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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3005

July 29, 2010

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Rt Hon Jack Straw, MP
House of Commons
London, England SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr. Straw,

I am responding to your letter of July 23, 2010 declining my invitation to testify before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee to provide insights into the events that led to the early release of Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi.

Although your letter states that you had no part in the Scottish Government's decision and that al-Megrahi's release was not related to the conclusion of a Prisoner Transfer Agreement (PTA) negotiated between the United Kingdom and Libya, it is far from obvious to me and many others that the process on PTA and on compassionate release can be viewed as completely distinct and unrelated. Al-Megrahi was central to both processes and both decisions were made and announced at the same time, which raises a number of questions. Any influence the United Kingdom exerted on Scotland concerning the PTA would necessarily have an almost identical impact on the compassionate release decision. Technically, there were two processes, but practically, they happened in tandem, making the difference merely a matter of semantics. Semantics will not answer our questions and semantics will not satisfy the victims' families.

Based on your declining our request to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week, we have opted to postpone the hearing until September in order to allow for more time to ensure appropriate participation in the hearing. I firmly believe that in your position as Secretary of State for Justice under the previous government, you are in a unique position to help us understand several questions still lingering from this decision. I hope you will reconsider your decision and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

That al-Megrahi was released and is now living out his remaining days outside of Scottish custody is not only an affront to the victims' families, it also poses a threat to our own national security. I appreciate your cooperation in this issue as we seek to review the underlying facts and circumstances leading to the release of al-Megrahi.

Sincerely,

