developing measures and practices restricting freedoms. By doing so, they play the terrorists' game, whose aim is to radicalize populations and to bring the world to violent confrontations between the North and the South.

While terrorist crimes have become a daily reality against which we must fight, the FIDH recalls the following principles:

The fight against terrorism, which is absolutely necessary and legitimate, must be carried out in the respect of Human Rights. If States do not comply with their obligations in this field, they will only feed the spiral of violence and extremism.

The democratization of despotic States can and must be encouraged by the international community, in particular by supporting local independent civil society and through diplomatic, or even economic, pressure on governments which violate Human Rights. Democracy can't be put in place with arms.

It is essential to establish monitoring mechanisms through appropriate domestic and intergovernmental institutions to help ensure that domestic anti terrorist measures are compatible with international standards on Human Rights.

Injustices and social and economic rights violations feed terrorism. It is necessary to address these root causes, in particular through the United Nations reform, a reform of the world economic system for a more equitable globalization and the affirmation of a legal order which must come to outweigh armed interventions.