

General Sir Patrick Sanders KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen
Chief of the General Staff

**MOD Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2HB**



DO/CGS

Dear all

You will have seen a letter concerning the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan, signed jointly by the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Permanent Secretary, and each of the service Chiefs. Given the importance of the subject matter, I wanted to communicate directly to all who are serving or have served in the Army, whether Regular or Reserve.

The Inquiry is looking into allegations of unlawful activity by Special Forces during Deliberate Detention Operations in Afghanistan from mid-2010 to mid-2013, including the broader response to these allegations. Where serious allegations of this nature are made, it is important that they are looked into thoroughly and independently. This is not only the hallmark of a democratic society but also the Rule of Law we strive to uphold.

I want you to be crystal clear that this Inquiry has my full cooperation and support, and I expect all levels of the Chain of Command to take the same approach. The Inquiry is entitled to see all evidence of any classification, and I encourage anyone who thinks they might have information or material that would help the Inquiry to contact them. I offer that you do not have to speak to anyone in the Army before approaching the Inquiry; you can contact the Inquiry directly. The Inquiry's website is at <https://www.iiaindependentinquiry.uk/>.

Noting its importance, the Army has created a new two-star post of Director Afghanistan Inquiry Response (Army). I am pleased to announce that Major General Alex Taylor CB, currently the Director of the Army Legal Services, will be appointed to this position in January 2024 in order to better coordinate the Army response to the Inquiry.

The judge leading the Inquiry has obtained a number of undertakings to provide protections for those who engage with the Inquiry. The detail on those undertakings is in the joint letter from the Chiefs and the Permanent Secretary. 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.

You can obtain welfare support through the Chain of Command in the first instance 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 Connect¹ and support is available via your local HIVE, medical centre, or the NHS for veterans².

Patrick Sanders

¹ <https://jive.defencegateway.mod.uk/groups/ahp/pages/mental-fitness-wellbeing>

² England: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/mental-health/veterans-reservists/>; Scotland: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/health-rights-for-veterans#health-resources-for-veterans>
Wales: <https://www.veteranswales.co.uk> Northern Ireland: <https://nivso.org.uk>