

Statement by Sir John Chilcot on meetings with bereaved families in London.

**14 October 2009**

Speaking after a series of public and private meetings in London on Tuesday 13th October between Iraq Inquiry committee members and families who lost loved ones during the Iraq conflict, Inquiry chairman Sir John Chilcot said;

“I would like to thank all of the families who were able to attend the London meetings. We heard from the bereaved families of Armed Forces personnel and British civilians who died in Iraq. I feel we got a clear sense of what those families would like us to focus on once we start the public hearings.

“What came over very powerfully was the individual sense of loss and the strength of feeling about a number of issues including how the decision to invade Iraq was taken, and why; as well as concerns about the equipment provided to the Armed Forces. Many of the families shared with the Committee issues and concerns surrounding their personal experience.

“We have several more meetings with family members around the country. The views expressed at those meetings will help inform the structure of the Inquiry and the lines of questioning to witnesses.”

The meetings with veterans of the Iraq conflict and families of those who died or are missing in Iraq will continue throughout October. The next meetings will be held in Manchester on Friday 16th, in Edinburgh on Wednesday 21st, Bristol on Friday 23rd and Belfast on Wednesday 28th October.

The meetings have been arranged to allow the families and those who served in Iraq to express their views personally to members of the Iraq Inquiry committee about the issues they think the Inquiry should focus on. The Inquiry team wrote to all of the UK families who lost loved ones during the Iraq conflict asking them whether they wished to take part in the meetings. Around 50 families said they did. The Iraq Inquiry committee has also contacted organisations representing former and current military personnel, issuing an invitation to people who served in Iraq during the conflict to take part in separate discussions.