



Public Accounts Committee

David Williams CB
Permanent Secretary
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By email: PUS-PrivateOffice@mod.gov.uk

20 July 2023

Gift of Camp Bagnold

Dear Permanent Secretary,

The Secretary of State for Defence [informed the House of Commons on 17 July](#) that the MOD intends to gift Camp Bagnold in Mali to MINUSMA, the United Nations mission in that country, by transferring it in exchange for a notional sum.

The departmental minute explains that MINUSMA has itself been asked to leave the country, but that transfer to MINUSMA will allow the UK to also transfer any obligations it might have to remediate or dispose of the site. In light of the unusual aspects of this situation, I would be grateful if you would write to me to let me know when the transfer of the site to MINUSMA has occurred. I would also be grateful if you would confirm that the gift has had the intended effect (i.e. that the United Kingdom has successfully transferred all obligations in respect of this site).

I am disappointed that your department provided so little notice of its intent to make this gift. While I recognise that this is a fast-moving situation, I understand that the Secretary of State made his decision on 5 July (on the basis of advice submitted on 23 June). However the departmental minute was only laid on 17 July meaning that only four sitting days remained before recess, limiting Members' ability to consider the proposed gift.

Even when Departments feel unable to provide the usual 14 days' notice, it is important that Members of Parliament have as much time as possible to consider proposed gifting arrangements. I would like your officials to pay much closer attention to this in future. They should ensure that, where there is a risk that Parliament may not receive the usual notice, action is taken to expedite all approvals. This should include liaising with HM Treasury where required.

Yours Sincerely

Dame Meg Hillier
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts