



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters

Nineteenth Report of Session 2014–15

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relating to the report*

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Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

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Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Tom Healey (Clerk), John-Paul Flaherty (Second Clerk), Dr Ruth Martin (Committee Specialist), Duma Langton (Committee Specialist), Andy Boyd (Senior Committee Assistant), Iwona Hankin (Committee Assistant) and Alex Paterson (Select Committee Media Officer).

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Key Facts

- The Association of Chief Police Officers reported a 58 percent increase in referrals to Channel in the year to December 2014. There have been over 2,000 referrals since April 2012.
- In the 2013/14 financial year, Prevent local authority co-ordinators in 30 Prevent priority areas worked with over 250 mosques, 50 faith groups and 70 community groups.

Summary

- Preventative work with communities must be a top priority for the Home's Office's de-radicalisation work. It is urgent that partnerships are developed with mosques and that they play a key role in Prevent counter-terrorism programmes.
- The Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism stated that the 'Ibaana' prison counter-radicalisation programme would be rolled out in full across British prisons by April 2014. The implementation of this programme across the country must be clearly outlined to specific deadlines. It is vital that individuals working with prisoners, particularly those offering counselling, should undergo specific training to equip them to combat extremist ideologies.
- It is particularly important that prisoners who have demonstrated extremist views in prison should receive support, monitoring and appropriate intervention on their release, including through the Channel programme. The Channel programme should be strengthened to provide long-term, effective monitoring of participants, to ensure proper evaluation of these prevention programmes.
- Where social media companies are given evidence that users of their services are seeking to promote violent extremism, they should be prepared to take action to suspend their accounts, as they do where there is abuse or harassment of other users.
- Communication between the police, schools and parents is in need of vast improvement. The police must engage in a regular and open dialogue with schools and community groups to ensure that information is exchanged and new initiatives can be explored at community level. Schools and the police must inform parents immediately, and work together when there is even the smallest hint of radicalisation, or a close association with someone who is thought to have been radicalised.
- It is essential that the officers working on the Prevent programme, as in other areas of the police, are truly reflective and representative of British society.
- There needs to be an advice service open to all, particularly targeted at parents who wish to seek advice or express concerns about a particular individual. This must be well publicised, and be a less extreme step than using the Anti-Terrorist Hotline. There is a fear of stigmatisation among communities and such a helpline could go some way in changing these attitudes. This method should be included in the Prevent strategy.

- The universality of the internet has enabled people to be radicalised in their bedrooms unnoticed by others. Policing social media sites such as Twitter, a means by which many IS propaganda has been spread for example, is impossible. Young people need to be equipped with the skills to become critical consumers of online content, in order to build a more natural resistance against radicalisation through online extremist content and propaganda. This is not just about counter-radicalisation: an informed, critical and questioning approach to online sources is a valuable asset in all aspects of a young person's social and intellectual development.
- International efforts to work in unison to tackle the growing number of young people travelling to these conflict zones to join extremist groups must be strengthened urgently.
- We are disappointed that the Home Office has not implemented a programme for individuals returning to Britain where there is evidence that they have fought in Syria. It is vital that the Government works with mental health practitioners and also assesses the Aarhus process to ensure that the UK's programme best integrates those returning from conflict zones such as Syria.

Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters

Preventing radicalisation

Places where individuals are radicalised

1. Our report on *Counter-terrorism*, published in May 2014, highlighted the alarming number of UK citizens and residents travelling to fight in foreign conflicts, notably in Syria.¹ The Government responded to our report in February 2015, stating that it is delivering targeted projects that address risks arising from the conflict in Syria and Iraq. More than seventy projects have been approved for 2014/15 so far, including training for frontline staff who may come into contact with potential travellers and work to equip parents with the skills and knowledge to identify risks and vulnerabilities and the confidence to seek support should they need it. It is also funding projects for young people, including mentoring and an interactive workshop that highlight the risks of travel to Syria.²

2. Three British teenagers, two aged 17 and one 19, were stopped from travelling to Syria from Turkey and were flown back to the UK and arrested on 14 March. A Turkish official states that the case was “a good and a clear example of how the security cooperation between Western intelligence agencies and Turkey should work.”³ We agree with this assessment and commend all those involved. It is vital that there should be more analysis of what motivates even the very miniscule number wishing to join a murderous and sadistic band, such as IS.

3. Preventative work with communities must be a top priority for the Home Office’s de-radicalisation work. It is urgent that new partnerships are developed with mosques and other community groups and that they play a key role in Prevent counter-terrorism programmes. We need to reassure them that they will not be ‘toxified’ by helping the authorities to identify those who they suspect of radicalisation and by engaging with these individuals.

4. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act imposes a general duty on a range of authorities—including local government, prisons, schools and universities, NHS providers and the police—to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism.⁴ The Government conducted a consultation between December 2014 and January 2015 seeking views on the draft guidance from the authorities concerned.⁵

5. Dr Usama Hasan, Senior Researcher at the Quilliam Foundation, and Dr Erin Saltman, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, identified universities and prisons as two of the most significant places where radicalisation occurs. The internet, they argued,

1 Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Counter-terrorism](#), HC 231

2 HM Government, [The Government response to the Seventeenth Report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2013-14](#), February 2015, Cm 9011, p. 2

3 BBC, [Turkey sends teenagers back to UK after Syria attempt](#), 15 March 2015

4 [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#), s 26 & Schedule 6

5 HM Government, [Prevent duty guidance: a consultation](#)

was a secondary influence. Dr Saltman argued that it was vital that frontline workers, such as chaplains, imams, teachers and prison officials, gained anti-radicalisation expertise.⁶

6. The National Offender Management Service receives funding from the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism to enable it to carry out its counter-extremism programme.⁷ With the support of NOMS, Muslim prison chaplains are developing the ‘Ibaana’ Programme, designed to target the small number of prisoners with the most entrenched extremist views. One-to-one sessions over several hours with a trained chaplain will be used to challenge the theological arguments used by these prisoners. The Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism stated that the Programme would be rolled out in full by April 2014, and would complement the existing education programme to develop prisoners’ understanding of Islam, already completed by 1,600 individuals.⁸ However, in February 2015, Andrew Selous MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice said that the Programme would be rolled out, “where appropriate, in due course”.⁹

7. We are concerned at the evidence that some people who do not previously hold or express any extremist views become radicalised in prison. It indicates that the programmes we have are not working effectively enough. Work to prevent radicalisation in prisons should be a high priority in the Government’s counter-radicalisation agenda. The Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism stated that the ‘Ibaana’ prison counter-radicalisation programme would be rolled out in full across British prisons by April 2014. The implementation of this programme across the country must be clearly outlined to specific deadlines. This programme is of vital importance given this growing threat, and so giving ambiguous timetables indicating piecemeal application are simply unacceptable. It is vital that individuals working with prisoners, particularly those offering counselling, should undergo specific training to equip them to combat extremist ideologies.

8. The Channel programme provides tailored support to people identified as being at risk of radicalisation. The Association of Chief Police Officers has reported a 58% increase in referrals to Channel in the past year and there have been over 2,000 referrals since April 2012. In the 2013/14 financial year, local authority co-ordinators in 30 priority areas worked with over 250 mosques, 50 faith groups and 70 community groups as part of the Prevent counter-radicalisation programme.¹⁰

9. It is particularly important that prisoners who have demonstrated extremist views in prison should receive support, monitoring and appropriate intervention on their release, including through the Channel programme. The Channel programme should be strengthened to provide long-term, effective monitoring of participants, to ensure

6 Q126, Dr Erin Saltman

7 Andrew Selous, HC Deb, 3 February 2015, [cW](#)

8 HM Government, [Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism](#), December 2013, p. 6

9 Andrew Selous, HC Deb, 3 February 2015, [cW](#)

10 Lord Bates, Hansard, 16 December 2014, [c35W](#)

proper evaluation of these prevention programmes. All the evaluations should be sent to our successor Committee by 31 July 2015.

Social media and radicalisation

10. The public can report online content they suspect may be of a violent, extremist or terrorist nature direct to a specialist police unit, the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU). Examples of illegal terrorist or extremist content include videos of violence with messages of ‘glorification’ or praise for terrorists, or postings inciting people to commit acts of terrorism or violence, which are placed on internet sites, chat rooms or other web-based forums.¹¹ Specialist officers assess the information and, where appropriate, investigate the website or work with partners to remove it.¹² The CTIRU has taken down 72,000 individual items since it was established in 2010.¹³

11. Jamie Bartlett, the Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media at the think-tank, Demos, argued that it is already relatively difficult to try to censor all the types of material that terrorists will post online, especially as much of what they post online is not directly illegal. He argued that, as the internet continued to evolve, it was going to be increasingly difficult to remove content because it was becoming easier to evade surveillance.¹⁴ He also suggested that, because large-scale, network-level analysis of data would in future be easier to evade, partly as a result of the Snowden revelations, targeted human intelligence work was likely to be more effective.¹⁵

12. Dr Saltman did not oppose the removal of extremist material from the internet, but advocated the promotion of community-led, counter-extremist online narratives to challenge it. Quilliam and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue are working to pilot educational programmes that has already gone live in Canada.¹⁶

13. On 17 February 2015, Amira Abase, Shamima Begum and Kadiza Sultana, three teenage girls from East London, flew to Istanbul with the apparent intention of crossing the border into Syria to join ISIS. On 24 February, the Metropolitan Police announced that they had reason to believe that the girls were no longer in Turkey and had crossed into Syria.¹⁷ This followed an incident in December, when another girl from their school appears to have travelled to Syria, after which the three were interviewed by police. Thought the girls have not been traced, and information about why they decided to go to Syria is largely speculative, it seems likely that contact with jihadis over social media could have played a part.

11 <https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency/reporting-suspected-terrorism>

12 ACPO, [The Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit](#)

13 James Brokenshire, Hansard, 21 January 2015, [col. 332](#)

14 Q160, Jamie Bartlett

15 Q162, Jamie Bartlett

16 Q143, Dr Erin Saltman

17 BBC News, [Missing teenagers have crossed into Syria, Met Police say](#), 24 February 2015

14. Where social media companies are given evidence that users of their services are seeking to promote violent extremism, they should be prepared to take action to suspend their accounts, as they do where there is abuse or harassment of other users.

15. Sara Khan, the director of Inspire, a non-governmental advocacy organisation working to counter extremism and gender inequality, argues that Isis is succeeding where other jihadist groups had failed, with a “very aggressive” social media campaign deliberately targeting young girls to help found their so-called Islamic State:

they are saying to young girls that what is real empowerment, what is real women’s liberation is being part of Isis – being a mother, a wife, there is no other role in public life... I think a lot of young girls can’t see the deceptive and sinister meaning that women have no rights, they have no authority, agency, freedom or opportunity.¹⁸

Five point plan

16. The evidence given to the Committee demonstrates that improvements urgently need to be made in responding to the radicalisation of young people. We suggest, as a starting point, a five point plan to strengthen the measures already in place.

(1) Improve communication

17. Communication between the police, schools and parents is in need of vast improvement. The police must engage in a regular and open dialogue with schools and community groups to ensure that information is exchanged and new initiatives can be explored at community level. Schools and the police must inform parents immediately, and work together when there is even the smallest hint of radicalisation, or a close association with someone who is thought to have been radicalised.

(2) Increase police diversity

18. Dal Babu, former Chief Superintendent at the Metropolitan Police, raised concerns about diversity of officers involved in the Prevent programme, arguing that “If you are going to fight terrorism effectively then your key operatives need to reflect the people that you are dealing with and that is not happening here.”¹⁹ Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley said in evidence to the Committee that he wants the counter-terrorism command to be “reflective of London”, namely “40 percent from different minority groups” and that they have changed their recruitment criteria to be more reflective of London.”²⁰ **It is essential that the officers working on the Prevent programme, as in other areas of the police, are truly reflective and representative of British society.**

18 Independent, [Missing Syria girls: Parents must 'keep passports under lock and key' to stop children joining Isis](#), 23 February 2015

19 Evening Standard, [Police ignorance of Islam 'hindering fight against radicalisation', former top cop says](#), 9 March 2015

20 Q325, Mark Rowley

(3) Provide advice

19. There needs to be an advice service open to all, particularly targeted at parents who wish to seek advice or express concerns about a particular individual. This must be well publicised, and be a less extreme step than using the Anti-Terrorist Hotline. There is a fear of stigmatisation among communities and such a helpline could go some way in changing these attitudes. This method should be included in the Prevent strategy.

(4) Provide a counter-narrative

20. The universality of the internet has enabled people to be radicalised in their bedrooms unnoticed by others. Policing social media sites such as Twitter, a means by which many IS propaganda has been spread for example, is impossible. Young people need to be equipped with the skills to become critical consumers of online content, in order to build a more natural resistance against radicalisation through online extremist content and propaganda. This is not just about counter-radicalisation: an informed, critical and questioning approach to online sources is a valuable asset in all aspects of a young person's social and intellectual development.

(5) Improve international co-operation

21. According to the Turkish Ambassador, the British embassy in Ankara sent details about the girls to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs six days after the girls left the country. This is an unacceptably slow response which significantly reduced any chances of intercepting the girls on their journey while there was still time. **International efforts to work in unison to tackle the growing number of young people travelling to these conflict zones to join extremist groups must be strengthened urgently.**

Support for families

22. The Committee took evidence from Sally and Micheal Evans, the mother and brother of Thomas Evans, who converted to Islam and travelled to Somalia to fight with Al Shabaab. In February 2011, he was stopped at the airport by the police while attempting to go to Kenya. The police did not contact his family to inform them that he had been stopped. Mrs Evans said that the family had received no support, and she felt that had “fallen between the cracks”, because there were no initiatives to support families in their situation who were not Muslim.²¹

23. The Metropolitan Police run the anti-terrorism hotline, which urges people to telephone with information about unusual or suspicious activity. All information passed to the police is treated in confidence and is analysed and researched by experienced officers to determine what, if any, police action should be taken.²² On 10 February 2015, Metropolitan Police commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe described the number as “unmemorable.”²³ In April 2014, the French Government set up an anti-terror hotline for

21 Q53, Q54, Q88, Sally Evans

22 Metropolitan Police, [Anti-terrorism hotline](#)

23 Independent, [UK's top police officer Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe forgets anti-terrorism hotline number live on air](#), 10 February 2015

individuals who want to report an alarming situation that they think is threatening a family member or loved one, offering information on what to do.²⁴ The French Government's *Stop-Djihadisme* website promotes the hotline's status as a free number (*Numéro Vert*), and highlights the importance of immediately contacting the police or gendarmerie if there are fears that a minor might leave the country.²⁵

24. We commend all the families which have spoken to the Committee during the course of this inquiry, namely Sally and Micheal Evans, Hussien Abase, Fahmida Aziz, and Sahima Begum, for their courage in speaking up. Not enough support is given to families by the Home Office. Greater counselling and support services should be offered to them.

Preventing individuals from travelling abroad

25. In our 2014 Report, we expressed concern about the relative ease by which foreign fighters appear to be able to travel to Syria. It is the responsibility of the international community to assist transit countries, such as Turkey, and the UK must offer practical support to those countries in securing their borders. We recommended that the Government maintain representation from the UK Counter Terrorism Command to help the Turkish authorities identify those who are at risk of crossing the border and share any relevant intelligence with the Turkish authorities. We also concluded that the Government should work with transit countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan to better establish who is likely to be travelling for genuine humanitarian reasons.²⁶

26. The Government stated that the UK is undertaking a range of activity to support Syria's neighbours to secure their borders and stop the flow of foreign fighters. The Police and Security and Intelligence Agencies are co-operating with counterparts to detect and disrupt individuals suspected of terrorist offences and they are sharing best practice with a number of countries on strengthening border security, through protective security measures and analysis of passenger data.²⁷ The Government has regular meetings with international counterparts on how best to persuade individuals against travel and stop foreign fighters before they reach Syria. It is working closely with the Turkish authorities and using their counter-terrorism and extremism liaison officer network to build capability with key partners across the region.

27. The Government also states that it has a range of measures that can disrupt an individual's plans to travelling abroad. These include exercising the Royal Prerogative to withdraw or refuse passports. The Home Secretary made a statement in April 2013 setting out the criteria which would govern the "necessary and proportionate" use of this power in the public interest.²⁸ Between April 2013 and October 2014, the total number of passports removed or refused under the Royal Prerogative was 2,310, though some of these cases

24 interieur.gouv.fr, [Lancement d'une plateforme d'assistance aux familles et de prévention de la radicalisation violente](#) [Launching a platform of assistance to families and the prevention of violent radicalisation], 25 April 2014

25 www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr, [Besoin d'aide?](#) ["Need help?"]

26 Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Counter-terrorism](#), HC 231

27 HM Government, [The Government response to the Seventeenth Report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2013-14](#), February 2015, Cm 9011, p. 4

28 HC Deb, 25 Apr 2013, [col. 68WS](#)

may relate to passports having been fraudulently obtained, rather than concerns about terrorism.²⁹ A Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures notice can also contain measures restricting foreign travel. Where an individual going through the criminal justice system, restrictive licence or bail conditions can be used to prevent the person leaving the UK. New provisions in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 will provide the police with a power to seize travel documents (including tickets and non-UK passports) at the border temporarily, during which time they will be able to investigate the individual concerned.³⁰

28. It is alarming that people subject to TPIMs or control orders have been able to abscond. We find it surprising that the police and security services are not better able to monitor people who they claim are such a substantial threat. We recommend that the police and security services review the methods and resources that they use to monitor these individuals.

29. Not enough emphasis is placed on preventing people from travelling abroad to join jihadist groups. At the check-in desk at airports and during exit checks, greater care should be taken with people travelling to destinations of concern (DOCs), such as Syria, Somalia, Iraq and Nigeria, as well as neighbouring countries which might be used as transit points to these destinations. The Home Office should work with airlines which serve these destinations to develop stricter controls for passengers travelling there. Airlines have a duty to work co-operatively with security services. We welcome the proposals put through on 12 February 2015, they will make sure that airlines take greater responsibility.

30. Where it becomes clear that individuals might already have left for Syria, the police need to work faster to alert overseas partners and airlines about them. Being reactive is inadequate: once people reach Syria and Iraq, or even Turkey, it is too late. No-fly lists should be strictly adhered to and shared internationally.

Combating returning foreign fighters

31. Our 2014 Report concluded that the Government needs a clear strategy for dealing with foreign fighters on their return, which may include help to come to terms with the violence they have witnessed and participated in, as well as counter-radicalisation interventions. We are concerned that their experiences may well make them vulnerable to post-traumatic stress, thereby increasing their vulnerability to further radicalisation. We recommend that the Government implement a programme, similar to Channel, for everyone returning to Britain where there is evidence that they have fought in Syria. The engagement in this strategy should be linked to any legal penalties imposed on their return. In developing the strategy the Government must work with mental health practitioners

29 [Passports removed or refused using the Royal Prerogative from April 2013 to October 2014](#), Home Office Freedom of Information release published 5 January 2015

30 HM Government, [The Government response to the Seventeenth Report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2013-14](#), February 2015, Cm 9011, p. 5

and academia to ensure that the programme best integrates those returning from conflict zones such as Syria.³¹

32. The Government states that they can manage the risk that individuals pose on their return to the UK through a broad range of disruptions including imposing restrictive TPIMs, asset freezing, and prosecuting for Terrorism Act or other offences where appropriate. Dual nationals can also be deprived of their British citizenship on public interest grounds and non-nationals may be excluded from the UK. The existing Prevent Case Management process, including the multi-agency Channel programme, enables police to work with local partners to manage individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation.³²

33. In Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city, an exit programme has created for returning foreign fighters. A vital component of the Aarhus process is its use of individual mentors, who engage with would-be or returning fighters over practical day-to-day issues alongside serious moral and religious debate. Aarhus model Superintendent Allan Aarslev, who is in charge of police end of the programme states:

“What’s easy is to pass tough new laws. Harder is to go through a real process with individuals: a panel of experts, counselling, healthcare, assistance getting back into education, with employment, maybe accommodation. With returning to everyday life and society. We don’t do this out of political conviction; we do it because we think it works.”³³

34. We are disappointed that the Home Office has not implemented a programme for individuals returning to Britain where there is evidence that they have fought in Syria. It is vital that the Government works with mental health practitioners and also assesses the Aarhus process to ensure that the UK’s programme best integrates those returning from conflict zones such as Syria.

35. There are of course people who travel to Syria and have not been involved in terrorist activity. It is clear that such people should not face the prospect of criminal sanctions, and we welcome the fact that Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe accepts this principle.

31 Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Counter-terrorism](#), HC 231

32 HM Government, [The Government response to the Seventeenth Report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2013-14](#), February 2015, Cm 9011, p. 5

33 The Guardian, [How do you deradicalise returning Isis fighters?](#), 12 November 2014

Appendix: Conclusions of the Home Affairs Committee's 2014 Report on *Counter-terrorism*

Conclusions and recommendations from Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, Counter-terrorism, HC 231.

Foreign fighters

1. The number of UK citizens and Westerners travelling to fight in foreign conflicts has reached alarming levels unlike anything seen in recent years. We require an immediate response targeted at dissuading and preventing those who wish to go to fight from going; helping countries who are key to intercepting those who are entering Syria, and ensuring those who return do not present a danger to the UK.

2. We are alarmed by the relative ease by which foreign fighters appear to be able to cross the border into Syria. It is the responsibility of the international community to assist transit countries, and the UK must offer practical support to those countries in securing their borders. We have been impressed by the efforts made to prevent football hooliganism in foreign countries by sending “spotters” to help pick out those at risk of committing criminal acts and believe similar practical help would be beneficial in the fight against terrorism. We recommend that the Government maintain representation from the UK Counter Terrorism command to help the Turkish authorities identify those who are at risk of crossing the border into Syria intending to fight and make available any relevant intelligence to the Turkish authorities that may be beneficial. The Government should also work with transit countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan to better establish who is likely to be travelling for genuine humanitarian reasons.

3. The Government needs a clear strategy for dealing with foreign fighters on their return, which may include help to come to terms with the violence they have witnessed and participated in, as well as counter-radicalisation interventions. We are concerned that their experiences may well make them vulnerable to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder thereby increasing their vulnerability to radicalisation. We recommend that the Government implement a programme, similar to Channel, for everyone returning to Britain where there is evidence that they have fought in Syria. The engagement in this strategy should be linked to any legal penalties imposed on their return. In developing the strategy the Government must work with mental health practitioners and academia to ensure that the programme best integrates those returning from conflict zones such as Syria.

Capacity building

4. The increasingly diverse and dispersed nature of the threat makes capacity building a front-line defence against a changing threat landscape. We note that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's budget is limited by available resources but given the importance of capacity building to the Government's counter-terrorism efforts we look to the OSCT and the FCO to reassure us that the Counter-Terrorism Fund will be maintained at current

levels in this and the next financial year. In the light of the announcement that the Prime Minister is considering using some of the UK's aid budget on peace keeping and other defence-related projects, we recommend that within the definitions of Overseas Development Aid, money could be used to increase resource for capacity building abroad.

5. We accept that some of the UK's capacity building programmes are sensitive but we believe that greater transparency about how much the Government spends on capacity building overseas and who funds these programmes (i.e. fully by UK Government or jointly between UK and EU) is crucial for accountability.

6. We recommend that the Government raise the issue of Interpol databases as part of discussions around counter-terrorism at the next EU Justice and Home Affairs Council and encourage others to utilise the tools at **their** disposal.

7. Interpol is an international policing organisation with a proven record of success and should be widely supported. We recommend that the Government take the lead in working with Interpol and the UK's international partners to create an international operational platform supporting terrorist investigations. The UK should use its pivotal position in the G7 to ensure that this change is achieved. Whilst UK policing may lack sufficient resources to supply a significant number of staff to such a platform, we also recommend the Government consider offering to host the permanent base of the platform.

The UK's response to the terrorist threat

8. The withdrawal of passports is a vital tool in preventing UK citizens from travelling to foreign conflicts. We understand the need to use the prerogative power to withdraw or withhold a citizen's passport. Given that the estimates of foreign fighters are in the low hundreds, we are surprised that it has only been used 14 times since April 2013 and recommend that, in all appropriate circumstances where there is evidence, the power is utilised as an exceptional preventative and temporary measure. However, we note that its use is not subject to any scrutiny external to the executive. We recommend that the Home Secretary report quarterly on its use to the House as is currently done with TPIMs and allow the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation to review the exercise of the Royal Prerogative as part of his annual review.

9. We have grave concerns about how effective the deprivation of mono-citizenship powers will be. Drafting legislation on the basis of an individual case lessens the impact of the legislation because the exact circumstances are unlikely to repeat themselves. We support the Minister's commitment to the power being used sparingly. We recommend that the Government endeavour to use the power only when the person subject to the decision is outside the UK.

10. It is deeply worrying that anyone who is subject to a TPIM, or those who were subjects of control orders, can abscond with relative ease. We recommend that a review of the types of measures placed upon subjects needs to be conducted to ensure that enough is being done to prevent absconsion.

11. So far there have been no jury convictions of breaches of TPIMs or Control Orders and the CPS needs to bear this in mind when bringing prosecutions. We recommend that the Government and Crown Prosecution Service produce specific guidance on investigating

and prosecuting breaches. The continued failure to secure a conviction undermines the system of TPIMs.

12. Many breaches of a TPIM order are minor infringements which might plausibly have happened inadvertently. It is therefore right that the CPS does not prosecute every single breach, considering the cost to the public purse and the difficulty of convincing a jury of the materiality of the alleged breach without being able to explain the basis on which the relevant restriction was included in the order. It is worth noting that no prosecution has been successful following a not-guilty plea and in only one case has the accused pleaded guilty. In the case of the tag tampering trial, it is of serious concern that the prosecution was discontinued. Deliberately tampering with a tag must be viewed as an attempt to abscond and we recommend that the Home Office request independent testing of the tags provided by G4S to definitively prove, as they claim, a tag-tamper alert can only be caused through deliberate actions. This will enable the Home Office to present reliable evidence to the court that such an alert cannot be caused inadvertently. Given that five prosecutions for tag tampering have been withdrawn or collapsed it is vital that both the public and TPIM subjects understand the extent to which it might or might not be possible for a tag-tamper alert to be innocently caused.

13. It is essential that the Government engages with those placed on a TPIM whilst they are subject to the control and not only afterwards. It is a missed opportunity not to implement a de-radicalisation programme until the subjects are free of the measures. We recommend that all TPIM subjects are placed on a graduated scheme, which commences concurrently with the measures, with the sole purpose of engagement and de-radicalisation. We accept that the anonymity order may cause difficulties in terms of liaising with the local community when seeking support for that process. However, we believe that the Government should engage with community leaders who are working with prisoners and ex-prisoners who have been radicalised in order to design a programme which would be suitable for TPIM subjects. Such a programme should take account of the different narratives of radicalisation. Due to the constraints placed on a subject it is unlikely that they will be eager to engage with the state or official parts of society. It is disastrous, therefore, for a subject to be left without a constructive path towards reintegration following the end of the measures.

14. The Government must ensure that an exit strategy is started as soon as the TPIM is imposed upon a subject. We recommend a continuation of the de-radicalisation engagement programme which they would have started under the TPIM which evolves into a more practical scheme enabling the former subject to reconnect with society through work or education.

15. We welcome the progress made by internet companies such as Google (who own YouTube) in the work they are doing to promote counter narratives. We commend the work by the creators of Abdullah-X and note the importance of peer-led education. Given the role that social media is playing in the dissemination of extremist messages we hope that other large multi-national social media companies status to support terrorist actions. We recommend that he assess the response to such abuse and suggest changes which will improve the ability of the authorities to tackle terrorist financing whilst ensuring that law-abiding charities can continue their vital work.

16. The National Crime Agency was established as a national mechanism as part of the changing landscape of policing. Like all new organisations, it is still seeking to establish a strong identity and its own remit. For instance, we remain concerned that the NCA does not have full operational capacity in Northern Ireland. The Metropolitan Police have a wide remit which has many complexities and the current difficulties faced by the organisation lead us to believe that the responsibility for counter-terrorism ought to be moved to the NCA in order to allow the Met to focus on the basics of policing London. The work to transfer the command ought to begin immediately with a view to a full transfer of responsibility for counter-terrorism operations taking place, for example within five years after the NCA became operational, in 2018. When this takes place, it should finally complete the jigsaw of the new landscape of policing.

17. Both members of the public and those in private enterprises have to ensure that vigilance is constant, this is especially important in areas where crowds of people congregate. Those in charge of areas visited by high numbers of people (such as shopping centres) must ensure that they have adequate security, surveillance and response plans. Ensuring public safety cannot be the sole purview of the counterterrorism command and the security service, it is a responsibility in which all UK citizens and companies take a share. We note that the British Council of Shopping Centres have updated their guidance following the Westgate attack. We recommend that all police forces ensure that local shopping centres have received this guidance and put in place and test a Response Plan.

Oversight of the security and intelligence agencies

18. We do not believe the current system of oversight is effective and we have concerns that the weak nature of that system has an impact upon the credibility of the agencies' accountability, and to the credibility of Parliament itself. The scrutiny of the work of the security and intelligence agencies should be not the exclusive preserve of the Intelligence and Security Committee. Whilst we recognise the importance of limiting the access to documents of a confidential nature, we believe that as the relevant departmental select committee, we ought to be able to take oral evidence from the head of the security service. Engagement with elected representatives is not, in itself, a danger to national security and to continue to insist so is hyperbole. There are questions about the accuracy of information provided to the House by the security and intelligence agencies in the past, particularly in 2003. As future decisions on warfare look likely to be determined by votes of the members of the House of Commons, there is heightened importance in ensuring that the House is accurately informed in future.

19. Furthermore we recommend that the Commons membership of the Intelligence and Security Committee should be elected like other select committees and that the Chair, who should always be a member of the Commons, ought to be subject to election of the whole House, as is the case for Select Committees from the start of the next parliament. We further recommend that the Chair should always be a member of the largest opposition party.

20. The Investigatory Powers Tribunal is the only body which can investigate individual complaints against the security and intelligence agencies and actions taken under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. It ought to command public confidence in its actions. For there to be public confidence there must first be public understanding of the

work of the Tribunal. We recommend that if the Investigatory Powers Tribunal are unwilling to voluntarily produce a detailed annual report on their work, that legislation be amended so that they are required to do so. Such an annual report should, at the very least contain the number of cases it has received and the outcome of cases determined in that year with comparable data for the previous four years. We also recommend that the data be broken down to show which agency the complaint was against.

21. It is unacceptable that there is so much confusion around the work of the Intelligence Services Commissioner and the Interception of Communications Commissioner. We recommend that as a matter of urgency data is collected on how many applications there were under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and how many people were subsequently subject to an application. Furthermore, the fact that the Intelligence Services Commissioner cannot tell us what percentage of consolidated guidance cases or disciplinary proceedings he has examined is concerning.

22. We have serious doubts that either the Interception of Communications Commissioner role or the Intelligence Services Commissioner role should be part-time. We are also concerned that the extent of the Intelligence Services Commissioner's staff is one personal assistant. The fact that less than 10% of warrants which allow intrusion in to the private lives of individuals are examined is concerning—we believe this figure ought to be at least 50%, if not higher. We recommend that the Commissioners are made full-time positions and that their resources are increased to allow them to examine half of the requests for information.

23. All parts of the oversight system need to do more to improve public confidence in their work. We recommend that each of the Commissioners and the Investigatory Powers Tribunal develop an outreach strategy which ought to be published as part of their annual reports along with details of how they have tried to fulfil the objective of improving knowledge of their work.

24. The security and intelligence agencies are staffed by brave men and women who in many cases risk their lives to protect this country. They deserve our gratitude and they deserve to be honoured for their work. The best way to honour them is by ensuring that there is no need to question their integrity and, in order to prove this, there must be adequate scrutiny of their actions. The current system of oversight belongs to a pre-internet age, a time when a person's word was accepted without question. What is needed is a scrutiny system for the 21st century, to ensure that sophisticated security and intelligence agencies can get on with the job with the full confidence of the public.

25. It is essential that the legal position be resolved clearly and promptly. It is currently unclear whether CSPs are obliged to store communications data as they were previously, or indeed if they are allowed to, because of the Data Protection Act. It is also unclear if the Home Office will continue to pay CSPs for their work on communications data.

26. Given the criticism which the Regulation of the Investigatory Powers Act is subject to, we believe that the legislation is in need of review. We recommend that a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament should be appointed in order to hold an inquiry with the ability to take evidence on the Act with a view to updating it. This inquiry would aim to bring the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act up to date with modern technology,

reduce the complexity (and associated difficulty in the use of) the legislation, strengthen the statistical and transparency requirements and improve the oversight functions as are set out in the current Act. We recommend that the inquiry address the areas of concern raised with us concerning communications data and the oversight of Section 94 of the Telecommunications Act 1984.

Conclusions and recommendations

Preventing radicalisation

1. Preventative work with communities must be a top priority for the Home Office's de-radicalisation work. It is urgent that new partnerships are developed with mosques and other community groups and that they play a key role in Prevent counter-terrorism programmes. We need to reassure them that they will not be 'toxified' by helping the authorities to identify those who they suspect of radicalisation and by engaging with these individuals. (Paragraph 3)
2. We are concerned at the evidence that some people who do not previously hold or express any extremist views become radicalised in prison. It indicates that the programmes we have are not working effectively enough. Work to prevent radicalisation in prisons should be a high priority in the Government's counter-radicalisation agenda. The Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism stated that the 'Ibaana' prison counter-radicalisation programme would be rolled out in full across British prisons by April 2014. The implementation of this programme across the country must be clearly outlined to specific deadlines. This programme is of vital importance given this growing threat, and so giving ambiguous timetables indicating piecemeal application are simply unacceptable. It is vital that individuals working with prisoners, particularly those offering counselling, should undergo specific training to equip them to combat extremist ideologies. (Paragraph 7)
3. It is particularly important that prisoners who have demonstrated extremist views in prison should receive support, monitoring and appropriate intervention on their release, including through the Channel programme. The Channel programme should be strengthened to provide long-term, effective monitoring of participants, to ensure proper evaluation of these prevention programmes. All the evaluations should be sent to our successor Committee by 31 July 2015. (Paragraph 9)
4. Where social media companies are given evidence that users of their services are seeking to promote violent extremism, they should be prepared to take action to suspend their accounts, as they do where there is abuse or harassment of other users. (Paragraph 14)
5. Communication between the police, schools and parents is in need of vast improvement. The police must engage in a regular and open dialogue with schools and community groups to ensure that information is exchanged and new initiatives can be explored at community level. Schools and the police must inform parents immediately, and work together when there is even the smallest hint of radicalisation, or a close association with someone who is thought to have been radicalised. (Paragraph 17)
6. It is essential that the officers working on the Prevent programme, as in other areas of the police, are truly reflective and representative of British society. (Paragraph 18)

7. There needs to be an advice service open to all, particularly targeted at parents who wish to seek advice or express concerns about a particular individual. This must be well publicised, and be a less extreme step than using the Anti-Terrorist Hotline. There is a fear of stigmatisation among communities and such a helpline could go some way in changing these attitudes. This method should be included in the Prevent strategy. (Paragraph 19)
8. The universality of the internet has enabled people to be radicalised in their bedrooms unnoticed by others. Policing social media sites such as Twitter, a means by which many IS propaganda has been spread for example, is impossible. Young people need to be equipped with the skills to become critical consumers of online content, in order to build a more natural resistance against radicalisation through online extremist content and propaganda. This is not just about counter-radicalisation: an informed, critical and questioning approach to online sources is a valuable asset in all aspects of a young person's social and intellectual development. (Paragraph 20)
9. International efforts to work in unison to tackle the growing number of young people travelling to these conflict zones to join extremist groups must be strengthened urgently. (Paragraph 21)
10. We commend all the families which have spoken to the Committee during the course of this inquiry, namely Sally and Micheal Evans, Hussien Abase, Fahmida Aziz, and Sahima Begum, for their courage in speaking up. Not enough support is given to families by the Home Office. Greater counselling and support services should be offered to them. (Paragraph 24)

Preventing individuals from travelling abroad

11. It is alarming that people subject to TPIMs or control orders have been able to abscond. We find it surprising that the police and security services are not better able to monitor people who they claim are such a substantial threat. We recommend that the police and security services review the methods and resources that they use to monitor these individuals. (Paragraph 28)
12. Not enough emphasis is placed on preventing people from travelling abroad to join jihadist groups. At the check-in desk at airports and during exit checks, greater care should be taken with people travelling to destinations of concern (DOCs), such as Syria, Somalia, Iraq and Nigeria, as well as neighbouring countries which might be used as transit points to these destinations. The Home Office should work with airlines which serve these destinations to develop stricter controls for passengers travelling there. Airlines have a duty to work co-operatively with security services. We welcome the proposals put through on 12 February 2015, they will make sure that airlines take greater responsibility. (Paragraph 29)
13. Where it becomes clear that individuals might already have left for Syria, the police need to work faster to alert overseas partners and airlines about them. Being reactive is inadequate: once people reach Syria and Iraq, or even Turkey, it is too late. No-fly lists should be strictly adhered to and shared internationally. (Paragraph 30)

Combating returning foreign fighters

14. We are disappointed that the Home Office has not implemented a programme for individuals returning to Britain where there is evidence that they have fought in Syria. It is vital that the Government works with mental health practitioners and also assesses the Aarhus process to ensure that the UK's programme best integrates those returning from conflict zones such as Syria. (Paragraph 34)
15. There are of course people who travel to Syria and have not been involved in terrorist activity. It is clear that such people should not face the prospect of criminal sanctions, and we welcome the fact that Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe accepts this principle. (Paragraph 35)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 17 March 2015

Keith Vaz, in the Chair

Ian Austin
Nicola Blackwood
Michael Ellis
Paul Flynn

Dr Julian Huppert
Tim Loughton
Yasmin Qureshi
Mr David Winnick

Draft Report (*Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 35 read and agreed to.

Paragraph—(*Dr Julian Huppert*)—brought up and read, as follows:

Oversight of the security and intelligence agencies

We do not believe the current system of oversight is effective and we have concerns that the weak nature of that system has an impact upon the credibility of the agencies' accountability, and on the credibility of Parliament itself. The Home Secretary, Rt Hon Theresa May MP, stated on 10 July 2014 that she had asked David Anderson QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, to lead a review of the capabilities and powers required by law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and the regulatory framework within which those capabilities and powers should be exercised. In March 2014, the Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, announced an Independent Surveillance Review (ISR), to be carried out by the Royal United Services Institute, on 4 March 2014. The ISR's purpose is to review the relationship between the needs of security and law enforcement in relation to civil liberties concerns in an era of rapidly evolving communications technology. The government has announced its intention for a Joint Committee to be established in the next Parliament to consider these various reviews and to make recommendations for new legislation to be brought into force before DRIPA expires. We support this intention and urge the next Government to go ahead with this proposal. **We are very concerned that there continues to be no oversight of the use of section 94 of the Telecommunications Act 1984. We recommend that the Interception of Communications Commissioner be given the statutory responsibility for this purpose, including publishing at least information on how often it is used in each year.**

Question put, That the paragraph be read a second time.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 4

Paul Flynn
Dr Julian Huppert
Yasmin Qureshi
Mr David Winnick

Noes, 4

Ian Austin
Nicola Blackwood
Michael Ellis
Tim Loughton

Whereupon the Chair declared himself with the Noes.

Question accordingly negative.

Resolved, That the Report be the Nineteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

22 Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chair.]

Witnesses

Tuesday 13 January 2015

Rob Wainwright, Director General, Europol Q 1-44

Tuesday 3 February 2015

Sally Evans, a mother whose son converted to Islam and travelled to Somalia to fight alongside Al Shabaab, and **Micheal Evans**, brother Q 45-121

Dr Usama Hasan, Senior Researcher, Quilliam Foundation, and **Dr Erin Saltman**, Senior Researcher Q 122-154

Jamie Bartlett, Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media, Demos Q 155-170

Tuesday 10 March 2015

Hussen Abase, father of Amira Abase, **Tasnime Akunjee**, Solicitor to Abase, Aziz and Begum families, **Fahmida Aziz**, first cousin of Kadiza Sultana and **Sahima Begum**, older sister of Shamima Begum Q 171-247

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and **Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley**, Metropolitan Police Q 248-328

His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in London Q 329-346

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee's website at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/publications/>

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First Report	Tobacco smuggling	HC 200
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Fifth Report	Police, the media, and high-profile criminal investigations	HC 629
Sixth Report	Child sexual exploitation and the response to localised grooming: follow-up	HC 203
Seventh Report	Effectiveness of the Committee in 2012-13	HC 825
Eighth Report	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	HC 711
Ninth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (January-June 2014)	HC 712
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Fourteenth Report	Out-of-Court Disposals	HC 799
Fifteenth Report	Police Information Notices	HC 901
Sixteenth Report	Female genital mutilation: follow-up	HC 961
Seventeenth Report	Police bail	HC 962
Eighteenth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates: Calais	HC 902

Session 2013–14

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Second Report	Child sexual exploitation and the response to localised grooming	HC 68
Third Report	Leadership and standards in the police	HC 67
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Fifth Report	E-crime	HC 70
Sixth Report	Police and Crime Commissioners: power to remove Chief Constables	HC 487
Seventh Report	Asylum	HC 71

Eighth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (Jan–March 2013)	HC 616
Ninth Report	Pre-Lisbon Treaty EU police and criminal justice measures: the UK's opt-in decision	HC 615
Tenth Report	Leadership and Standards in the Police: follow-up	HC 756
Eleventh Report	Khat	HC 869
Twelfth Report	Drugs: new psychoactive substances and prescription drugs	HC 819
Thirteenth Report	The work of the Permanent Secretary	HC 233
Fourteenth Report	The Government's Response to the Committees' Reports on the 2014 block opt-out decision	HC 1177
Fifteenth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (April–Sep 2013)	HC 820
Sixteenth Report	Police and Crime Commissioners: Progress to date	HC 757
Seventeenth Report	Counter-terrorism	HC 231
Eighteenth Report	Reform of the Police Federation	HC 1163

Session 2012–13

First Report	Effectiveness of the Committee in 2010–12	HC 144
Second Report	Work of the Permanent Secretary (April–Dec 2011)	HC 145
Third Report	Pre-appointment Hearing for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary	HC 183
Fourth Report	Private Investigators	HC 100
Fifth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (Dec 2011–Mar 2012)	HC 71
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Seventh Report	Olympics Security	HC 531
Eighth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (April–June 2012)	HC 603
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Eleventh Report	Independent Police Complaints Commission	HC 494
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Eighth Report	Forced marriage	HC 880
Ninth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (Nov 2010–March 2011)	HC 929
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	accession of Turkey to the European Union	
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Twelfth Report	Home Office—Work of the Permanent Secretary	HC 928
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Fifteenth Report	The work of the UK Border Agency (April-July 2011)	HC 1497
Sixteenth Report	Policing large scale disorder	HC 1456
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