



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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Andrew Dismore MP  
Chair of Joint Committee on Human Rights

*From The Minister of State*

Dear Andrew

I am writing to you about a reference in the Joint Committee on Human Rights report of 3 August on "Allegations of Complicity in Torture". The Report contained a reference to the number of cases of British nationals detained in Pakistan in relation to terrorism since 2000 (at paragraph 7) and referred to a discrepancy between the number of cases the FCO gave in answer to a PQ last year and a list of cases provided by the Guardian (JCHR Report, page 47, footnote 133). Although you have not asked us about this discrepancy, I consider that it is important that we address it now in order to set the record straight at the earliest opportunity.

Having seen the Guardian's list of cases, I can confirm that the FCO is aware of the 11 individuals that they have mentioned. The figure of 8 cases (amended from 6 originally) given last year in response to the PQ was based on a search of our case files. These records were not designed to be searched according to thematic criteria such as the reason for detention, but are set up for the retrieval of individual cases. Information from before the introduction of the current electronic consular casework database in 2003 is held in paper files which are weeded in line with HMG's data handling policy. Furthermore, we rely on the national authorities in any country to notify us of any detention and of the reasons for detention, and this is not always done, particularly in cases of dual nationals.

We continue to put in place systems to facilitate this type of data retrieval. But for the reasons above, and despite our best efforts, it is not always possible to give a definitive historical figure for detentions in connection with allegations of terrorism. Where we find discrepancies we will always aim to set the record straight as soon as possible.



Ivan Lewis

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Cc: Kim Howells, Chair of ISC and Andrew Tyrie MP ✓