

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **United Kingdom: Amnesty International welcomes new investigation into UK complicity in torture and other ill-treatment abroad, but deplors the continued use of diplomatic assurances**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on the United Kingdom***

Amnesty International welcomes the UK's engagement with the UPR process, including consultations to garner information and feedback from non-governmental organizations and others in civil society.

A key concern for Amnesty International is accountability for the UK's involvement in the rendition, secret detention, and torture and other ill-treatment of alleged suspects in the context of global counter-terrorism operations beginning in 2001. The current criminal investigation into cases involving Libya is a positive development, but the failure of the Detainee Inquiry, which operated from 2010 until January 2012, to conform with international human rights standards sets a disturbing precedent. Amnesty International therefore welcomes the government's acceptance of recommendations to investigate allegations of UK complicity in the US rendition and secret detention programmes, as well as to investigate allegations of mistreatment by armed forces.<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International wishes to remind the UK government that any such investigation must be independent, impartial, thorough and effective in conformity with its international legal obligations, a point emphasized in a September 2012 European Parliament report.

The UK has accepted recommendations to ensure that its counter-terrorism measures comply with the highest human rights standards, as it did in the last UPR cycle.<sup>2</sup> However, there has not been sufficient progress on ensuring that counter-terrorism measures do not undermine human rights protection. In this regard, Amnesty International is deeply disappointed that the UK has rejected a recommendation to halt the use of diplomatic assurances to deport persons suspected of terrorism-related acts or deemed a threat to national security, to places where they are at risk of torture and other human rights violations.<sup>3</sup> Such assurances from governments with a poor human rights record are inherently unreliable and do not provide an effective safeguard against torture and other ill-treatment. The use of diplomatic assurances should be halted as a matter of urgency as they expose individuals to risk of such abuse, in violation of the absolute ban on sending people to places where they are at risk of torture.

It is also disappointing that the UK has not fully committed to the ratification of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International acknowledges the government's intention to work towards this goal and would urge that a timetable be established and adequate resources allocated to ensure the Convention's ratification as soon as possible. The UK government should make public the specific legislative changes that would be necessary to allow ratification of the Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/21/9, recommendations 110.118, 110.121, 110.123, 110.125-126, and A/HRC/21/9/Add.1, page 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, recommendations 110.118-120, 110.124-125,

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, recommendation 110.122 and A/HRC/21/9/Add.1, page 3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, recommendations 110.20-24, 110.26, and A/HRC/21/9/Add.1, page 2

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 20 September 2012 during its 21<sup>st</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in the United Kingdom:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR45/021/2011/en>

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