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News Release

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EU states complicit in CIA led rendition and torture must be held accountable

Speaking at a debate of the European Parliament yesterday on her follow-up report into alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in European countries by the CIA, Liberal Democrat European justice & human rights spokeswoman Sarah Ludford criticised Member States for failing to meet their obligations to carry out full, independent inquiries to investigate human rights violations.

Sarah Ludford commented:

“It’s vital that Member States support independent inquiries to ascertain and secure accountability for their complicity in rendition and torture, without which we risk eroding citizens’ trust in the democratic institutions of the EU to protect and promote our human rights.”

“Given the EU’s well-publicised commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, the fact of highly credible allegations of European countries’ complicity in CIA abduction, disappearance, rendition and torture after 9/11 is already bad enough. But the continuing refusal to investigate properly is compounding the original failings.”

“The EU has just appointed its first Human Rights chief. But our credibility in urging respect for fundamental rights throughout the world is badly undermined by the justified suspicion that some of our member states rode roughshod over international law and civil liberties.”

“Delays and deliberate obstructions to independent and transparent national inquiries are an affront to liberty and justice. It is a travesty to claim 'state secret' to perpetuate impunity. The EU must have the guts and self-respect to enforce accountability for its own members’ involvement in human rights abuses.”