



## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: Afghan, Australian and international human rights and legal organisations call for public release of Justice Brereton's Afghanistan Inquiry report**

**For immediate release | Friday 30 October 2020**

Today, over 20 Afghan, Australian and international human rights and legal organisations wrote to the Assistant Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force, Major General Justice Paul Brereton, urging him to commit to releasing the report of the Inquiry into allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) by Australian special forces in Afghanistan.

**Horia Mosadiq of the Transitional Justice Coordination Group in Afghanistan**, said:

“The allegations of the crimes committed are bone chilling. The Afghan people deserve truth and justice. Those responsible must be held accountable. Our people have been trapped in an unbroken cycle of conflict and impunity for decades. Parties operate with total impunity and in disregard of international laws and norms. The report of this Inquiry should be made available publicly, the victims and their families deserve nothing less.”

**Hadi Marifat, Executive Director at the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization** said: “At a time when conflict parties are set to negotiate peace in Afghanistan, the immediate and full release of the Inquiry's report would not only be a significant step towards accountability to the Australian public and the families of victims, but it will also set an important example for many other conflict actors to tell the truth and commit to justice. Failure to do so might raise questions about Australia's commitment to upholding rules of war and IHL, will only entrench the impunity among Afghanistan's conflict actors, and will impact prospects for redress for international crimes.”

**Rawan Arraf, Principal Lawyer and Director at the Australian Centre for International Justice**, which helped to coordinate the letter, said that it was “imperative that the report of the Inquiry is made available to the Australian public. The public interest requires release. A summary of the report is not enough. The Australian people deserve to know what was done in our name, and to be engaged in a process of ensuring those responsible are held to account.”

“Transparency and accountability are critical to ensure public trust in the independence of the Inquiry, the Defence Force and the process that will follow. Refusal to release the report in full, undermines this trust.”

**Ruth Barson, Legal Director at the Human Rights Law Centre**, commented: “If this monumental report is not publicly released, Australians may never know of the gravest of crimes that might have been committed in our names. Opaqueness, selectivity and silence in the face of these horrific allegations should not be an option. There can be no truth and justice without transparency and accountability.”

The organisations are calling on the Assistant Inspector-General of the ADF, Justice Brereton to release publicly the final report, and where there are valid reasons for partial release, to recommend that the complete version be tabled and published at the conclusion of any relevant legal proceedings.

## **About the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry**

In 2016, the Chief of the Defence Force requested the Inspector-General of the ADF (**IGADF**) commence an Inquiry regarding allegations of misconduct and breaches of international humanitarian law (**IHL**) by members of the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan over the period of 2005-2016. The IGADF appointed Major General, Justice Paul Brereton to lead the Afghanistan Inquiry.

[Read the joint civil society letter to the Assistant Inspector-General of the ADF.](#)

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