Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan (IIA)

HQ PM(A) Update: January 2025

Hearings

The Inquiry is holding three days of OPEN hearings at the Royal Courts of Justice from **Monday 27th January to Wednesday 29th January 2025**.

The Inquiry will be hearing evidence from Alan Pughsley QPM. Alan Pughsley is a policing expert who has extensive civilian policing experience in serious and complex crime. Mr Pughsley is an expert witness who has prepared a report for the Inquiry focusing on Op NORTHMOOR and Op CESTRO.

This report has been produced based on Mr Pughsley's review of documentary evidence. Like any thorough review, it casts a critical eye over all aspects of the investigations. Royal Military Police witnesses and others involved in the Operation NORTHMOOR and CESTRO investigations will have their own opportunity to give oral evidence in due course. It will ultimately be for the Chair of the Inquiry to make findings based on all the evidence he has heard.

The hearings will be live on YouTube at this link.

Inquiry Update

As the Chair indicated in his last update at the beginning of the 23rd September OPEN hearing, there is significant Inquiry work ongoing, however the majority of this is taking place in CLOSED due to its nature.

The update at the last OPEN hearing was very informative and the link to the transcript is here, or can be watched on YouTube at 27:04-39:16.

RMP Inquiry Team Uplift

The RMP Inquiry team which is supporting the RMP's response to the Inquiry has been uplifted to provide greater support to our witnesses once they are called forward to give written and oral evidence.

Communications

We are aware that not everyone who served on Op CESTRO and Op NORTHMOOR receive this newsletter. We would be grateful if you could pass this on to those you served with and ask them to contact us via the RMP IIA group mailbox so that we can add them to the distribution list.

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

If you would like to receive this newsletter on a different email address then please contact SO1 Policy and Communications IIA with your amendment using the group mailbox. Please also let them know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

Disclosing Information

We continue to reach out to individuals who we require evidence from, in order to fulfil Rule 9 requests from the Inquiry. 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. If you are approached by the Inquiry team please speak to our IIA 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 have any other information that you believe is relevant to the Inquiry, you may either contact us via the HQ PM(A) IIA 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/contact-us/. 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 can be found using the same link as above.

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.

Please continue to monitor your inboxes to ensure that you are up to date with Inquiry related correspondence. If you wish to discuss emails from the Inquiry team, please reach out to the HQ PM(A) IIA 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 & we will add them.

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 HQ PM(A) IIA 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.

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

Army Operational Legacy Branch (AOLB):

Maj Tracey Brooks, tracey.brooks102@mod.gov.uk

RMP Regimental Secretary:

Col Jeremy Green, regsec@rhqrmp.org

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/

RMP Inquiry team:

ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk

Inquiry Welfare page:

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

Useful Links

DefNet:

https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/SitePages/An-update-on-the-Independent-Inquiry-relating-to-Afghanistan.aspx

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

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 on the IIA team so that you can get to know us? Please don't hesitate to contact SO1 Policy and Communications IIA with your suggestions using the RMP IIA group mailbox.