REDRESS challenges the Lithuanian Prosecutor's continued refusal to grant victim status to victim of CIA rendition

London, 18 February 2016 – Today, the anti-torture organization REDRESS, through attorney Ingrida Botyriené, filed an appeal of the Lithuanian General Prosecutor's continued refusal to grant Mustafa al-Hawsawi victim status so that he can participate in the ongoing investigation regarding aspects of the CIA rendition, detention and interrogation programme in Lithuania.

In September 2013, REDRESS and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) submitted a complaint calling for the Lithuanian 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. 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 in 2011.

In August 2015 REDRESS, through attorney Botyriené, filed a request to grant Mr al-Hawsawi victim status in the investigation. Prosecutor Ona Rojuté rejected this request in September 2015 with a letter and, following a number of appeals on the procedure used, adopted a procedural decision reiterating this refusal, which is the subject of this appeal. If this appeal 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.

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, including in Lithuania. During this time he was tortured and became infected with Hepatitis C, a condition he did not have previously.

The redacted Executive Summary of the 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. During his secret detention for three and a half years Mr al-Hawsawi was not allowed access to a lawyer or to independent monitors.

Mr al-Hawsawi remains in detention in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where he has been held since 2006. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that Mr Al-Hawsawi's ongoing detention is arbitrary and in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In July 2015, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered precautionary measures regarding Mr al-Hawsawi, requesting the

U.S. to urgently provide him with the medical care he needs to treat injuries he incurred during his detention and interrogation by the CIA. To date, the U.S. Government has failed to respond to these decisions.

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. The ongoing investigation in Lithuania is an important part of efforts to achieve greater accountability for these grave and systematic violations of human rights. This is important not only for Mr al-Hawsawi but so that these types of abuses are not repeated. The investigation also provides an opportunity for Lithuania to comply with its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Further information about REDRESS involvement in the al-Hawsawi case is available here: http://www.redress.org/case-docket/al-hawsawi-case-1

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About REDRESS: REDRESS in an international human rights NGO based in the UK with a mandate to assist torture survivors to seek justice and other forms of reparation.