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11 July 2006

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear President Bouteflika,

We have today agreed an exchange of letters which reflects our shared intent to strengthen cooperation with the Algerian Government with a view to dealing jointly with the threat from crime in all its forms, and in particular international terrorism.

The British Government is firmly committed to implementing this Exchange of Letters in accordance with its obligations under international law and under UK domestic law, in particular as regards its own responsibilities on human rights.

Similarly, the British Government welcomes the Algerian Government's commitment to implement this Exchange of Letters in accordance with its legal obligations under international and national law, and in particular the provisions of the Algerian Constitution.

Thus, this Exchange of Letters underscores the absolute commitment of our two governments to human rights and fundamental freedoms such as the *freedom of movement and the right of abode, the right to take legal action, the right to be informed of the reasons for one's arrest or detention, the right to the*

presumption of innocence, to the assistance of legal counsel, and the right to a fair hearing and public hearing by a competent and impartial court.

The British Government takes note of the Algerian position on the question of the death penalty, which is: "while the death penalty is indeed provided for by Algerian legislation as an extreme penalty for serious offences, the fact remains that the legislature is gradually introducing amendments to the criminal law with a view to removing the death penalty, in stages, from the legal system.

Furthermore, in judicial practice, the death penalty is rarely imposed by the courts and, since 1993, has been the subject of a moratorium.

This approach is reflected on the legislative front by the absence of any reference to the death penalty in the texts of laws enacted since 1995."

For its part, the British Government affirms that it is opposed to the use of the death penalty in any circumstances and would not return an individual to Algeria if that person were at significant risk of being subjected to such a penalty.

Finally, the British Government notes that, in particular in cases relating to questions of internal security, it may, depending on the circumstances, wish to request special assurances from the competent authorities of the Algerian Government.

Mr President, we are, I am convinced, committed to implementing the four agreements on cooperation in the legal, judicial and consular fields which have been signed by our governments with a view to strengthening our common fight against crime in all its forms, and in particular international terrorism.

Please accept, Sir, the expression of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Tony Blair

His Excellency Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika