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Andrew Tyrie MP
House of Commons
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Cc Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Justice

18 June 2013

Dear Andrew,

I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK) to convey the concerns of our membership about allegations of UK involvement in torture and rendition. UNA-UK provides independent analysis on the UN and promotes adherence to international laws and norms within the UK. In addition to working with our UK-wide grassroots supporter base, we also serve as the Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations

We are disturbed by the allegations that have been made against the UK, which have not, in our opinion, been adequately addressed to date. Any violation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) represents a blow to international human rights and the rule of law. We are also concerned about the UK's ongoing reliance on diplomatic assurances, which several UN experts and mechanisms interpret as a breach of the *non-refoulement* obligation of UNCAT Article 3.

The right not to be subjected to torture is a widely-accepted principle that covers all states, from which no state can derogate and to which universal jurisdiction applies. A briefing we prepared for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition in 2008 (enclosed) sets out these points, with reference to the relevant UN treaties and mechanisms.

More generally, we are worried by the wider implications that these allegations, if unaddressed, may have for international laws and norms, as well as their impact on the UK's ability to make representations to other states with regard to their human rights records. As such, we were pleased to see the comprehensive periodic review by the UN Committee Against Torture in May 2013, which assessed the UK's compliance with its obligations under UNCAT and included a number of useful recommendations.

Given your leadership on this issue in Parliament and your position as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition, we are interested in hearing your views on what you perceive as the best way forward on this issue. We would particularly welcome your thoughts on the prospects for an effective independent inquiry into the allegations, and on what you see as the necessary steps for the UK to re-establish its credibility as a leading state in protecting and promoting the absolute prohibition of torture worldwide.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Jeremy Greenstock
Chairman, UNA-UK