
IRAQ INQUIRY REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED IN JULY

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The long-awaited Chilcot Inquiry into the UK's involvement in Iraq will be published on 6 July - seven years after its launch.

The date was confirmed in correspondence between Sir John Chilcot and Prime Minister David Cameron, following the completion of the report and the national security-checking process.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Sir John said: "National security checking of the inquiry's report has now been completed, without the need for any redactions to appear in the text.

"I am grateful for the speed with which it was accomplished."

He added: "This will allow suitable time for the inquiry to prepare the 2.6 million word report for publication, including final proof reading, formatting, printing and the steps required for electronic publication."

It is understood that arrangements are being made for families of those killed in the conflict to have early access to the report on the day of publication.

The inquiry was set up in June 2009 by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown to examine the UK involvement in Iraq from the summer of 2001 to the end of June 2009.

It received evidence from more than 150 witnesses, held more than 130 sessions of oral evidence and analysed more than 150,000 government documents.

At 2.6 million words, it is nearly four times as long as War And Peace and has cost the taxpayer

£10.3m.

Sky News Defence Correspondent Alistair Bunkall said: "It is going to be very in depth, very detailed and it is not just politicians - I think that we'll find some criticism of the military, as well as the military planners that were involved in that build-up."

Last October, there was anger when it was announced the release of the report would be delayed until this summer, after Sir John wrote to Mr Cameron saying that, although the text had been completed in April 2015, it would not be ready for release until June or July 2016.

There was speculation that Tony Blair, who was Prime Minister when the UK went into Iraq, was responsible for the delay but his former special adviser Lance Price denied this, telling Sky News: "There is no real incentive for Tony Blair to try and delay it.

"I would have thought he'd want it out of the way some time ago."

Reg Keys, the father of a British serviceman killed in the war, told Sky News: "I certainly believe that that man (Tony Blair), along with George Bush, misled the electorate in getting into that evil war. At the time, I admit, I believed it.

"Iraq has been one huge cloud hanging over me - and the other families - since those early days."

A spokesman for Mr Blair said: "Mr Blair welcomes the fact that a date has been set for the publication of the report."

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