

Dear Keith Brown

Urgent Matter concerning Craig Murray (Follow-up from Case# 202100236984)

We write to you in your capacity as Justice Minister to again request your urgent intervention in relation to the ongoing imprisonment of former ambassador Craig Murray at HMP Edinburgh. We have today been notified of a COVID19 outbreak within Craig's close vicinity which puts his vulnerable health at serious and immediate risk.

The Craig Murray Justice Committee wrote to you on the 1st of September 2021 to highlight a serious anomaly in the secondary legislation related to Home Detention Curfew. This omission means that the purpose of the legislation is not being met in the cases of civil prisoners. We were twice assured of a full response by the Scottish government's case handling service but have not received any.

While criminal prisoners can be released on tag, prior to the completion of their sentence, "non-offence" civil prisoners such as Craig are currently not eligible for early release under Scots law. As a result of this, "non-offence" civil prisoners are treated more punitively than criminal prisoners in relation to release on home detention curfew. In Craig's case, this means that if he had been imprisoned for a criminal offence he would have been released from prison under the Home Detention Curfew provisions already.

This morning Craig's imprisonment became even more critical with the discovery of four COVID19 cases on his corridor at HMP Edinburgh. We note that the Scottish Prison Service statistics on COVID cases within their facilities are no longer being publicised broken down by institution, as was the case until July, and now only display a daily figure of overall cases across all prisons in Scotland.

While the recent September peak in COVID cases was the highest recorded since the beginning of the pandemic in Scotland it also appears that an earlier provision aimed to safeguard vulnerable prisoners at home, which allowed those with preexisting health conditions to apply for 'release on tag' for the last 3 months of their sentence, is no longer available.

As you will be aware, Craig Murray's chronic and life-threatening heart-, lung- and general health conditions mean that his life is at particular risk.

In order to both safeguard his life, alleviate pressure on the Scottish Prison Service and uphold Human Rights laws within the Scottish judiciary, we ask that you take immediate action to release Craig Murray from prison on compassionate grounds as a matter of urgency.

Given that Craig Murray's case will be brought to the European Court of Human Rights in due course and has already attracted a significant amount of global attention and concern about Scotland's judiciary we believe your intervention is of utmost importance at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

The Craig Murray Justice Committee

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Donald M. Blair - International Government and Public Affairs Consultant

Catherine Brown - Academic (Associate Professor, New College of the Humanities)

Laurie Flynn - Rt. television producer, journalist and author

Ailsa Gray - Lawyer

Dave Llewellyn - Political Activist

Robin McAlpine - Activist and political commentator

Gillian Mair - NowScotland director, political activist

Hugh Kerr - former MEP, Editor Edinburgh Music Review

Nadira Murray - Director, film producer

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Gareth Watson - Activist

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