

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

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MI6 spy to be cleared. Today's Sunday Times carries the news that "our spy services are to be cleared of criminal complicity in the torture of terrorist suspects after detectives found insufficient evidence to charge an MI6 intelligence officer... It follows a decision last November by Keir Starmer, the director of public prosecutions (DPP), to drop a case against a second spy, this time from MI5, who was accused of complicity in the torture of Binyam Mohamed, a British resident, in Pakistan... Also in November Kenneth Clarke, the justice secretary, announced that about a dozen men, including Mohamed, who had accused British security forces of colluding in their transfer overseas, were to receive millions of pounds in compensation." *[More details in The Sunday Times 23/1/11 – but internet access is no longer free of charge]* If the DPP does decide not to proceed against the MI6 officer, this will clear the way for the "independent" investigation by Sir Peter Gibson whose suitability for this role has already been questioned because he was the Intelligence Services Commissioner during the period he will be investigating.

Bangladesh interrogation centre where Britons were taken to be tortured.

The Guardian has continued its brilliant investigation into British complicity in torture, this time in Bangladesh, revealing more highly compromising cases involving MI5 and MI6 and, by implication, successive Home Secretaries. For full coverage, use following link: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/17/bangladesh-secret-interrogation-centre/print
For excellent article by Afua Hirsch on British lawyers' advice to intelligence services, see www.guardian.co.uk/world/commentisfree/2011/jan/18/complicity-torture-war-terror-british-lawyers/print

Arab Organization for Human Rights claims wide range of torture in West Bank.

Palestinian Authority security forces in the West Bank have been using torture on a wide and systematic basis for several years, according to a report by the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain. The report found that torture techniques in PA prisons included shabh [hanging] of all kinds, beatings with cables, pulling out nails, suspension from the ceiling, flogging, kicking, cursing, electric shocks, sexual harassment and the threat of rape.

At least six Palestinians have died under torture in PA prisons and many former detainees have permanent physical disabilities, the report found. The human rights organization said that it has documented such "crimes" for three years – from October 2007 to October 2010. During that period – the report said – PA security forces in the West Bank detained almost 8,640 Palestinians at a rate of 8 arrests per-day. "Every one of those detainees has been subject to humiliating and degrading treatment and stayed in cells for more than 10 days," the report said. "The analysis shows that an astonishing 95% of the detainees were subjected to severe torture, others feeling the detrimental effects on their health for varying periods."

The report pointed out that the PA had admitted practicing torture when, at the beginning of October 2009, it announced that it was stopping torture in its prisons. But, the report said, "it turns out that torture has not been stopped; rather, it has grown more frequent and intense. The PA's announcement was window-dressing and deception." A top PA official in **Ramallah** dismissed the report as "unreliable" and "full of lies." The official claimed that the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain was affiliated with Hamas and other Islamic fundamentalist groups.

For more see: www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=204763

In The Sunday Times today (23/1/11) Brigadier James Mackaness, who heads a training programme for senior PA officials which costs the European Union £2 million a year, admitted that the UK is powerless to stop them torturing Palestinian prisoners in the West Bank.

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