



Press Release
For immediate release

Independent Report finds serious failings in Royal Military Police investigation into Afghanistan allegations

The Inquiry commissioned a preliminary expert report into Operation Northmoor, the Royal Military Police investigation into allegations arising from operations in Afghanistan. The report was authored by the former Chief Constable of Kent Police, Alan Pughsley QPM. Mr Pughsley also gave OPEN evidence to the Inquiry in January 2025. [Hearings - Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan](#)

This report concluded that Operation Northmoor was poorly led, inadequately resourced, and failed to meet the standards expected of a major investigation.

The report does not make findings that unlawful killings occurred, nor does it determine criminal liability for any individual. Instead, it sets out in detail how Mr Pughsley considers that structural weaknesses, leadership failures and repeated changes in strategy and personnel undermined the investigation's effectiveness from an early stage.

The report is critical of delays in referring allegations to the Service Police, shortcomings in leadership and decision-making, inadequate record-keeping, and missed opportunities to secure evidence and witness accounts at an early stage. It also highlights the particular challenges of conducting investigations years after operational deployments, noting that key witnesses were interviewed several years after events took place, reducing the prospect of achieving clear outcomes.

The report confirms that two individuals were at one stage identified as suspects during Operation Northmoor, but records that they were never arrested or charged, and that suspect status was subsequently removed as the investigation's strategy changed and lines of enquiry were exhausted. The report questions aspects of how those decisions were made and recorded, but does not conclude that arrests should, or would, have led to prosecutions.

Mr Pughsley concludes that Operation Northmoor can properly be regarded as a failed investigation, not because the RMP did not recognise the seriousness of the allegations, but because of weaknesses in leadership, experience, independence, resourcing, and investigative approach. He identifies lessons for how complex, serious, sensitive investigations involving military operations should be conducted in future.

The Inquiry will hear evidence from witnesses who worked on Operation Northmoor, and Mr Pughsley will then be commissioned to review his findings in the light of their evidence and submit a final report informed by that evidence.

The Chair will then consider Mr Pughsley's final report findings alongside the broader body of evidence he is examining.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The report was examined over two days of OPEN hearings in January 2025.