



Ministry  
of Justice

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Group

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Dear John,

### UK NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM

Thank you for your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> January and our subsequent meeting. I am very sorry for the delay in responding to you.

As I said at our meeting, we consider that the UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) complies with the international law requirements of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). As you know, in the context of making changes to the provisions in the Prison Act 1952 on HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Chief Inspector, we considered it helpful that the Prisons and Courts Bill expressly recognised the role of the Chief Inspector in relation to OPCAT.

Following the announcement of a General Election, the Leader of the House of Commons confirmed on 20<sup>th</sup> April, that Bills that were introduced to Parliament quite late in the parliamentary session, including the Prisons and Courts Bill, would fall. In the final sitting of the Bill Committee, a motion was moved by Sir Oliver Heald, Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, to withdraw the Bill in light of the then imminent dissolution of Parliament. Parliament was in fact dissolved on 3 May. The new Government will need to consider whether to reintroduce the Bill in the new Parliament.

I also wanted to update you in relation other changes. I am now acting Director General of Justice and Courts Policy Group, with my colleague, Ben Smith taking over from me as acting Director of Global Britain directorate. Dominic Lake has recently been appointed as Deputy Director of the Human Rights and Intergovernmental Relations team (which continues to oversee the UK compliance with various UN treaties, including the OPCAT). I suggest it would be helpful for you to meet Dominic for an introductory meeting and to discuss how to take forward work to support the role of the NPM.

Yours sincerely,

**SCOTT MCPHERSON**