The Baha Mousa Public Inquiry

Inquiry Chairman: The Right Honourable Sir William Gage

Thursday 12 February 2009

Press notice

Opening statement

The Baha Mousa Public Inquiry announced today its intention to hear the Opening Statement of Counsel to the Inquiry on 13th July 2009.

The Inquiry, set up under the chairmanship of Sir William Gage, has already conducted several preliminary hearings and given legal rulings in respect of them and continues the significant task of preparing the documentation and evidence for the public hearings.

This preparation process necessarily involves regular liaison with other parties, including the Detainees, the Treasury Solicitor, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, and the procedures for ensuring the security and integrity of documents have been laid down following representations from all interested parties. These safeguards, although vitally necessary, are time consuming and require detailed consideration of many individual documents and the time before the Opening Statement will be fully utilised in this essential process as well as in the taking of witness statements and analysis of the documentary evidence.

Note to Editors

1. The Opening Statement will be held in open session. All Hearings are held at the Inquiry's premises in the City of London: Finlaison House, 15-17 Furnival Street, London EC4A 1AB. (View location map).
2. The Chairman has indicated a provisional date for the next Directions Hearing on Wednesday 18 March 2009. This will be confirmed in due course pending submissions from Core Participants. Please note that the provisional hearing date of 18 February will not now be used.

3. An issues list is available on the Inquiry's website at www.bahamousainquiry.org/key_documents/index.htm. This is designed as a guide to the issues that the Inquiry is likely to cover and it may be subject to revision from time to time.

4. Directions hearings and the Opening Statement are open to the public. Journalists wishing to attend the hearing should contact the Inquiry press office (details below) and will need to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the start of proceedings to ensure entry. All attendees will be required to undergo security checks in line with normal court procedures before being admitted to the building, and photography and the use of mobile phones in the hearing room is prohibited.

5. Court Reporting Rules: Sir William Gage highlighted at the Preliminary Hearing that at the Court Martial of seven servicemen arising out of these events, the presiding Judge Advocate made an order, which remains in force for this Inquiry, requiring the media not to publish certain features and information in relation to the Defendants. A note on these restrictions and subsequent orders made by the Chairman are available on the website.

For more information please contact Suzanne Halls or Mark Fenwick in the Baha Mousa Inquiry Press Office on 020 7261 8327 / 07971 186710, or visit the website at www.bahamousainquiry.org.