



Press Release

London, Thursday 21st February 2008

USA Use Of UK Territory In 'Extraordinary Rendition': More To Come?

Today, the UK Government admitted that the United States used Diego Garcia in its "extraordinary renditions" programme in 2002. This is a dramatic shift for the Government, which had previously said that *"careful research by officials has been unable to identify any occasion since 11 September 2001, or earlier in the Bush administration, when we received a request for permission by the United States for a rendition through UK territory or airspace, nor are we otherwise aware of such a case."*

Foreign Secretary, David Miliband said the Government received the information on Diego Garcia from the US Government on 15th February. **'This revelation is extremely worrisome'**, said REDRESS' Director Carla Ferstman. **'Not only does it continue to raise questions about the UK's role in extraordinary renditions, but we have to ask: after all its careful research, why didn't the Government already know about this?'**

Diego Garcia isn't the only place under UK jurisdiction with suspected links to "extraordinary rendition" – should we be expecting further apologies in two years time, after the US Government decides to reveal more information?'

The UK Government's stated policy on extraordinary rendition is that it expects the US Government to ask for permission to use its territory or airspace for such purposes. The UK will only grant permission if it is satisfied that the UK is not contravening its obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture

'Did the US ask permission to use Diego Garcia for "extraordinary rendition"? The Government should clarify this point. If no permission was asked, then this policy of 'see no evil, hear no evil' has been exposed for the sham that it is,' said REDRESS' director.

REDRESS, the human rights, anti-torture organisation, is calling for a thorough, independent and public inquiry into the role of the UK in the US "extraordinary renditions" programme.

The fact that one of the persons "rendered" through Diego Garcia is being held at Guantanamo Bay, raises the issue of whether that individual is going to face a Military Commission 'trial' of the kind which has been internationally condemned as inherently unfair. The person's identity needs to be revealed immediately, and the UK Government should demand his release without further delay. **'The fact that the person is not a UK citizen or resident is irrelevant. UK territory was used to flagrantly violate his rights and the UK should be protesting vigorously about this fact and its consequences, and not only that the UK Government and Parliament was misled'**, said Ferstman.

The other person has been released, but it is not known who he is, for how long he was held and where, how he was treated, and what has happened to him since. This information too should be at the forefront of UK demands on the US, and should be made public. Today Foreign Secretary Miliband apologised to Parliament, and rightly so. However, the UK also owes these two men an apology, and more.

END

REDRESS is an international human rights organisation helping torture survivors obtain justice.

Contact: Jo Deverson. Tel: 0207 793 1777. Mobile: 0796 282 1697 email: jo@redress.org

Web: www.redress.org