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UK: Detainee Inquiry closure presents an opportunity for real accountability

The UK Justice Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, announced yesterday that the UK government has decided to conclude the work of the Detainee Inquiry, pending ongoing criminal investigations into allegations of UK involvement in torture and ill-treatment. The Chairman of the Detainee Inquiry, Sir Peter Gibson, confirmed the news shortly thereafter, stating that the Inquiry would produce a report for any future judicial inquiry.

The decision to close the Detainee Inquiry provides an opportunity to address the failures of the current system and establish an inquiry that ensures real accountability.

Amnesty International considers that the Detainee Inquiry was never fit for purpose, and fell significantly short of the UK's international human rights obligations to fully and independently investigate allegations of UK involvement in torture and ill-treatment.

Amnesty International calls on the UK government to seize the opportunity presented by the mounting allegations of UK involvement, the ongoing criminal investigations into specific cases, and the report of the Detainee Inquiry's work to date which will be presented shortly, to establish a human rights compliant inquiry that ensures real accountability, and that conforms with and fully discharges the UK's obligations under international human rights law.

Background:

On 6 July 2010, UK Prime Minister David Cameron announced to Parliament that there would be an independent inquiry into allegations of UK involvement in torture and other human rights violations with respect to individuals detained abroad in the context of counter-terrorism operations.

In the period that followed the Inquiry's establishment, Amnesty International along with several other NGOs, repeatedly raised concerns about the inquiry's failure to discharge the UK's international legal obligation to ensure a full, independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture and ill-treatment.

For further information:

United Kingdom: Detainee Inquiry terms of reference and protocol fall far short of human rights standards, AI Index EUR 45/011/2011, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR45/011/2011/en>

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