



William Hague today stepped up pressure on the government over claims that the Foreign Office asked the US for help in suppressing crucial evidence concerning torture allegations.

The shadow foreign secretary wrote to David Miliband demanding urgent clarification on a number of specific allegations about whether the UK was complicit in the mistreatment or torture of Guantánamo detainee Binyam Mohamed.

Today Downing Street rallied to Miliband's defence, insisting that the Foreign Office had merely asked the US to "set out its position in writing" when it solicited a letter for the American authorities to back up its claim that, if the evidence was disclosed, Washington could stop sharing intelligence with Britain.

The claim persuaded two high court judges earlier this month to suppress what they called "powerful evidence" relating to the ill treatment of Mohamed, a British resident being held in the US's Guantánamo Bay detention camp in Cuba.

"The Foreign Office has made clear that they asked the US to set out their position in writing for us and the court," a spokesman for Gordon Brown said.

In response to the British request, John Bellinger, the US state department's chief legal adviser, said in a letter to the Foreign Office last August: "We want to affirm the public disclosure of these documents is likely to result in serious damage to US national security and could harm existing intelligence information-sharing arrangements between our two governments."

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