Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan (IIA)

HQ PM(A) Newsletter: December 2025

Thank You

Whether you are a witness engaged in the Inquiry process, or if you are simply following it's progress, I want to extend my thanks. Your engagement and and support to the Inquiry this year is is greatly appreciated by me and also by Brigadier Sarah Pringle-Smith, Provost Marshal (Army). Your assistance has proved invaluable and has made a challenging task much more manageable. I look forward to building on this progress as we move into 2026.



1 - Colonel J R Alecock - Assistant Head Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan

Witness Support

Maj Matt Benn-Edwards has joined the RMP Inquiry team as the SO2 Witness Manager. He is here to provide support to all RMP witnesses that are requested to provide evidence to the Inquiry. Initially he will be supporting witnesses through the process of providing written evidence and, should witnesses be called to provide oral evidence, Matt will be on hand to provide support through that process, too.

Matt can be contacted via the multiuser mailbox during normal working hours, or out of hours by appointment. Matt can be contacted via mobile for easier access, whether via call or text, at: +44 (0) 7717 451 962 or via Microsoft Teams at: +44 303 372 6554.

Matt and the remainder of the RMP Inquiry team remain contactable at: ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk.

The team is always ready to assist, whether during office hours or by appointment for after-hours support.

The team has also been working with the Government Legal Department (GLD) to introduce a revised expense process, to ensure that witnesses are reimbursed reasonable expenses (as set out in the Protocol for the payment of non-legal expenses by the Independent Inquiry

relating to Afghanistan ('the Inquiry')) when travelling to witness meetings with GLD, in a timelier manner. Serving personnel will continue to submit claims via JPA. Veterans will now provide receipts to their GLD lawyer, who will then process them, ensuring timely payment via BACS. Further details on the process can be obtained from the RMP Inquiry team or GLD.

The Witness Support Leaflet, detailed in the July edition of the newsletter, outlines further support avenues, available to all witnesses.

Summaries of Evidence Published

The Inquiry has published four OPEN summaries of evidence from witnesses (N1466, N1803, N2444 and N5461) who were heard in CLOSED hearings during the Concerns and Complaints Part Two phase of the Inquiry.

The Concerns and Complaints Part Two CLOSED phase of work focused on eight individuals who held key posts within UK Special Forces during the period of mid-2010 to mid-2013. The evidence they gave related to concerns that were raised about the tactics, techniques and procedures used by UK Special Forces to conduct deliberate detention operations in Afghanistan. The remaining evidence summaries will be published in 2026.The Inquiry also heard evidence regarding allegations of extra judicial killings which were raised by the Afghan Partner Unit and a Third-Party Entity. These witnesses provided a written statement to the Inquiry following a Rule 9 request (under the Inquiry Rules 2006) and gave evidence in CLOSED hearings during the summer of 2024.

The Inquiry has published redacted written statements, redacted documents (such as email correspondence) and a summary of the CLOSED hearing transcripts. The summaries of the CLOSED hearing transcripts have been redacted in order to protect the identity of the witnesses and for reasons of National Security.

The Inquiry will continue to release evidence periodically on the Inquiry website, likely in a thematic way. The Inquiry ensures the evidence has been through all relevant checks, including National Security checks. Where possible we will seek to inform you ahead of time if your evidence is to be published in the future, so that we can answer any queries you may have and provide witness support if beneficial.

Inquiry Chair Issues Update

On 4th November 2025, the Chair of the Inquiry, Lord Justice Haddon-Cave, shared a 2025 progress update which is available to read on the Inquiry website and there is also a video summary available to watch on YouTube.

The Chair's update also advises that he has postponed the hearings for Deliberate Detention Operation (DDO) Phase 3A and 3B due to some potentially significant information which has

recently become available to the Inquiry. Further updates on this phase will be given in due course. The pause in DDO Phase 3 is likely to lead to a delay in RMP evidence being heard.

Judicial Review

Witness IIA126 has challenged a decision made by the Chair of the Inquiry by way of a Judicial Review (JR).

The case number for the JR is: AC-2025-LON-002497.

The Anonymity Order signed by The Hon. Mr Justice Chamberlain can be found on the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website: HERE.

A case management hearing for this JR was held at the Royal Courts of Justice on 3rd October 2025 where the RMP's application to become an Interest Party was heard by The Hon. Mrs Justice Steyn DBE.

Despite the disappointment of not being made an Interest Party in this JR, concessions were made which reinforce the independence of Service Policing.

The Approved Judgement relating to this case management hearing can be found on the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website: HERE.

MOD Application to Restrict Publication of Alan Pughsley QPM Material

You may recall that in January 2025 Alan Pughsley QPM gave OPEN evidence to the Inquiry over two days about the contents of the redacted version of his Report and addendum. Mr Pughsley is a former Chief Constable with extensive civilian policing experience in serious and complex crime. Through comparison with Home Office best practice, Mr Pughsley prepared a report based only on documentary evidence from the Operation NORTHMOOR and CESTRO investigations. Like any thorough review, Mr Pughsley's report casts a critical eye over all aspects of the investigations. In adducing evidence, it was recognised that the military context will need to be added by future RMP witnesses to the Inquiry.

You can watch the recordings of Mr Pughsley's OPEN evidence on YouTube and the transcripts can be found on the Inquiry website in the 'Transcripts' section.

During the second hearing day of Mr Pughsley's evidence, the GLD wrote to the Inquiry on behalf of both the Ministry of Defence Corporate Team (MODCT) and the Ministry of Defence Witness Legal Team (MODWLT) requesting that the publication of Mr Pughsley's Report and accompanying documentation be delayed. The letter stated that the MOD had "significant concerns… regarding the ability of the existing restriction orders, as currently interpreted and applied, to meaningfully guarantee the anonymity of witnesses" and

submitted that the evidence of Mr Pughsley and the accompanying documents "centrally engage[d]" those matters. It was not explained why such concerns about Mr Pughsley's evidence had not been raised previously. The MODCT's application was supported by extensive CLOSED evidence and submissions in relation to National Security, including written and oral evidence from Mr Barry Corradine, a former official in the MOD Department of Judicial Engagement Policy.

On 24th September 2025, the Chair of the Inquiry released an OPEN Ruling rejecting the MOD application to pause publication of all material until the conclusion of the DDO evidence, finding that it was "untenable" to do so. The Ruling, titled: "OPEN Ruling on the Ministry of Defence Application to Restrict Publication of Alan Pughsley QPM Material and Other Materials" can be found on the Inquiry's website under the 'Rulings' section and the RMP position of neutrality is outlined in this document at paragraph 61, page 18.

Absences

We will be engaging on a regular basis with the Inquiry to update them with witness non-availability and to ascertain the timeline for RMP evidence.

Please contact the RMP Inquiry team at the multiuser mailbox with your 2026 long-term absences and non-availability. Do inform us of your 2026 deployments, courses and significant travel plans, etc, to ensure that we can keep all parties informed.

Disclosing Information

If you have any information that you believe is relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, you may either contact us via the RMP Inquiry team group mailbox ***or*** you can make direct contact with the Inquiry team using the contact details at this link: https://www.iia.independent-inquiry.uk/providing-information-to-the-inquiry/. If you have any relevant material to share with the Inquiry and wish to remain anonymous, you can use the IIA SecureDrop system. Further information around this can be found using the same link as above.

The Inquiry continue to reach out to individuals who they require evidence from with Rule 9 requests. A Rule 9 evidence request is made under the Inquiries Act 2005 and is a legal notification sent to either individuals or organisations instructing them to provide relevant information or material to a Statutory Inquiry. **We must highlight that the Inquiry does have the power to compel evidence under section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005.**

If you are approached by the Inquiry please speak to the RMP Inquiry team at this email address: ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk. This will ensure that the right support is in place and enables us to act as a single point of contact, as well as ensuring that the agreed

processes and protocols in place for the Inquiry to interact with Core Participants, is adhered to.

If you are approached to give evidence, this is the opportunity for you to provide your honest thoughts and opinions to support this vital work.

If you have any information that does not fall within the Inquiry's Terms of Reference then we request that you report this to the Police.

The Defence Serious Crime Command (DSCC) is independent of the Chain of Command and responsible for investigating serious crime committed by persons subject to service law, in the UK and abroad. The Victim Witness Care Unit (VWCU) forms part of the DSCC and acts as a central point of contact for victims and witnesses of serious crime whilst providing support and guidance where required.

To find out more visit:

1. Defence Serious Crime Unit - Reporting a crime
2. Contact the VWCU

Communications

This newsletter will now be released on a quarterly basis. The next edition will be in March 2026.

Please continue to monitor your inboxes to ensure that you are up to date with Inquiry related correspondence. If you wish to discuss anything about the Inquiry, please reach out to the RMP Inquiry team.

If you would like to receive this newsletter on a different email address, or if you would like to opt out of receiving this newsletter, then please contact SO1 Policy and Communications IIA via the group mailbox.

If you are aware of anyone that is affected by the IIA, and if they are not already on our communications distribution list, please inform us and we will add them.

All previous editions of this newsletter can be found on the Regimental Headquarters website under the 'Newsletters' section.



The Media

Several personnel have been contacted by the media in relation to RMP legacy investigations, which is likely to continue as the Inquiry progresses. As all personnel, both serving and retired, are subject to the Official Secrets Act and it is advised that you refer any enquiries to the MOD Press Office who will engage and ensure all enquiries are handled appropriately. Their contact number is: +44207 2187 907.

If you are contacted by the media, you should inform both us (using the group mailbox) and the MOD press office, using the following email address: DDC-PR-News@mod.gov.uk.

You may wish to consider the amount of career detail you post on your social media profile(s), which could be used by journalists to make contact. Further information can be found at the following link to assist you in securing your social media accounts: https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/social-media-how-to-use-it-safely

Welfare

Your welfare throughout the proceedings remains of upmost importance to us and we will make ourselves available on any day of the week, or location, that suits you in order to provide you with the support you require.

Please be assured that support remains available through the chain of command, the RMP Regimental Secretary, the AGC Assistant Corps Secretary, the Army Operational Legacy Branch, and the Veterans Gateway. Should you have any concerns you wish to discuss; please do not hesitate to do so.

We encourage you to reach out to the following individuals and organisations for support, should you need it:

RMP Inquiry team:

ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk

SO2 Witness Manager:

Mobile at +44 (0) 7717 451 962 or Microsoft Teams at +44 303 372 6554

Army Operational Legacy Branch (AOLB):

ArmyPers-APSG-AOLB-0MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk

RMP Regimental Secretary:

Col Jeremy Green, Reg-Sec@RHQRMP.onmicrosoft.com

Adjutant General's Corps Headquarters:

Assistant Corps Secretary Maj (retired) Ben Culleton, AGCRHQ-0GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk

The Veterans Gateway:

http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/

Inquiry Support page:

Support - Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan

Op COURAGE:

Access Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service - GOV.UK

Useful Links

Defence Connect:

Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan | Defence Connect (mod.uk)

Inquiry website:

https://www.iia.independent-inquiry.uk/

Inquiry Terms of Reference:

https://iiaweb-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/2023090_Terms_Of_Reference_IIA.pdf

MOD Inquiry SharePoint landing page (MODNet users only):

https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/IntranetMOD/SitePages/The-Independent-Inquiry-relating-to-Afghanistan.aspx?web=1

Feedback

We are very keen to hear your feedback regarding this newsletter. Is there something we can add that will make this process easier for you? Is there a section, not already included, that you would like to see? Would you like to see profiles of those in the RMP Inquiry team so that you can get to know us? Please don't hesitate to contact SO1 Policy and Communications IIA with your suggestions via the group mailbox.