



Government powerless to improve Hicks' prison conditions

"Time and again complaints have been made about David Hicks' prison conditions in Guantanamo Bay and the government has been powerless to improve them," said Carla Klease, spokesperson for Australian Lawyers for Human Rights.

"Hicks is languishing in prison in solitary confinement and is without access to natural light in breach of fundamental human rights law."

"The Government's scepticism about the latest reports of ill-treatment masks its inability to affect his welfare in prison and its unwillingness to reject the fundamentally unfair regime proposed to try him," Ms Klease said.

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights echoes the calls made for the immediate release of Hicks from Guantanamo Bay.

"Hicks' treatment in Guantanamo Bay breaches his fundamental right to be treated with humanity and dignity. It falls well short of the international laws put in place to prevent a repeat of the abhorrent treatment of prisoners seen during the Second World War."

"It is unacceptable that Mr Hicks has had to wait over five and half years and, after all that time, will still not receive a fair hearing."

"Comments made blaming Hicks for the delays are perverse. No reasonable Australian would expect Hicks to agree to a fundamentally unfair trial just to speed up the result.

"The Military Commission under which Hicks had originally been charged was held by the US Supreme Court to be illegal. Many of the flaws of that system are found in the new process."

"Hicks is more than likely to be excluded from any hearing, and will be charged and convicted on hearsay evidence or statements obtained by torture and coercion.

This is clearly contrary to his right to a fair trial, a right enshrined in international, US and Australian law," said Ms Klease.

"The Australian Government should perform its duty to protect Australian citizens overseas by calling for Hicks' immediate return."

1 February 2007

Contact:

Carla Klease (Secretary) 0409 644 001

or Simeon Beckett (President) 0412 008 039

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