INDEPENDENT INQUIRY RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN

RMP HEARINGS - CHAIR'S CONCLUDING REMARKS

– @ c.1:30 on Thursday 12th November 2026

The Rt Hon. Lord Justice Haddon-Cave:

1. We have now completed the planned three weeks of hearings of RMP witnesses. The remaining RMP witnesses will be heard next year

RMP hearings

2. I would like to thank the witnesses who have given evidence and some who have waited very patiently for a long time to do so I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Core Participants and their teams - the MOD, the RMP and the families represented by Leigh Day - for their co-operation and co-ordination with the Inquiry team and helping these hearings run (relatively) smoothly and on schedule. These OPEN hearings have involved a huge amount of unheralded work in the background by many people – on the gisting and redaction side, preparing copious R10 questions despite curtailed timetables, dealing with National Security issues as and when they have arisen. And particular

thanks, of course, go to my hard-working team – as well as the redoubtable RTS digital team, Lawrence and your people. Thank you..

Reason for an Inquiry

3. Members of the public and others who have had the opportunity to observe on-line some of the OPEN live-streamed evidence these past weeks , may have gained a better understanding as <u>why</u> it was thought necessary that the serious concerns and allegations raised, during the RMP investigation Operation NORTHMOOR, required the most careful and thorough investigation by an independent inquiry such as this.

4. The daily live-stream links will remain available on the website, and witness transcripts and documentary evidence will be put up shortly in the normal way.

Workstreams

5. Let me turn briefly to what lies ahead and the timetable for the next phases of the Inquiry.

6. As I indicated on 12th October, the Inquiry is pressing ahead on all fronts with key workstreams and lines of inquiry, in particular:

- *Forensics* – including expert analysis of thousands of high-resolution photographic images which were taken in the course of these DDOs by special forces
- Interrogation of the backup tapes of the *ITS server which as you know were seized; and*
- Thirdly, gathering evidence from **a variety of** *further witnesses* who have been the subject of Rule 9 requests, who have continued to come forward direct to the Inquiry, or who have been identified by the Inquiry's investigators. It is anticipated that this will include members of the Afghan military who served on some of the operations that are under consideration.

Gisting

7. Meanwhile, the Inquiry will continue its programme of National Security redacting and gisting in order that material from witnesses who have given evidence in CLOSED may safely be published as required by a public inquiry to enable the public to understand the evidence which the Inquiry has received and is considering . I am grateful to the continued assistance and collaboration of the MOD and Inquiry gisting teams in this important work - to ensure national security, operational sensitivities, and witness anonymity and safety continues to be properly protected.

Forward look

8. As regards a forward look and the timetable, I can indicate that in January through April next year we will be hearing:
    - Evidence in OPEN from the *Afghan Families*
    - Evidence in OPEN from the lead *Forensic Expert*
    - Evidence in OPEN from the *Ballistics Expert*

9. And we will be hearing evidence in CLOSED from:
    - *Further witnesses* under the heading Concerns & Complaints
    - *Further witnesses* who have approached the Inquiry directly.

10. And **finally**, we will be calling the *Phase 3B* witnesses, namely members of the relevant SAS Squadrons to afford them the opportunity to give evidence about the DDOs in question.

Deadline for completion of 'unlawful killings' evidence – April 2027

11. As I have made clear, I have set a deadline for the completion of the evidence in relation to the allegations of 'unlawful killings' by 30th April next year. I re-iterate that this deadline must be kept to.

12. As I have said, it is not fair to the veterans, serving soldiers and officers, their families or the Afghan families, for the Inquiry to be delayed further for want of resources or efficiency.

13. I remain grateful for the continuing support for the Inquiry from the Chiefs of Staff, the Permanent Secretary and Secretary State for Defence Thank you. We will now adjourn to a date to be notified.