

REDRESS

Seeking Reparation for Torture Survivors

Press Statement

10th December, 2008, London

UK's Counter-Terrorism Policies Undermine Anti-Torture Commitments

The UK's counter-terrorism measures have seriously undermined the UK's otherwise sincere attempts to combat torture internationally and leave the UK open to charges of hypocrisy in its criticism of those responsible for torture abroad. This is the conclusion of a new report '***The United Kingdom, Torture And Anti-Terrorism: Where The Problems Lie***', released today by REDRESS, the human rights NGO which seeks justice for torture survivors

The Report raises serious questions about the role of the UK's intelligence services in the rendition and ill-treatment of UK nationals and residents in Guantanamo Bay and other 'legal black holes' and calls for an independent public inquiry into whether UK agents acted unlawfully, as well as for compensation and assistance to those that were tortured.

REDRESS also criticises the Government's refusal to budge from its position of relying on US assurances that UK territory is not used in the US' extraordinary renditions programme, despite admissions earlier this year that Diego Garcia was used, proving that such assurances cannot be trusted. The UK's policy of trying to deport terrorist suspects to countries notorious for torture also comes under attack in the Report.

The release of the Report coincides with two important anniversaries this week, the 20th Anniversary of the UK's ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture and the 60th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. It is also ten years after the Labour Government launched its anti-torture initiative in which it promised to ensure Britain 'speaks clearly and acts effectively against torture'.

"Far from taking the moral lead on this most fundamental of issues, the UK Government's counter-terrorism policies have failed to live up to the Governments' international commitments on the total prohibition against torture. It is time to usher in a new era of respect for human rights; this requires more than lip-service, it needs clear leadership." said Carla Ferstman, REDRESS' Director.

End

For Further Information:

Report available at:

<http://www.redress.org/documents/Where%20the%20Problems%20Lie%2010%20Dec%2008.pdf>

Hard copy available from REDRESS.

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REDRESS seeks to combat torture by seeking justice for torture survivors. It takes legal challenges on behalf of survivors, works to ensure that torturers are punished and that survivors and their families obtain remedies for their suffering.