

Tom Watson MP  
House of Commons  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 0AA

18th September 2014

Dear Mr Emmerson,

We are writing to you in advance of the Panel Discussion scheduled for 22 September, pursuant to UN Human Rights Council ('the Council') resolution 25/22. We view resolution 25/22 and the expert Panel discussion, part of the Council's 27th session, as important steps in its work to protect the human rights of those affected by armed drones around the world.

In resolution 25/22, the Council called on States to ensure that any measures employed to counter terrorism, including the use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones, comply with their obligations under existing international law. The Council further called on States to conduct prompt and independent investigations whenever there are indications of a violation of international law caused by their use. We welcome the lead of the Council in this regard. Resolution 25/22 is made all the more pertinent and timely as the frontiers of transnational counter-terrorism operations expand: increased use of armed drones underscores the need for greater consensus between States on how to apply the international laws that regulate lethal force.

We note, in particular, that States are invited to respond to the questions posed by Special Rapporteur Ben Emmerson in his report of 28 February prior to the 27th session of the Human Rights Council. We note that the 27th session has now commenced and the UK Government does not appear to have responded to the Special Rapporteur.

In the event that the UK Government or other States do not respond, or do not respond adequately, to the questions posed at paragraph 71 of the Special Rapporteur's report of 28 February, we urge you to consider the advantages of having a Special Procedures mandate-holder address these questions in a new report. We consider the Panel on 22 September well placed to encourage this approach, in order to follow up on Council resolution 25/22 and General Assembly Reports A/65/321 and A/68/382. We note that Mr Emmerson's existing mandate, extended by resolution 22/8 on 21 March 2013, includes a request from the Council 'to make recommendations on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism'.

In our view, in the absence of consensus on this issue, States urgently need definitive recommendations ('UN Guidance') from a Special Procedures mandate-holder to address the questions posed at paragraph 71. We recommend that this should, in turn, form the basis for a further Council resolution on the core principles governing use of armed drones.

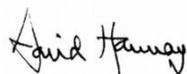
We would welcome the continued lead of the Special Procedures and Panel in considering such positive action next Monday.

Yours sincerely



**Tom Watson MP**

Chair, Drones APPG



**Lord Hannay**

Chair UNAPPG



**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Chair, United Nations Association – UK

**Baroness Stern**, Vice-Chair APPG on Drones

**Admiral Lord West of Spithead**, member of APPG on Drones

**John Hemming MP**, Officer of APPG on Drones

**David Anderson MP** Officer of APPG on Drones

**Zac Goldsmith MP** Vice – Chair APPG on Drones