



**All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition  
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA**

**As a Libyan dissident and his wife take the British Government to court over claims that it helped send them to Gaddafi's prisons, new powers of "secret justice" could still stop the truth from coming out, says Andrew Tyrie MP.**

Writing in Prospect magazine, Andrew Tyrie argues that the new rules on closed court hearings could stop Britain learning the lessons of its past.

"British courts have shown that they are ready to hold those at the highest levels of Government to account for 'extraordinary rendition'. This is a victory for transparency and rule of law. But if the trial is hidden behind closed doors, it will be difficult to be certain that justice has been done – and been seen to be done.

"The case will be one of the biggest tests yet for legislation on secret hearings. Under the Justice and Security Act of 2013, Mr. Belhaj and Ms. Boudchar could be barred from much of the trial, and then lose the case without being able to challenge – or even hear – the evidence used against them. This does not sound much like British justice.

"Instead of burying the facts in secret hearings, Ministers should first try to keep the trial fair by using long-established measures to have the most sensitive evidence ruled out – for both sides.

"If the new rules had been in place a few years ago, the public wouldn't know much of what is now established about the UK's role in rendition.

"President Trump has said that he wants to use torture as an instrument of policy. Anyone who thought that the UK's role in rendition could safely be allowed to fade into the past has been given a sharp reality check.

"The Prime Minister assured me in the Commons last month that Britain would not sanction torture. Her words are welcome. Britain has a strong interest in a close relationship with the US. Its interest in justice cannot be permitted to become a casualty."

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**Note to editors:**

- Andrew Tyrie MP is the Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Supreme Court ruled that Abdel Hakim Belhaj and his wife, Fatima Bouchar, could sue the UK Government over its alleged involvement in their kidnap and transfer to Gaddafi's Libya. The defendants include the Foreign Office, Home Office, MI6, MI5, and former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.
- Documents implicating the British Government in the case were discovered in 2011 after the fall of the Gaddafi regime. Mr Belhaj alleges that British intelligence provided information that facilitated their rendition.