



Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

House of Commons · London · SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon David Lidington MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

30 April 2019

Dear David,

CSSF: Pakistan Rule of Law programme

Further to our correspondence on the Pakistan 'Rule of Law' programme funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, I am writing in relation to allegations brought to the Committee's attention by the human rights organisation Reprieve.

In a briefing note submitted to the Committee (attached) and reported on by *The Telegraph* on 13 April, Reprieve highlights the UK Government's support for Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Courts. The note states that Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Courts handed down 359 death sentences in the period between 2013 and 2018, during which time the UK Government was actively seeking to build the capacity of this element of the Pakistani justice system under the Rule of Law programme.

When you provided oral evidence to the Committee in November, you told us that

... every programme needs to comply with this country's domestic and human rights obligations. [Q13]

However, Reprieve asserts that UK assistance to Pakistan is contributing to death sentences.

The Committee would like to invite your comment on Reprieve's paper, and in particular on:

1. Whether, in your assessment, this element of the Pakistan Rule of Law programme complies with UK human rights obligations?
2. Whether the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) assessments for this element of the Rule of Law programme identified significant human rights risks, and how the project design was adjusted to mitigate these risks?
3. Which Minister signed off the OSJAs for the relevant elements of the Rule of Law programme?

The Committee would appreciate it if you could reply to these questions in a letter for publication by 21 May 2019.

Sincerely
Margaret.

Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Chair