

General Sir Roly Walker KCB DSO ADC Gen
Chief of the General Staff

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DO/CGS

17 June 2024

Dear Officers, Soldiers and Veterans of the British Army

Sent electronically.

I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you, upon assuming the role of Chief of the General Staff, to reiterate the messages given regarding the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan¹ by my predecessor in his letter of December 2023.

Given the importance of the subject matter, I want you to be clear that I share the views expressed by my predecessor in that this Inquiry has my full cooperation and support, and I expect all levels of the Chain of Command to continue to take the same approach. Whilst this is a difficult and emotive issue, it is right that these allegations are fully investigated and that we consider whether there are further lessons to be learnt to help us continue to fight and win wars in the future. This is about transparency, trust, accountability and maintaining the very highest standards – it should not be construed as diminishing the service, sacrifice and commitment displayed by the vast majority who served with great distinction in Afghanistan.

Anyone who thinks they might have information or material that might assist the Inquiry should come forward. You can contact the Inquiry directly ([link](#)) or you can speak in the first instance to the Army's Afghanistan Inquiry Response team (ArmyStratCen-ICE-PP-AFG-InvGp@mod.gov.uk). Lord Justice Haddon-Cave has obtained several undertakings to protect those who engage with the Inquiry. The detail on those undertakings is in the [joint letter](#) from the Chiefs and the Permanent Secretary issued in December 2023, and also in the more recent [Defnet article](#). If you would like more information about these undertakings, please speak to the Army Operational Legacy Branch (APSG-AOLB-Op-Legacy-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk) or contact the Inquiry directly.

I am committed to ensuring we support our people through this process, which may be challenging for those involved. As the Inquiry is underway, I want to remind you about the legal and welfare

¹ The Inquiry is looking into allegations of unlawful activity by Special Forces during Deliberate Detention Operations in Afghanistan from mid-2010 to mid-2013. Further detail, including transcripts and recordings of the Open Hearings, and the Inquiry's Terms of Reference (TORs), can be found via <https://www.iiaindependentinquiry.uk>

support that is available, not just for members of the Army but for all members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and civilians working for Defence.

Legal support for personnel is available for individuals involved with the Inquiry. Notably, individuals who require it are entitled to legal support at public expense if facing allegations that relate to actions taken during the individual's service when performing operational duties. Where personnel are current or former members of the Royal Military Police, they will be supported by the RMP (ARMYPM-IIAGroupmailbox@mod.gov.uk) and its own legal team.

You can also obtain welfare support through the Chain of Command, or through the Army Operational Legacy Branch, Regimental Headquarters, and associations for veterans. There are also helpful resources on the Army Health and Wellbeing page of Defence Connect and support is available via your local HIVE, medical centre, or the NHS for veterans. If you are a civilian, there are also useful resources through the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#).

Finally, I would like to thank members of the Army who have engaged with the Inquiry so far, whether through the provision of witness statements or oral evidence, or those who have helped search for, redact, and provide operational records, doctrine, and policy documents to the Inquiry. I would also like to thank members of the Inquiry Response team helping to liaise with the Inquiry and wider Defence, and of course those who provide support to our soldiers and officers.

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'CR Walker', is centered on the page.