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Thank you for your letter of 3 July, including a copy of your statement to the House of Commons and the accompanying information giving details of the 391 flights where concerns about rendition flights in UK airspace have been raised.

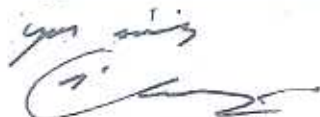
We are of course pleased to see that the FCO is continuing to look at this issue. However it is disappointing that your letter does not refer to the various recommendations made by Liberty in our letter of 27 March (copy attached).

In your letter you state that 'Secretary Rice has also underlined to me the firm US understanding that there will be no rendition through the UK, our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies without first receiving our express permission'. While this is encouraging these assurances should be considered in the light of recent comments made by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee. In the press notice of 20 July accompanying the publication of the Committee's report on the FCO's annual report its Chair Mike Gapes MP said, 'We conclude that, given the recent US practice of water-boarding, the British Government can no longer rely on US assurances that it does not use torture.'

The Committee's comments underline the importance of a proactive approach from the British Government. As we stated in our earlier letter, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission has identified a need for all member States to take positive steps to ensure that their airspace cannot be used for rendition purposes. The powers we have suggested and drafted (contained in the attached letter) would allow the UK to meet these obligations.

We would also repeat our call for an independent inquiry into the rendition allegations. This would do much to restore public and international regard for the UK's commitment to human rights.

Your letter and recent statement emphasise the Government's intention to uphold UK law and ensure compliance with our international obligations. The further actions we suggest will demonstrate a clear commitment to achieving these aims.



Shami Chakrabarti  
 Liberty Director