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## **UK: Law Lords' decision opens way for more deportations**

Amnesty International is gravely concerned by the possible consequences of today's decision by the Law Lords, the UK's highest court, that authorizes the UK government to deport people to countries where they will be at a real risk of serious human rights violations, including torture or other ill-treatment.

The government is attempting to deport two individuals, referred to in legal proceedings in the UK as 'RB' and 'U', to Algeria, and a third individual, Omar Othman (also known as Abu Qatada) to Jordan. In all three cases the government is relying on diplomatic assurances, given by the governments of Algeria and Jordan respectively, to reduce what the government acknowledges is a real risk that the men will be subject to serious human rights violations in their countries of origin.

"It would be deeply worrying if the Law Lords' decision were to be taken by the UK government as a green light to push ahead with deporting people to countries where they will be at risk of abuses such as torture and unfair trials," said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

"Diplomatic assurances are completely unenforceable and as such cannot be relied upon."

Amnesty International believes that by resorting to these assurances, the UK government is undermining the system of international human rights treaties, including the global ban on torture and other ill-treatment, in favour of bilateral deals negotiated with countries which have already failed to live up to their existing international obligations to prevent and punish torture and other ill-treatment.

"No-one should be deported to face a risk of torture, whatever they might be alleged or suspected to have done. States simply cannot pick and choose which people have human rights," Nicola Duckworth said.

"If these individuals in question are reasonably suspected of having committed a criminal offence relating to terrorism, it is always open to the UK authorities to charge them and give them a fair trial. What is not acceptable is to use suspicion of involvement in terrorism to justify sending someone to face a real risk of torture or other serious violations of their rights."

The UK has been seeking to deport a number of individuals whom it alleges pose a threat to national security for some years. It has sought so-called "diplomatic assurances" from the countries to which these individuals are to be returned and where they may be at risk of serious human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment and flagrantly unfair trials.