

The Iraq Fatality Investigations

Inspector: Sir George Newman

Progress Statement #2 - 22 September 2014

1. This is a short update on the arrangements for the public hearing which is to take place in London and which is to be transmitted to Iraq by videolink on the 26th of September, namely, this coming Friday.
2. I made a funding decision recently in both the cases I am presently investigating in favour of the families and witnesses in Iraq, allowing them to have the benefit of legal advice, support and assistance from a lawyer in Iraq, Ms Al Qurnawi, who practices from Basrah in Iraq. Ms Al Qurnawi is familiar with English law, having been admitted as a solicitor in England in 2005. My decision is posted on the website with this statement.
3. The arrangements for the 26th of September are for a pathologist in England to give evidence about the cause of death of Mr Nadheem Abdullah. Further, for a witness in Iraq, Dr Said Abdul Razak, to give evidence about the cause of death of Mr Hassan Abbas Said. It will be the first opportunity for the families and witnesses and any other interested persons to participate in a public hearing forming part of these investigations. Considerable effort, expense and time has been incurred to arrange this hearing.
4. In the first week of August, Ms Al Qurnawi received instructions from the family and witnesses who are due to participate in the investigation into the death of Mr Nadheem Abdullah. Regrettably, late last week I was informed that the family and witnesses: (1) had withdrawn their instructions from Ms Al Qurnawi, and (2) had stated that they did not intend to participate in the investigation on the 26th of September or at all.

5. I have received information which suggests that they may have made these regrettable decisions because they have been subjected to improper pressure and misleading information has been given to them. I have ordered an urgent investigation into the facts.
6. In the meantime, I wish to make it clear that the hearing scheduled for the 26th of September will take place, and I have asked Ms Al Qurnawi to be present via the videolink in order to act on my behalf. She will be available to assist anyone who attends and she will be able to give them the benefit of any advice, assistance and support which they may desire.
7. I urge the family and witnesses in the case of Abdullah to attend and to participate.