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Rt Hon. Jack Straw MP  
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
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29 May 2009

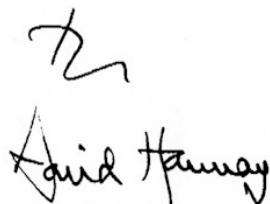
Dear Jack,

I am writing to you as Chair of the United Nations Association of the UK (UNA-UK) to urge the government to support and accept amendments to the Coroners and Justice Bill currently before the House of Lords and designed to close loopholes in the law relating to the prosecution of suspects of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Such legislative loopholes result in English courts not being able to try suspects of some of the most horrific crimes as defined in international law if they were not committed by UK nationals or those "resident" in the UK, and unless the crime was committed after the International Criminal Court Act came into force in 2001.

The amendments Lord Carlile of Berriew intends to table, announced by Baroness D'Souza during the Second Reading of the Coroners and Justice Bill in the House of Lords on 18 May which have cross-party support, are intended to remedy what is surely a damaging anomaly in UK legislation – the unintended consequences of which were highlighted by the High Court ruling on 8 April preventing the extradition to Rwanda of four men suspected of involvement in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. These men are now free in the UK.

UNA-UK very much welcomes and applauds all that the government has done to support the establishment of the ICC and to back up its work; and also the strong line it has taken against the culture of impunity for those who have committed or are suspected of having committed gross abuses of international humanitarian law. We therefore hope that you and your colleagues will agree that this bill provides an excellent and straightforward way to ensure that our political support for future directives is also legally watertight.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, David Miliband, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice, Lord Bach, and the FCO Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN, Lord Malloch-Brown.



Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
Chair, UNA-UK

cc: Rt Hon. David Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs  
Lord Bach of Lutterworth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice  
Rt Hon. Lord Malloch-Brown, FCO Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN