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## PRESS RELEASE

### Former British ambassador says CIA and MI6 use testimony obtained under torture

***"Under the UK-US intelligence sharing agreement, the US and UK have taken a policy decision that they will get testimonies obtained under torture in third countries. I say that with regret and with certainty,"*** said Craig Murray, former UK ambassador to Uzbekistan, speaking to MEPs in the temporary committee investigating the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for illegal activities.

Giving evidence on Thursday, Mr Murray spoke of cooperation among national intelligence services when dealing with terrorism suspects detained in countries like Uzbekistan, where he was the British ambassador from 2002 to 2004. He said he had hard evidence that the Uzbek intelligence services often torture detainees. He said the CIA and the British intelligence service MI6 did not participate in such interrogations, but they shared the information obtained from them.

*"I saw evidence of scores of cases of torture in Uzbekistan: people boiled to death, photos of serious injuries, mutilation of genitals, rape of individuals in front of their relatives... until they would sign a confession,"* Mr Murray said. When he tried to share his concern with the UK Foreign Office by sending several letters and faxes, he was finally told that *"Jack Straw discussed the issue with the head of the MI6 and reached the conclusion that we should continue to receive intelligence material obtained from confessions under torture and that this would not contravene the UN Convention against Torture"*, since the UK government did not torture people directly. He said Foreign Office legal advisor Michael Wood replied in a letter that the UN Convention against torture only forbids information obtained under torture *"to be invoked as evidence in any proceedings"*.

*In this way, the British formal position can be maintained when they say 'we do not condone, use or instigate torture,'"* Mr Murray added. He said he had continued to protest, which led to him being forced to leave the civil service. Mr Murray added that these events left a *"lack of credibility of the intelligence material obtained, intended to paint the false picture that Uzbekistan opposition people were linked to Al Qaeda and Bin Laden"*.

#### Other EU countries

Asked by rapporteur Claudio Fava (PES, IT) whether other EU countries had used intelligence obtained under torture, he said: *"I am not aware of the CIA sharing intelligence with other European services but I know that Germany in particular had close links with the Uzbek intelligence security services and I believe this is still happening. They still have a military base there"*.

Asked about the alleged existence of detention centres in Bulgaria or Romania, Mr Murray said he had never come across any evidence of such centres and was sceptical about their existence. However, he said he was aware of the use of torture in other third countries like Syria, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco.

The members of the Committee also heard from EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator Gijs de Vries, Spanish journalist from Diario Mallorca Matías Vallés, and the UN peacekeeper Edward Horgan. This press release will be updated with details of their comments in due course.

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