

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

Briefing 9

March 2010

### Pressure on the Prime Minister to publish current legal advice to the security services

The Intelligence and Security Committee, no less, has demanded that Gordon Brown should publish without further delay the new guidelines in relation to the use of torture by the CIA and other allies. These were issued eight months ago in response to general anxiety over the previous legal position on complicity in torture. Considering that this committee is a personal fiefdom of the Prime Minister, appointed by him and answerable only to him, and that its chairman, Kim Howells MP, was one of those most self-righteously dismissing the claims of Binyan Mohamed and others, this is quite a step forward. The Government has refused to publish the guidelines as they existed before this revision, so they probably condoned such complicity.

Water-boarding: we didn't know and Bush's aide is proud of it

Last week Eliza Manningham-Buller, former head of MI5, gave a much-publicised lecture about our security services during which she claimed to have discovered that the CIA were water-boarding Khalid Sheik Mohammed (in 2002) only after her retirement in 2007. This has been greeted with general scepticism – could the head of MI5 really have been unaware of what was widely known? Incompetence or naiveté? I have just written to The Guardian to point out that all references to the United States (quite extensive according to press reports the following day) have been omitted from the text of her lecture. You can read what remains of it, Reflections on Intelligence, on the website of the Mile End Group of Queen Mary, University of London ([www.meg.qmul.ac.uk/pastevents/](http://www.meg.qmul.ac.uk/pastevents/)). She quotes a French commentator who remarked on the singular inappropriateness of the English word 'intelligence' to describe the antics of security services. We might like to add the inappropriateness of the word 'security' in this context!

During the same week Karl Rove, one of George Bush's closest advisers, boasted about the successful use of water-boarding 180 times on Khalid Sheik Mohammed in breaking his spirit and getting his confession to being the master-mind behind the twin towers atrocity. Eliza M-B claims the CIA told her that he had volunteered this information because he was so proud to have achieved what he did.

### Other developments

Meanwhile, our Supreme Court has ruled against the Government's wish to hold secret trials of terrorist suspects without informing them of the charges against them (as in Guantánamo Bay practice) and Medical Justice and the Medical Foundation have compiled a compelling dossier of torture victims being detained in Britain against stated Government policy. Where will it all end?

### Moazzam Begg

A few weeks ago a senior member of staff at Amnesty International UK spoke out against her employers' use of Moazzam Begg as an ally in the campaign against Guantánamo Bay, stating that they should not share a platform with someone who is dedicated to jihad and therefore totally opposed to human rights values. Those Friends who attended our conference last year will have formed their own opinions after hearing him speak and answer some searching questions. I can only quote Eliza Manningham-Buller's lecture in which she said, "Nothing – not even the saving of lives – justifies the torturing of people".

*Ending Torture: the next steps* - Q-CAT Seminar at Woodbrooke, 10<sup>th</sup> April. Places still available. Details from:

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