

**E.R**

Thursday, 29 June 2006

**HOME OFFICE**

**Report of the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (John Reid):** The Government is today publishing the report of the inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham Young Offender Institution which was announced by my predecessor, my Rt Hon Friend the member for Sheffield Brightside, on 29 April 2004. I wish to express my gratitude to the Honourable Mr Justice Keith, his advisers, and the enquiry team for their comprehensive examination of the important issues which arise in this case.

Zahid Mubarek was killed, completely without provocation, on 21 March 2000 by his cell-mate, Robert Stewart, who was a known racist. The then Director-General of the Prison Service wrote immediately to Mr Mubarek's family to acknowledge that the Service had not protected him as it should have done and to offer an unreserved apology. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my own sympathies to the family, for whom this will have been a particularly traumatic time.

There have since then been a number of inquiries into the circumstances surrounding this appalling case from which the Prison Service has already learned much. The inquiry by Mr Justice Keith is however the most thorough examination which has been carried out and adds much to our knowledge of the background to this murder.

I welcome the report's recognition that much progress has been made by the Prison Service in the last six years to address the problems which may have contributed to Zahid Mubarek's murder. In particular I am pleased to note that the report finds that the allegations that prison officers maliciously placed ethnic minority prisoners in cells with known racists are not substantiated.

I have placed on the Home Office's website a preliminary response to all 88 recommendations. It shows that the Government is already able to agree, at least in principle, to 50 of these. The responses to those which relate to prison practice cover only directly-managed establishments at this stage. The rest will be considered both urgently and carefully, and I will make a full response to each of the recommendations within two months.