GENEVA—The UN Special Rapporteur on torture, Manfred Nowak, will undertake a fact-finding mission to Greece from 10-20 October, in what will be the first visit to the country by the independent expert mandated by the UN Human Rights council to monitor the practice of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

“The aim of the mission is to evaluate, in an objective and impartial manner, the situation regarding torture and ill-treatment, and to initiate a process of constructive cooperation with the Government,” said Mr. Nowak, who will visit the country at the invitation of the Government.

The independent expert will meet with Government officials, civil society members and representatives of United Nations agencies and international organizations. He will also gather first-hand information in places where persons are deprived of their liberty.

The mandate of Special Rapporteur covers all countries, irrespective of whether a State has ratified the Convention* against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Greece signed the Convention in 1985 and ratified it in 1988.

A press conference will be held in Athens at the conclusion of the Special Rapporteur’s visit on Wednesday 20 October at 11:00am at the Divani Palace Acropolis Hotel (room Aristotelis A), 19-25 Parthenonos, P.C 117-42 Athens. A final report on the visit will be presented to the Human Rights Council in 2011.

(*): Check the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cat.htm

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Manfred Nowak, appointed Special Rapporteur on 1 December 2004 by the UN Commission on Human Rights, is independent from any government and serves in his individual capacity. He has previously served as member of the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, the UN expert on missing persons in the former Yugoslavia, the UN expert on legal questions on enforced disappearances, and as a judge at the Human Rights Chamber for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nowak is Professor of Constitutional Law and Human Rights at the University of Vienna, and Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights.

Learn more about the mandate and work of the Special Rapporteur: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/index.htm

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Torture: UN expert begins fact-finding mission to Greece