

## QUAKER CONCERN FOR THE ABOLITION OF TORTURE (Q-CAT)

Briefing 10

April 2010

### **Amnesty International Briefing: United Kingdom – Time for an inquiry into the UK’s role in human rights violations overseas since 11 September 2001 (EUR 45/001/2010)**

In March, Amnesty International released a new briefing outlining its call for a full, independent and impartial inquiry into UK involvement in human rights abuses post-11 September 2001. The briefing outlines 10 questions that an inquiry should answer including the following:

- \* What have been the UK government’s policies and practices in response to grave violations of human rights such as torture or other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, renditions and unlawful detentions perpetrated by the USA and other states against people, including UK nationals, held overseas since 11 September 2001? Have they changed since then? If so, when, how and why?
- \* In relation to seeking to obtain, receiving and using information that may have been extracted under torture or otherwise obtained unlawfully, what was the UK government’s policy and practice prior to 11 September 2001? Have these changed since then? If so, when, how and why?
- \* What were the terms of the agreement/s the UK government signed at the request of the US administration in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 purportedly under the principle of collective defence under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty?
- \* Were there further bilateral secret agreements on cooperation in the context of the US-led “war on terror” between the UK and the USA, and if so, what did they entail?
- \* What was the guidance regarding the role of the security services in the treatment and interviewing of detainees held overseas prior to 11 September 2001? Has it changed since then? And if so, when, how many times, in what respects and why?

For a short document this is particularly relevant to our concern and Q-CAT will be taking up the issues raised with ministers in the new UK Government as soon as they are appointed.

### **Amnesty International Briefing: Dangerous Deals – Europe’s reliance on “diplomatic assurances” against torture (EUR 01/012/2010)**

In April, this further briefing was released which gives details of 10 European countries, including the UK, which have relied on diplomatic assurances before extraditing people to countries known to use torture. It concludes by urging them “to commit the necessary resources to assist governments in countries where torture and other ill-treatment are persistent to eliminate these practices”. Again, Q-CAT will be working on this material to encourage the new Government to substantiate the UK’s past claims to have an exemplary policy against torture.

### **United Nations Human Rights Council Report on secret detention (A/HRC/13/42)**

This report was presented to the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council in January by the Special Rapporteur on Torture together with three other special rapporteurs. It looks at the abuse of secret detention in the context of countering terrorism, putting this within an exhaustive account of the legal and historic aspects of the practice. A central section covers CIA detention facilities, those operated jointly with the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan and “proxy” sites in 8 other countries. Of the 24 case summaries, three are British citizens or residents – Moazzam Begg, Omar Deghayes and Binyan Mohamed.

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