



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

Press release – 10 May 2018

Kenneth Clarke MP welcomed today's apology by the Government for the UK's complicity in the 2004 rendition of Abdul Hakim Belhaj and his wife, Fatima Boudchar. The apology is contained in a letter from the Prime Minister to the couple, delivered today in Parliament by the Attorney General Jeremy Wright.

Kenneth Clarke, Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition, said: "The fulsome apology today from the government for the complicity of UK officials in the rendition and torture of Mr Belhaj and Ms Boudchar is a victory for the rule of law. Given the fulsome nature of the apology, the question has to be asked why it has taken the government so long to settle this matter, particularly when Mr Belhaj offered to settle the case in 2013 for £3 and an apology. The delay is deeply regrettable.

It is truly shocking that Britain has been involved in kidnap and torture. The practice of extraordinary rendition is contrary to fundamental human rights and long-held British values. It is right that the government has apologised in this case and that the Attorney General has given assurances that this sort of thing will not happen again.

These assurances must now be followed up by actions. Firstly, the Intelligence and Security Committee inquiry into detainee mistreatment and rendition must fulfil its promise to report this year, and give a full account of what went wrong and why in this and other cases. The public needs to be assured that the scope and limits of British involvement in kidnap and torture have been fully investigated.

Secondly, the government must revise the Consolidated Guidance to ensure that it properly protects against rendition and unlawful detention. Much clearer guidelines are needed for officers who believe a detainee is being held or transferred unlawfully. As recommended by the Intelligence Services Commissioner, the government should hold a public consultation seeking the views of civil society on the matter.

Today's apology is an extremely welcome step forwards in transparency and accountability for the UK's involvement in extraordinary rendition. But the work does not stop here. The government today made clear its commitment to ensure that the mistakes that were made Mr Belhaj and Ms Boudchar's case must never be repeated. It must now make good on this commitment." [END]

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Note to editors

- Kenneth Clarke is the chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition (APPG), a cross-party group of MPs and Peers that was founded in 2005. It aims to establish the facts about the scope and scale of UK involvement in rendition, and to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- The British Government has today apologised to Abdul-Hakim Belhaj and Fatima Boudchar for the UK's role in their 2004 abduction, torture, and rendition to Libya. The apology is contained in a letter from the Prime Minister to the couple, delivered today in Parliament by the Attorney General Jeremy Wright.
- The ISC [recently stated](#) that it planned to publish in 2018 its report on the involvement of the UK Government and Security and Intelligence Agencies in detainee mistreatment and rendition.
- The Consolidated Guidance (full title "Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees") was developed and published in 2010.