

Tom Tugendhat MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

25 May 2022

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 2022 in connection with the recently published Freedom from Torture report, and for the questions you raise on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Committee regarding the partnership between London Policing College (LPC), Hunan Police Academy and Shanghai Police College.

As part of the UK-China-ASEAN partnership programme, the British Council awarded funding to LPC to facilitate specific partnerships with the Hunan and Shanghai police training institutions in China. This programme, which began in April 2019, and is due to run until January 2023, is also helping to connect LPC with the Royal Police Academy of Thailand and the Police Academy of Cambodia and partners in India and Vietnam. It is delivered in collaboration with the University of West London with which the LPC has an MoU dating back to 2017. Funding came from the British Council's core Overseas Development Aid (ODA) grant from the FCDO.

The core objective of the programme is to improve international teaching standards in police education and to develop cooperation, education, and research between the UK, China, and other participating ASEAN countries. Part of that objective includes efforts to reduce human rights abuse and other malpractice through better policing by sharing UK knowledge, experience and best practice in the area of, for example, domestic violence.

The British Council is not funding, nor has ever funded, any activities in which the Xinjiang police or public security organs are involved, or from which they may benefit. Moreover, LPC assure us that it has never been engaged with institutions of any nature from Xinjiang Province.

As with all funding decisions we take, the decisions made around this programme were subject to due diligence processes and regular reporting. In China, the funding provided by the British Council for this programme was limited to facilitating LPC's collaboration with a specific and limited number of named police training institutions and no funds were distributed to any of the overseas institutions involved. The British Council has monitored the project closely since the disbursement of funding in April 2019. LPC assure us that there is no evidence that the project involved the Xinjiang police or public security organs at any stage.

LPC has indicated that their work in China to date has been limited to exchange and research, and at no point has its staff ever trained officers from any part of China, nor has it

engaged in any commercial activities in China since 2019. Furthermore, LPC has decided to withdraw from all activities with the police in China in light of changing government advice.

I hope this information helps reassure you and members of the Committee of the British Council's commitment to upholding human rights and provides insight into just one of the many programmes we deliver that help protect those fundamental rights around the world. Moreover, our work in China promotes universal values through the sharing of relevant UK expertise and UK standards including, but not limited to, our approach to the rule of law.

I would be happy to answer any further questions the Committee may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott McDonald
Chief Executive



Foreign Affairs Committee

From the Chair
Tom Tugendhat MP

Scott McDonald
Chief Executive, British Council
Bridgewater House
58 Whitworth Street
Manchester
M1 6BB

By Email

20 May 2022

Dear Mr. McDonald,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee about the report published on 17 May by Freedom from Torture entitled "*Dangerous Liaisons: UK partnerships with Chinese policing institutions linked to crimes against humanity in Xinjiang*". This describes partnerships between Chinese police training institutions and London Policing College (LPC) which have been partly funded by UK aid money distributed via the British Council China.

As a committee, we are concerned that these activities include a five-year partnership with the Hunan Police Academy, which is involved in cooperation and exchanges with Xinjiang Police College, an entity sanctioned by the United States for its role in human rights violations. There appears also to have been direct contact between LPC and Xinjiang Police College. The People's Public Security University of China (PPSUC), an elite institution directly under the Ministry of Public Security, says that counter-terrorism training is an important part of its cooperation with LPC. PPSUC supplies both training and personnel to the Xinjiang police.

You will be aware of the package of measures announced by the Foreign Secretary in January 2021 to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang. The Government warns organisations to consider the risk of exposure to entities that are involved in providing services to internment facilities in Xinjiang, which almost certainly includes the Chinese police institutions that have been working with LPC.

I understand that although the LPC has now stated that it has suspended all activities involving Chinese police and police academic organisations or the Ministry of Public Security, Freedom from Torture has not yet received confirmation of this from British Council China, which answers to you. Could I ask you to confirm the accuracy of the London Policing College statement and state clearly that the British Council is not, and will not be, funding any activities in which the Xinjiang police and public security organs are involved or from which they may benefit directly or indirectly?

It would be helpful to receive a response to this letter by 25 May. I intend to publish our correspondence.

TOM TUGENDHAT