

Lin Homer
Chief Executive
1st Floor Seacole Building
Room 40
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sir Michael Scholar
UK Statistics Authority
Statistics House
Islington
London
EC1R 1UW

Tel +44 020 7035 1678
Fax +44 0870 3369050
Email Lin.homer@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Web www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

**UK Statistics Authority
London**

12th March 2009

16 MAR 2009

Dear Sir Michael

Received

Thank you for your letter of 23 January 2009 regarding the Home Office's press release of 26 December which outlined the latest position on the number of foreign national prisoners removed from the UK in 2008. The Minister has asked me to respond.

The press release issued in December 2008 announced that the UK Border Agency had met its target of removing more than 5,000 foreign national prisoners during the year. This is a self-imposed target against which the Agency regularly measures itself and publicly reports. You will be aware that this information is routinely provided to Parliament through PQs and oral questions, statements and debates, and also in the regular letters I send to the Home Affairs Committee.

As referenced in the press release, the announcement was not an estimate but a provisional outcome and was compiled from management information; the figures were cleared for use by Home Office statisticians. We did not provide the actual specific figure but instead stated that we had met our target in deporting 5,000 foreign criminals. Although this figure forms part of the total removals figure published as National Statistics, the number of foreign national prisoners removed from the UK has never been separately identified in any National Statistics publications. The press release was purposely issued on 26 December 2008 in order to maintain consistency with the previous year.

We consider it particularly important to respond to the strong Parliamentary and public interest in foreign national prisoners. Hence we will continue to provide regular updates, with the latest relevant information to Parliament in the way I have outlined above. Additionally we will also publish an annual figure of foreign national prisoner removals in the context of all removals – as we have just done in the Control of Immigration Statistics published on 24 February 2009.

We intend to continue to be open and transparent in reporting this information, as we remain strongly committed to building public trust in official statistics and to the new measures put in place to safeguard their independence, and indeed we are undertaking some important work with ONS to ensure the statistics available on migration are the best quality that can be achieved.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lin Homer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lin Homer

Chief Executive, UK Border Agency