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# REPRIEVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (February 26, 2009):

## Reprieve insists government confession is ‘the tip of the renditions iceberg’; inquiry urgently needed

The British government today confirmed what Reprieve investigators uncovered many months ago: that the UK has colluded with the USA in the illegal practice of extraordinary rendition.

In a major U-turn, Defence Secretary John Hutton admitted that two terror suspects captured by UK troops in Iraq were handed over to the United States to be rendered to Afghanistan. This directly contradicts previous government assurances.

“This government has misled us again and again,” said Reprieve executive director Clare Algar.

“First, they said that Diego Garcia was not used for rendition flights; then they had to admit that they had misled us on that.

“Then they said that the security services condemn torture, yet it seems that those services were complicit in the torture of Binyam Mohamed.

“Now the Defence Secretary tells us that, despite previous assurances to the contrary, British forces handed prisoners to US forces in Iraq whom the US have rendered to Afghanistan.

“Surely we must immediately have the public inquiry into the government’s conduct of the ‘War on Terror’ demanded by so many.”

Reprieve is deeply concerned by the inadequate scope of the MOD review cited by Hutton, specifically that it does **not include the participation of UK personnel in joint operations under the overall command of the US**, for example Task Force 6-26.

Reprieve renditions investigator Clara Gutteridge said: “I’m afraid this is only the tip of the renditions iceberg.”

“For years now, the British government has been tossing us miserable scraps of information about its involvement in illegal renditions in Pakistan, Diego Garcia and now Afghanistan.

“Enough is enough. The British government must come clean and reveal exactly who has it captured, what has been done to them, and where they are now.”

**Three questions** must be urgently addressed by the Defence Secretary:

1) How will this mistake be rectified?

The two prisoners must immediately be identified and given legal representation. Complete details about their detention must be fully disclosed.

2) Where else has this happened?

An urgent review must investigate British forces acting both independently and under the command of US forces.

3) What policies are in place to ensure that this never happens again?

The UK must demonstrate a clear change in direction on the illegal and deeply unpopular practice of extraordinary rendition.

“We cannot learn from history unless we know what history is,” said Reprive director Clive Stafford Smith.

“The government must come clean about their participation in extraordinary renditions past and present. Until they do, this issue remains nothing short of a political minefield.”

**NOTES FOR EDITORS:**

*Reprive*, a legal action charity, uses the law to enforce the human rights of prisoners, from death row to Guantánamo Bay. *Reprive* investigates, litigates and educates, working on the frontline, to provide legal support to prisoners unable to pay for it themselves. *Reprive* promotes the rule of law around the world, securing each person’s right to a fair trial and saving lives. Clive Stafford Smith is the founder of *Reprive* and has spent 25 years working on behalf of people facing the death penalty in the USA.

*Reprive*’s current casework involves representing 33 prisoners in the US prison at Guantánamo Bay, working on behalf of prisoners facing the death penalty, and conducting ongoing investigations into the rendition and the secret detention of ‘ghost prisoners’ in the so-called ‘war on terror.’

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