

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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Great Minster House
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May 15, 2006

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing on behalf of Human Rights Watch to express our support for the House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition (APPG) draft measure to safeguard the rights of individuals subject to renditions.

Human Rights Watch has conducted extensive research on renditions and the secret detention of terrorism suspects by the United States government and its intelligence agencies. We have contributed that research to a number of regional investigations into individual renditions and secret detentions, including the European Parliament investigation by the Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners (TDIP) and the Council of Europe Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights inquiry into alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers involving member states.

In February 2006 the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Terry Davis, issued a report on rendition and secret detention in which he concluded that the current controls and procedures for civil air traffic in the vast majority of Council of Europe member states lack adequate safeguards against human rights violations.

The APPG measures would remedy those deficiencies in the United Kingdom by enhancing the permission system for requests to conduct renditions through UK territory or airspace. In our assessment, the measures would ensure that any rendition through UK territory or airspace would be conducted in conformity with the UK's international legal obligations, including its legally binding human rights commitments.

We understand that the APPG measures could become law by an amendment to the Air Navigation Order. Human Rights Watch respectfully requests that you give full consideration to the APPG measures and lend your support to such an amendment.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom Porteous
London Director
Human Rights Watch