

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE



INDEPENDENT INQUIRY
RELATING TO
AFGHANISTAN

Ministry of Defence Legal Team

By email only

Wednesday 16 September 2026

Dear all,

Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan – DAS Update

On 6 August 2026 you wrote to the Inquiry to alert us to the fact that in July 2026 there had been a substantial upload of additional documents to the DAS server. Your letter stated that initial interrogation had indicated that there were 97 million unique records that related to the period covered by the Terms of Reference, and which had not previously been the subject of searches made in responding to the Inquiry.

The letter also mentions “additional folders that may include relevant material that were not captured by the search terms in the first instance.” Within that we understand there to have been 130 image files to date which have already been assessed as relevant.

Your letter concludes by saying “we understand that this is a significant and unexpected increase in documentation. We would be grateful to discuss with the Inquiry the potential implications of these points.”

In light of this revelation, I wrote to you on 18 August 2026 asking a series of questions about the above matters. I asked for a response to that by 25 August 2026.

On 24 August a member of your team wrote to the Inquiry to say that “due to leave, MOD is unable to respond substantively this week. We will revert with a detailed response as soon as possible following the August Bank holiday.”

Since then, the Inquiry has received no further correspondence from you, either seeking further time to respond, or engaging with the questions.

This is not satisfactory.

The Chair has directed me to write to you:

1. To require that you respond to the questions posed in my letter of 18 August 2026 by no later than **4pm on Friday 18 September 2026 and sooner if possible;**
2. To inform you that he proposes to hold an open hearing on **Friday 25 September 2026**, at which he expects your leading Counsel, Andrew O'Connor KC, to attend with the Permanent Under Secretary so that a full explanation can be provided for these matters, and assurances provide to the Chair that this will not impact on his proposed timetable;

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3. To require that the MOD provide by no later than **4pm on Friday 18 September and sooner if possible** OPEN versions of:
- (a) Your letter dated 8 August 2026;
 - (b) Our response dated 18 August 2026;
 - (c) This letter, and
 - (d) Any response to it.

So that these may be shared with Core Participants and published in advance of the hearing.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Piers', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Piers Doggart

Solicitor to the Inquiry
Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan