

Leanna Burnard
Legal Officer for Asset Recovery and Sanctions
REDRESS
87 Vauxhall Walk
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UK

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Re: Findings and conclusions of independent medico-legal evaluation of Ms Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Dear Ms Burnard,

Following your request to conduct an independent medico-legal evaluation into the allegations of torture and ill-treatment by Ms Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, the **International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)** hereby provides our findings and conclusions. Comprising of 158 rehabilitation centres in 74 countries, the IRCT is one of the world's leading experts on the Istanbul Protocol¹ and a key provider of technical assistance and expertise on legal and forensic investigation to policy makers worldwide, including many state, regional, and inter-governmental bodies.

To fulfil your request, we asked members of the **Independent Forensic Expert Group (IFEG) – Prof Dr Michele Heisler and Dr Lilla Hardi** – to conduct a comprehensive physical and psychological evaluation of Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe. The IFEG is an international body of 42 preeminent independent forensic specialists from 23 countries, who are recognised global leaders in the medico-legal investigation of torture and ill-treatment. Prof Dr Heisler and Dr Hardi's exceptional qualifications are attached.

Over the period of 6 hours from 29-31 October 2020, Drs Heisler and Hardi, conducted their (virtual) examination of Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe. In summary, the IFEG experts concluded that:

1. The physical and psychological findings are “highly consistent” with Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe’s allegations of torture and ill-treatment from her period of imprisonment to present times. Among them, Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe suffers from serious and chronic

¹ Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol). 2004. HR/P/PT/8/Rev.1.

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder due to her mistreatment during detention, present house arrest, and continuing legal and judicial uncertainty. In addition, Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe experiences physical pain and impairment that developed over the course of her imprisonment, including neck, shoulder and arm pain and numbness, tooth pain, possible anaemia, and breast lumps, which have not been adequately evaluated or treated.

2. Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe “is in urgent need of psychiatric pharmacological and psychotherapeutic support, as well as evaluation and treatment of her physical symptoms.” Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe’s pain and suffering have not abated due to her release from imprisonment to house arrest. “While she is not feeling as acute stress as she did when she was in prison, she continues to relive and suffer from the serious and long-lasting traumatising issues she experienced during the past (nearly) 5 years.” The continuing uncertainty of her fate, “creates a sense of permanent threat leading to constant pain and suffering.” Moreover, the ankle tag “serves to permanently trigger the traumatic memories and experiences and exacerbate her psychological/psychiatric symptoms.” “The limited range of her ankle bracelet has also prevented her from seeing doctors for her medical problems.”

3. In the long-term, without reunification with her family in the UK and effective treatment, Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe’s conditions will become chronic and potentially deteriorate. Her psychological symptoms and disorders “will be unable to resolve themselves and will become chronic and potentially worsen.” In addition, “[i]f she does not receive adequate evaluation and treatment of the conditions contributing to her neurological and skeletomuscular symptoms and signs, she has a high risk of experiencing chronic pain and impairment in the medium to long-term that likely will continue to worsen. Moreover, if the growing breast tumours are cancer, the longer the delay the higher the probability of metastatic spread.”

4. Finally, Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe’s healing “can be only provided in the UK in the presence of her family after reunification.” “In order to recover, she needs to be in a safe and non-threatening environment. In particular, she needs:
 - Psychiatric treatment to assist in alleviating her symptoms of PTSD, anxiety and depression.
 - Individual, longitudinal psychotherapy that will provide her with the opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with a therapist who has a speciality in the treatment of severe trauma.
 - Establishment of care with a primary care physician and appropriate subspecialists for necessary evaluation of her physical symptoms and signs and medical treatment.”

5. In conclusion, in order for Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe's condition to improve, "she needs to be allowed to return to the UK and receive appropriate care, however, her prognosis is good, as she appears resilient, hardworking, and determined to heal."

We remain at your disposition should you have any questions.

Yours truly,



James Lin
Istanbul Protocol Programme Coordinator
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims