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## **UK holds off on detainee transfers to Afghan authorities**

The UK Ministry of Defence today announced that it will maintain its moratorium on the transfer of detainees to Afghan authorities for the foreseeable future.

The UK Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, said that the decision was made because detainees faced “serious mistreatment” in Afghanistan.

Human rights organisations, the UN and others have in the past raised very serious concerns about treatment of detainees in Afghan custody

“This is a positive step by the UK Government, but it is really no more than what is required under international law given the real risk of torture that prisoners face in Afghanistan,” said Polly Truscott, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Programme.

“Research by both Amnesty International and the UN has revealed the extent to which detainees are being beaten and otherwise tortured by the Afghan security services.

“There is also an almost complete lack of any kind of investigation by the Afghan authorities into accusations of torture – this allows these violations to continue with impunity.

“All states with a troop presence in Afghanistan must follow the UK’s example. Detainee transfers to the Afghan authorities must be stopped until the Afghan detention system has proper safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment, including effective investigations into such allegations.”

The decision was announced today during a hearing in the High Court of England and Wales in the case of Serdar Mohammed, an Afghan national who was detained by UK forces in Afghanistan in 2010 and subsequently handed over to the Afghan intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). Serdar Mohammed has alleged that he was tortured while in NDS custody and then subjected to a flagrantly unfair trial.