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Torture, Rendition and Calls for a Public Enquiry

Thank you for contacting me about a public inquiry into UK complicity in torture and rendition.

As you may be aware, the independent Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) recently published two reports examining allegations of UK involvement in mistreatment and rendition.

It is important to note the context in which the Government, including the security and intelligence agencies, and the armed forces, were working in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The UK responded to the tragic events of 9/11 with the aim of doing everything possible to prevent further loss of innocent life. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that UK personnel were working within a new and challenging environment, for which, in some cases, they were not prepared. The Government has acknowledged that it took too long to recognise that guidance and training for staff was inadequate, and too long to understand fully and take appropriate action on the risks arising from the UK's work with international partners.

I am encouraged that the Government has clearly stated that it will give further consideration, both to the conclusions and recommendations of the ISC reports, as well as to calls for another judge-led inquiry, and I have been assured that the Government will update the House of Commons by the end of August on these issues.

We can and should be proud of the work undertaken by our intelligence and security personnel, often in the most challenging of circumstances. It is right that they should be held to the highest possible standards. I am encouraged that changes made in recent years allow the UK to protect our national security and to maintain our global reputation as a champion for human rights across the world.

I look forward to studying the Government's in depth responses to both to the ISC reports and to calls for a judge-led inquiry.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP