



STATEMENT OF REDRESS ON TODAY'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE UK ROLE IN CIA RENDITIONS

29 June 2016 – Today MPs will debate the UK's role in the CIA's rendition and torture programme, when the House of Commons holds an Adjournment Debate on this issue at the end of the day's sitting.

Commenting on today's parliamentary debate, Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS, said:

"Today's debate in Parliament on 'UK involvement in rendition' is an important reminder that this matter has not yet been adequately addressed. Last week was the 10th Anniversary of the coming into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture which the UK Government has and continues to champion. Justice, truth and transparency are crucial aspects of prevention. Sometimes getting to the truth can be painful or difficult but it plays a crucial role in ensuring that unlawful practices are not repeated."

The former head of MI5, Eliza Manningham-Buller, was right to be incensed when she discovered the role played by MI6 in abductions that led to suspected extremists being tortured, reportedly saying that 'their actions had threatened Britain's intelligence gathering and may have compromised the security and safety of MI5 officers and their informants.' Torture does not produce intelligence short-cuts, it does not combat terrorism, it is not an acceptable tool – ever. It is simply wrong, illegal and unconscionable for any person, any government to partake in. REDRESS encourages the UK Government to act now and to act resolutely to expose the truth of what happened and to take all possible steps to guarantee that torture does not feature in the UK's arsenal in the fight against terrorism or in any other context."

Evidence of the UK's alleged role in two rendition operations emerged in 2011, when following the fall of Col. Gaddafi's regime in 2011, correspondence from MI6's former head of counter-terrorism to Gaddafi's spy chief was discovered. The correspondence revealed Sir Mark Allen discussing the role of UK intelligence in securing the arrival of what he described as the "air cargo", believed to be Abdul-Hakim Belhaj and his pregnant wife, Fatima Boudchar, who had been rendered to Libya.

Notes to editors:

About REDRESS: REDRESS is a human rights organisation that helps torture survivors obtain justice and reparation. REDRESS works with survivors to help restore their dignity, and to hold accountable the governments and individuals who perpetrate torture. To achieve this mission, our key strategies are: casework (providing legal assistance to individuals and communities in securing their rights); advocacy (with governments, parliaments and international organisations) and capacity building (working in partnership with like-minded organisations around the world).

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