



REDRESS seeks victim status in Lithuania for victim of CIA rendition

3 September 2015 – Last week, the anti-torture organization REDRESS (www.redress.org), through attorney Ingrida Botyrienne, filed a request with the Lithuanian Prosecutor to grant Mustafa Al-Hawsawi victim status so that he can participate in the ongoing investigation regarding the CIA rendition, detention and interrogation programme in Lithuania. This request was filed on 26 August.

In September 2013, REDRESS and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) submitted a complaint calling for the Lithuanian General Prosecutor to investigate allegations that Mr Al-Hawsawi was illegally transferred to and secretly detained and tortured in Lithuania as part of the CIA-led programme. Despite the Prosecutor's initial refusal, an investigation was opened in February 2014, pursuant to a decision by the Regional Court. This investigation has been ongoing and in early 2015 it was combined with an earlier investigation, which had been terminated by the Prosecutor in 2011. Mr Al-Hawsawi faces capital charges before a United States Military Commission in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, related to his alleged support of the al-Qaeda's terrorist network.

"REDRESS has been seeking justice in Lithuania on Mr Al-Hawsawi's behalf for two years now and is disappointed at the lack of tangible progress and the Lithuanian government's failure to adequately address the serious human rights violations which took place on their soil," said Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS. ***"Long before we submitted our complaint in 2013 the Lithuanian government was aware that the CIA had used its territory as part of the global torture programme, but failed to conduct an adequate investigation and to hold those responsible to account. REDRESS hopes that the Lithuanian Government will now seize upon the opportunity of this investigation to fulfil its obligations under various treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention Against Torture."***

Mr Al-Hawsawi was captured in Pakistan in 2003 and was held in secret detention in the CIA's rendition, detention, and interrogation programme until September 2006. During this time he was tortured and was infected with Hepatitis C, a condition he did not have previously. The redacted Executive Summary of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's Report, released in December 2014, makes clear that while Mr Al-Hawsawi was held in Lithuania he required access to emergency medical care, which was delayed because he was denied access to a local hospital.

"We are concerned at the slow progress of the investigation and the lack of available information on its scope. If today's request is granted Mr. Al-Hawsawi would have greater rights, including the ability to request access to pre-trial investigation material and to make requests to expand the scope of the pre-trial investigation. This would be a new and important stage of increased involvement in the investigation," added Ferstman.

During his secret detention Mr Al-Hawsawi was not allowed access to a lawyer or to independent monitors. Mr. Al-Hawsawi remains in detention in Guatanamo Bay, where he has been held since 2006, following the years of secret detention by the CIA. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention recently found that Mr Al-Hawsawi's ongoing detention is arbitrary and in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In July, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered precautionary measures

regarding Mr Al-Hawsawi, requesting the US to urgently provide him with the medical care he needs to treat injuries he incurred during his detention and interrogation by the CIA.

In February 2015 the European Parliament reiterated its call on EU Member States to investigate the allegations that there were secret prisons on their territory where people were held under the CIA programme, and to prosecute those involved in these operations, taking into account all the new evidence that has come to light following the release of the Executive Summary of the US Senate Report. The UN Committee against Torture and the UN Human Rights Committee, have both called on Lithuania to effectively investigate the CIA operations on its territory.

"The ongoing investigation by the Lithuanian General Prosecutor is an important part of efforts to achieve greater accountability for these grave and systematic violations of human rights. We hope that Lithuania will pursue all possible lines of inquiry so that the truth can be known and any Lithuanian officials who participated are subject to the full weight of the law. This is important not only for Mr Al-Hawsawi but so that these types of events are not repeated," said Ferstman.

The investigation also provides an opportunity for Lithuania to comply with its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. A case regarding CIA operations in Lithuania is already pending before the European Court of Human Rights. The Guantanamo Bay detainee Abu Zubaydah was held in the CIA detention site in Poland, and is also alleged to have been held at the site in Lithuania.

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For further details of the case see [here](#).

About REDRESS: REDRESS is a London-based organisation that combats torture internationally by seeking justice and reparation for torture survivors. Since 1992, it has consistently fought for the rights of torture survivors and their families in the UK and abroad. It has intervened in a range of leading torture cases. More information is available on: www.redress.org.