

The Tony Blair War Crimes Saga in Limbo: Chilcot Iraq War Report “to Be Published June or July 2016”, Chilcot Tells Cameron

By [RT](#)

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Sir John Chilcot has told Prime Minister David Cameron that the long-delayed, highly controversial report into the legality of the Iraq War will certainly be published in June or July 2016.

In an official [letter](#) to Cameron, Chilcot said the text of the report would be completed by April 18, 2016, at which point “national security” checking of the content will commence.

Excellent use of the words “should” and “possible” by Chilcot:
<https://t.co/l5FPtbNAJJ> [pic.twitter.com/ADriHXqjG6](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/ADriHXqjG6)

— Alex Wickham (@WikiGuido) [October 29, 2015](#)

Chilcot said that given the sheer size of the document, which he says will run to more than 2 million words, the intervening time will be required to check the text before printing and publication. In his correspondence, Chilcot tells Cameron that the process of ‘national security’ is distinct from the process of declassification.

It concerns the preparation of material to avoid endangering Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – in effect, the right to life – and to ensure the nation’s security as a whole is not breached by anything made public.

Blair’s office released a statement claiming the former-Prime Minister had always been keen to see the report published as soon it “properly” could be. The statement claimed that delays over the report had not been due to the nature of past correspondences between himself and former-President Bush or because he had contested findings. “*It is our understanding that other witnesses also received information very late in the process, so any suggestion that witnesses have been the cause of the delay is categorically incorrect and this has again been stated clearly and publicly by Sir John,*” the statement reads.

Statement on the announcement of the Chilcot Inquiry’s timetable for publication of their report: <https://t.co/SVBRSDejVT>

— Tony Blair Office (@tonyblairoffice) [October 29, 2015](#)

MPs and campaigners blasted the news of further delay to publication.

Former SNP leader Alex Salmond MP told RT: *"The delay's quite disgraceful. Let's think of it from the perspective of the families of 179 British service men and women who died, who lost their lives in the conflict."*

This is another 7 months, which means it will be 7 years. 7 years! Longer than the First World War between the start of this inquiry and its reporting and a full 13 years after the onset of the conflict.

"We really need an explanation and the families need an explanation of the reasons for the delay," he added.

The Stop the War coalition, which organized a million-strong march against the war in 2003, blasted what they called the *"never-ending farce of the Chilcot report."*

"News that the Chilcot report on the Iraq war will not come out until the middle of next year piles insult onto the injury already suffered by the Iraqi people, the families of those British servicemen and women killed in Iraq, and the millions who argued at the time that the war was wrong," the coalition said in a statement.

In mid-October it was revealed that, contrary to his claims at the time, former-Prime Minister Tony Blair had committed the UK to joining the US invasion of Iraq a year before it began.

The memo was obtained by the Daily Mail as part of the batch of emails from the private server of former US State Secretary Hillary Clinton, which US courts have forced her to disclose.

Among the leaked papers is one written in March 2002 by former US Secretary of State Colin Powell to then-President George W. Bush, in which he said: *"On Iraq, Blair will be with us should military operations be necessary ... He is convinced on two points: the threat is real; and success against Saddam will yield more regional success."*

At the time Blair was quoted by the British media as saying: *"This is a matter for considering all the options."*

"We're not proposing military action at this point in time."

Tony Blair's Iraq War narrative now includes part ISIS acknowledgement, part apology <https://t.co/7KlvxLTv4t> pic.twitter.com/prb0QUfYZx

— RT UK (@RTUKnews) [October 25, 2015](#)

Following the release of the memo, Blair appeared to apologize for some parts of his involvement in the Iraq War and concede that the 2003 invasion and occupation led to the rise of the Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL). Reg Keys, whose son Tom was killed in Iraq in 2003, dismissed former Blair's apology aired on CNN as an attempt to shift the blame and spin the long-overdue Chilcot Inquiry report into the war. He told the Telegraph he felt Blair's apparent apology was a political move, and not a heartfelt one.

'Blair pre-empting Chilcot': Iraq apology made father of dead soldier "feel revulsion" <https://t.co/LEW1yJqrC4> pic.twitter.com/5TBn484Gaf

— RT UK (@RTUKnews) [October 26, 2015](#)

I feel that he's obviously pre-empting the Iraq inquiry's findings. It's finger-pointing. He's blaming intelligence chiefs for giving him the wrong intelligence. He's not [apologizing] for toppling Saddam.

David Cameron has told Sir John Chilcot that he is "disappointed" report won't be published until next summer pic.twitter.com/b1k3xZ6Q84

— Laura Hughes (@Laura_K_Hughes) [October 29, 2015](#)

"What about [apologizing] for the unnecessary loss of life? The reason we went to war was weapons of mass destruction, not to topple Saddam," Keys added. "I feel revulsion. This man [Blair] certainly got it wrong." Despite widespread opposition to the Iraq War, Blair is not without his defenders. Michael Gapes MP, one of most hard-core Blair loyalists in the Labour Party, questioned whether the report should be published at all, tweeting "the hysterical Blair haters have decided already" and that "most journalists and commentators have made up their minds already so won't bother to read it in any case."

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