All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition
House of Commons

Press release: Immediate, Tuesday 6th July 2010

Andrew Tyrie responds to the Prime Minister's announcement that there will be an independent judge-led inquiry into allegations of UK involvement in rendition and the mistreatment of detainees abroad.

Andrew Tyrie MP said: "The Prime Minister's courageous decision to hold a judge-led inquiry, and to set aside a number of objections that will have been put to him, is a huge step forward. It can give the public confidence that the truth on British involvement in rendition will come out."

"In December 2005 I created the All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition to get to the truth on allegations of UK involvement. I came to realise that only an independent judge-led inquiry could give the public confidence that we have got to the bottom of all this."

"I pressed Prime Ministers Blair and Brown, and the new coalition Government, to get to the truth. So I strongly support the decision the Prime Minister has taken."

"It is in the British national interest and in the interest of the security services, as well as in the interest of those who may have been maltreated, that an inquiry should be held. Only by getting to the truth can we bring an end to the drip-drip of allegations which, whether true or not, erode the morale of our security services and Britain's moral reputation abroad."

"The Prime Minister's openness has been extremely refreshing. The decision to publish the guidelines for intelligence officers is also welcome."

Ends.

Notes to Editors:

Andrew Tyrie is Conservative MP for Chichester and Chairman and founder of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition. Mr Tyrie can be contacted on **0207 219 6371**. His office email is tyriea@parliament.uk. The website of the All Party Group is www.extraordinaryrendition.org.

The US programme of extraordinary rendition has involved the kidnap and transfer of terrorist suspects to places where they may be maltreated or tortured.

Today, the Prime Minister in a statement to the House of Commons announced an independent judge-led inquiry into allegations of UK involvement in rendition and mistreatment of detainees abroad.

He also published the consolidated guidance for intelligence officers on the detention and interviewing of detainees overseas.

Andrew Tyrie MP wrote to the Foreign Secretary on Friday 25th June 2010:

Rt Hon William Hague
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

25th June 2010

Re: An inquiry into British involvement in extraordinary rendition

I have published today the attached legal opinion which concludes that an inquiry into rendition can start immediately, notwithstanding the number of ongoing related criminal investigations and civil cases.

On 20th May you announced that you intend to hold a judge-led inquiry into allegations of British involvement in extraordinary rendition. Soon afterwards, it was reported that such an inquiry might have to wait upon the conclusion of court cases. This was presumably prompted by fears that an inquiry would prejudice the fairness of those legal proceedings, and that witnesses might be reluctant to give evidence that could incriminate them.

The attached opinion allays these concerns. It concludes that they are not a bar to an immediate public inquiry into the UK's involvement in torture and extraordinary rendition; measures are available to mitigate any adverse effects on ongoing civil and criminal cases and to encourage the cooperation of witnesses.

I look forward to your response. I will be placing a copy of this letter and your response in the public domain.

ANDREW TYRIE MP
Chairman, All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition

The opinion can be found here:
http://www.extraordinaryrendition.org/index.php/component/docman/cat_view/30-all-other-documents?orderby=dmdate_published

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Open Letter, released March 2010:

Dear Sirs

In light of the string of recent revelations, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition, Amnesty International UK, Human Rights Watch, Liberty and Reprieve have united to call on the UK Government to establish an independent inquiry into the UK's involvement in extraordinary rendition and the mistreatment of detainees abroad. The public should not have to rely on occasional speeches and lengthy judicial cases to discover the truth about such a serious issue.

We propose that such an inquiry should examine, amongst other issues, the use of UK territory and airspace, the involvement of the intelligence agencies and the involvement of the Armed Forces. The inquiry should be guided by the following statement of principles; it should:

1. be led by a judge or former judge. It should benefit from appropriate legal representation on the inquiry's panel. This is essential to give the inquiry independence and legitimacy;
2. be public, with as much evidence as possible heard in public. The government should disclose all relevant documents to the inquiry, and the head of the inquiry must have the power to then decide what should be made public;
3. aim to achieve maximum possible disclosure;
4. publish a report, making any necessary recommendations including on changes to law and / or policy;
5. Consider any other such matters as it considers appropriate and accept and consider written submissions from interested parties.

Signed,

All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition;
Amnesty International UK;
Human Rights Watch;
Liberty;
Reprieve.