Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan (IIA)

HQ PM(A) Newsletter: June 2026

Inquiry lift Restriction Order to permit naming the SAS and SBS

The Chair of the Inquiry, the Rt Hon Lord Justice Haddon-Cave has granted an application by the BBC to vary the Restriction Order that prevented the use of Special Air Service (SAS), Special Boat Service (SBS) in reporting. The Chair concluded that it is *"appropriate to reconsider and revoke the August 2023 Restriction Order in relation to the ciphers 'UKSF1' and 'UKSF3'".*

In making this decision, the Chair considered four general questions under Section 19(4) of the Inquiries Act 2005.

The Chair is satisfied that:

- The evidence does not establish that removing the Restriction Order over the terms 'SAS' and 'SBS' would materially increase the risk of harm or damage to National Security.
- Maintaining the ciphers 'UKSF1' and 'UKSF3' would significantly inhibit the ability of the Inquiry to allay public concern.

- No longer imposing these restrictions would not delay or impair the efficiency or effectiveness of the Inquiry or result in additional cost.
- That imposing the said restrictions is no longer conducive to the Inquiry fulfilling its Terms of Reference, or necessary in the public interest.

The Chair of the Inquiry has refused a Further Application made by the BBC to vary the Restriction Order that prevents the media from naming two senior UK Special Forces personnel. In making this decision, the Chair considered the four general questions under Section 19(4) of the Inquiries Act 2005. The Chair remains satisfied that:

- There is a material risk of harm or damage (including damage to National Security) if the restriction which requires the use of nominals when referring to the Individuals is lifted.
- Maintaining the use of the nominals in relation to the Individuals would not significantly inhibit the ability of the Inquiry to allay public concern at this stage (i.e prior to the Chair reaching any evidential conclusions).
- Continuing to impose said restrictions would not delay or impair the efficiency of effectiveness of the Inquiry or result in additional cost.
- Continuing to impose these restrictions remains conducive to the Inquiry fulfilling its Terms of Reference, and necessary in the public interest.

The Chair made clear in his August 2023 Ruling that he would *"keep all Restriction Orders under review during the course of the Inquiry to ensure that they remained fit for purpose as the Inquiry progressed".*

The Chair's decision only applies to the identification of SAS and SBS and to permit the use of the term 'squadron'. The true identities of specific squadrons remain restricted. Existing protections for individual anonymity and operational detail remain firmly in place. Any reporting of the identities of ciphered witnesses remains a breach of the Restriction Order. The Inquiry will continue to monitor media reporting to ensure that Restriction Orders in place are adhered to.

On 1st May 2025, the RMP served a position statement to the Inquiry adopting a neutral stance on the BBC Cross-Application made by the MOD and the BBC.

On 10th February 2026, the RMP informed the Inquiry Legal Team that they adopted a neutral stance in relation to the BBC Further Application. However, the RMP emphasised that the ***"safety and security of Service personnel, including those who have retired from service, is of paramount importance"*** and considered that the *"Ministry of Defence Corporate Team is in the best position, through their possession of the necessary information and resources, to be able to identify any such risks".*

The OPEN Rulings can be found on the Inquiry's website.

Absences

We continue to engage on a regular basis, via our legal representatives, with the Inquiry to update them with witness non-availability and to remain sighted on the Inquiry's timeline for RMP evidence.

Please continue to contact the RMP Inquiry team at the multiuser mailbox with your 2026 and 2027 long-term absences and non-availability. Do keep informing us of your deployments, courses and significant travel plans, etc, to ensure that we can keep all parties informed.

Concerns & Complaints Part 2 Evidence

In May 2026 the Inquiry published on their website three OPEN summaries of evidence from witnesses who were heard in CLOSED hearings during the Concerns and Complaints Part Two phase of the Inquiry, this is a continuation of the evidence summaries published in December 2025.

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 techniques, tactics and procedures used by UK Special Forces to conduct deliberate detention operations in Afghanistan. The remaining evidence summary 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 to protect the identity of the witnesses and for reasons of National Security.

The RMP Inquiry team understand that, in addition to those mentioned above, further gisted summaries of evidence will be published by the Inquiry in due course.

Farewells

At the end of May, the team bid farewell to Legal Advisor Captain Nathan Davidson, assigned to HQ 1 United Kingdom Division Legal Branch, and to SO2 Witness Manager Major Matt Benn-Edwards, assigned as the Head of Crime within the Defence Serious Crime Unit. They are thanked by all members of the team for their hard work in supporting the Inquiry and are wished the best in their next roles.

Until a new Legal Advisor is formally in post, Lieutenant Colonel Matt Collie will provide support to the RMP Inquiry Team in the interim.

Witness Support

Until the next SO2 Witness Manager is in place, please do contact Staff Sergeant Jamie Yemm, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Mullaney and the remainder of the team at the multiuser address with any queries or concerns you may have. The team will continue to provide support to all RMP witnesses that are requested to provide evidence to the Inquiry and can be contacted via the multiuser mailbox (ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk) during normal working hours, or out of hours by appointment. Yemm can be contacted via mobile for easier access, whether via call or text, at: +44 (0) 7717 451 962.

The expenses process remains in place 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 the Government Legal Department, 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 outlines further support avenues, available to all witnesses.

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 (ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk) ***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 is released on a quarterly basis. The next edition will be in September 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 (ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk).

If you are aware of anyone that is affected by the Inquiry, 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.

RHQ RMP

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 at ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk 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

SSgt Jamie Yemm:

+44 (0) 7717 451 962

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

National Bullying Helpline:

Cyberbullying and online harassment | Bullying online advice

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:

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. Please don't hesitate to contact SO1 Policy and Communications IIA with your suggestions via the group mailbox.