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The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)20 7413 5500

F: +44 (0)20 7956 1157

E: amnestyis@amnesty.org

W: www.amnesty.org

Dear Prime Minister,

BRITISH GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMMES AND INTERCEPTION OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

We are writing to you with regards to the recent findings of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT) in the case brought by Amnesty International, Liberty, Privacy International and other human rights organizations, challenging the lawfulness of the UK government's surveillance legislation and practice.

You will be aware that on 1 July we were informed by the IPT that our communications were intercepted and accessed pursuant to a warrant under s.8(4) of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The IPT found a breach of article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights on account of the fact that the intercepted communications were retained for a longer period of time than foreseen under GCHQ's internal policies. We understand that you have received - or will receive very shortly - a closed report from the IPT made under s.68(5) RIPA 2000 with full details of what underpinned these findings.

This revelation is of the highest concern to us. As an organization which depends upon relationships of trust and confidence with our contacts to carry out our vital work researching, documenting and fighting to end human rights abuses, the fact that we have been under surveillance puts that work at risk. Victims of human rights abuses will have serious reasons to believe that their confidential communications with Amnesty International are at risk of being intercepted by the UK government, as well as possibly shared with other governments.

We have been given no information as to the reason for intercepting, accessing and storing our communications.

We know we are not the only human rights organization to have been the subject of UK security agencies' surveillance - the IPT also found a breach of the UK's human rights obligations in relation to the Legal Resource Centre, a South African NGO, and did not say whether or not the communications of the eight other claimant organisations had been subjected to surveillance measures. In addition, disclosures made by Edward Snowden suggest that GCHQ has intercepted and accessed the communications of other organizations such as UNICEF. This state of affairs, taken together with information about large-scale mass surveillance programmes such as Tempora and recent findings made by the IPT over the last few months, sends a chilling message to human rights organizations and charities in the UK and abroad.

Given the overriding public interest in revealing the extent and reasons behind subjecting human rights organizations to surveillance, we urge you to publish the IPT report in full, apart from redactions strictly necessary for genuine and legitimate national security reasons, and to order an independent judge-led inquiry into surveillance of human rights organizations by the UK security services as soon as possible.

Given the seriousness of this situation, we would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the recent IPT finding, and our broader concerns with respect to your government's approach to surveillance and forthcoming reviews of RIPA and related policy.

Yours sincerely,



Salil Shetty
Secretary-General
Amnesty International



Kate Allen
Director
Amnesty International UK