



HM Government

Tackling extremism in the UK

Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on
Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism

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The UK deplores and will fight terrorism of every kind, whether based on Islamist, extreme right-wing or any other extremist ideology. We will not tolerate extremist activity of any sort, which creates an environment for radicalising individuals and could lead them on a pathway towards terrorism.

1.1 The killing of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich was the impetus to look closely at whether the government was doing all it could to confront extremism and radicalisation. We know that the international terrorist threat to the UK comes primarily from those people who are inspired by Al Qa'ida's distorted interpretation of Islam and use that as justification for killing innocent people. But we must tackle extremism of all kinds, including the Islamophobia and neo-Nazism espoused by the murderer of Mohammed Saleem to justify his terrorist attacks against mosques in the West Midlands.

1.2 The Prime Minister set up the Extremism Task Force to identify any areas where our current approach was lacking and to agree practical steps to fight against all forms of extremism. We have made progress since this government came to power. We have removed over 18,000 items of online terrorist propaganda and intervened more often than ever before to limit the opportunities for hate preachers to spread their messages. But we recognise that we can and should do more. This response is broader than dealing only with those who espouse violence – we must confront the poisonous extremist ideology that can lead people to violence; which divides

communities and which extremists use to recruit individuals to their cause; which runs counter to fundamental British values such as freedom of speech, democracy and equal rights; which says that 'the West' is at war with Islam and that it is not possible to be a true Muslim and to live an integrated life in the UK.

1.3 Since the 2011 revised 'Prevent' strategy, the government has defined extremism as: "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas". There is a range of extremist individuals and organisations, including Islamists, the far right and others. As the greatest risk to our security comes from Al Qa'ida and like-minded groups, and terrorist ideologies draw on and make use of extremist ideas, we believe it is also necessary to define the ideology of Islamist extremism.

1.4 This is a distinct ideology which should not be confused with traditional religious practice. It is an ideology which is based on a distorted interpretation of Islam, which betrays

Islam's peaceful principles, and draws on the teachings of the likes of Sayyid Qutb. Islamist extremists deem Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as a 'war on Islam', creating a narrative of 'them' and 'us'. They seek to impose a global Islamic state governed by their interpretation of Shari'ah as state law, rejecting liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law and equality. Their ideology also includes the uncompromising belief that people cannot be Muslim and British, and insists that those who do not agree with them are not true Muslims

1.5 Challenging and tackling extremism is a shared effort. We welcome the spontaneous and unequivocal condemnation from Muslim community organisations and other faith groups in response to the Woolwich attack. The government, as much as organisations and communities in the UK, must take

responsibility. We have been too reticent about challenging extreme Islamist ideologies in the past, in part because of a misplaced concern that attacking Islamist extremism equates to an attack on Islam itself. This reticence, and the failure to confront extremists, has led to an environment conducive to radicalisation in some mosques and Islamic centres, universities and prisons. Many institutions do not have the capacity to play their full part in challenging extremists, even when they want to. The government has a role in leading this challenge, ensuring that communities where extremists operate, and the organisations working against extremists, have the capability to confront it themselves.

1.6 The Extremism Task Force looked in detail at the following areas and agreed these practical steps to address the gaps in our response.

Disrupting extremists

It is often too easy for extremist preachers and groups to spread extremist views which can lead people into terrorism, while at the same time being careful not to contravene existing laws on incitement to violence or glorifying terrorism.

2.1 Some organisations and religious institutions may be targeted and infiltrated by extremist groups or individuals. When they are, it can be hard for those institutions to take direct action to remove extremists from their midst. Some extremist groups target charities and seek to exploit and benefit from charitable status.

2.2 While protecting society from extremism, **we will also continue to protect the right to freedom of expression.** These proposals are not intended or designed to restrict or prevent legitimate and lawful comment and debate.

2.3 We will close these gaps in our legislation by:

- **making sure organisations have the support and advice they need to confront and exclude extremists:** they will get expert advice from specialist charities if they have to resort to legal action to exclude extremists
- **considering if there is a case for new types of order to ban groups** which seek to undermine democracy or use hate speech, when necessary to protect the public or prevent crime and disorder
- **considering if there is a case for new civil powers**, akin to the new anti-social behaviour powers, to target the behaviours extremists use to radicalise others

- **consulting on new legislation to strengthen the powers of the Charity Commission:** these powers will help us tackle extremism, as well as other abuses of charitable status such as tax avoidance and fraud

2.4 In addition, the police will:

- ensure that the **extremist dimension of hate-crimes** is properly logged and taken into account when conducting their investigations
- **share information with other countries** to identify individuals with extreme right-wing views coming to the UK, as they do with Islamist extremists

Countering extremist narratives and ideology

Extremist propaganda is too widely available, particularly online, and has a direct impact on radicalising individuals. The poisonous messages of extremists must not be allowed to drown out the voices of the moderate majority.

3.1 The Task Force has agreed to:

- **build the capabilities of communities and civil society organisations** so that they can campaign against the large volume of extremist material, including online
- **work with internet companies to restrict access to terrorist material online** which is hosted overseas but illegal under UK law
- **improve the process for public reporting of extremist content online**
- work with the internet industry to help them in their continuing efforts to **identify extremist content to include in family-friendly filters**
- look at using existing powers to **exclude from the UK those who post extremist material online** who are based overseas

Preventing radicalisation

Local authorities are instrumental in delivering ‘Prevent’, the government’s counter-radicalisation and counter-extremism strategy.

4.1 There are some towns and cities in the UK where extremism is of particular concern. The people on the front line who we rely on to work with communities to tackle extremism must have the full support of their local authority. This is not always the case.

4.2 To show unequivocally the importance we attach to tackling extremism and the role of local authorities in delivering it, we will:

- **take steps to intervene where local authorities are not taking the problem seriously**
- **make delivery of ‘Prevent’ a legal requirement** in those areas of the country where extremism is of particular concern
- **make delivery of the ‘Channel’ programme a legal requirement** in England and Wales, which supports individuals at risk of being radicalised

Integration

Extremism can flourish where different parts of a community remain isolated from each other. More integrated communities will be more resilient to the influence of extremists.

4.3 Extremism is less likely to be tolerated by communities which come together to challenge it. Britain is stronger because of its open, multi-faith and multi-racial communities, which can tackle extremists together and challenge the view that it is not possible to be a true Muslim and be integrated in British society. Approaches in the past that, on occasion, sought to deal with different communities as separate and distinct, were mistaken.

4.4 It is important that this effort is led locally by communities who know their areas best. Alongside confronting the extremist narrative, the government will:

- set up a **dedicated public communications platform** to allow communities to bring to life the success of integration and challenge the extremist worldview

- **support projects that demonstrate how communities come together**, whether in:
 - celebrating the ‘Big Iftar’, when Mosques up and down the country open up their doors to their community
 - commemorating the sacrifice of soldiers of all faiths from across the Commonwealth in World War 1
- remembering where intolerance and hatred can lead, through Holocaust Memorial Day and the ‘Remembering Srebrenica’ project
- **give more support to those places which face the biggest integration challenges**, especially those communities where extremism is a particular problem

Stopping extremism in institutions

Extremists take advantage of institutions to share their poisonous narrative with others, particularly with individuals vulnerable to their messages. The government must do more to address extremism in locations where it can exert control, such as prisons, and increase oversight where it is needed, such as some independent and religious schools.

Schools

5.1.1 We have a responsibility to protect children from extremist views in schools. All schools in England, whether in the state or independent sectors, including those with a faith ethos, must expect that they will be inspected and assessed on their measures to protect their pupils from extremist material.

5.1.2 Ofsted already conducts unannounced inspections of independent schools – these will continue. We are working to introduce even tougher standards from September 2014 to ensure that schools support fundamental British values. Regulations to bar individuals involved

or linked with extremism from managing or teaching at independent schools will be in place by April 2014.

5.1.3 To widen the protection of school children further, the Task Force has agreed to improve oversight of religious supplementary schools. We will introduce a voluntary code of practice which will depend on schools implementing robust policies to protect children and young people from harm, including exposure to intolerant or extremist views. This will help parents make informed decisions about the right choice of supplementary school for their child.

Universities and further education

5.2.1 Extremist preachers use some higher education institutions as a platform for spreading their messages. Universities must take seriously their responsibility to deny extremist speakers a platform. This is not about the government restricting freedom of speech – it is about universities taking account of the interests of all their students and their own reputations when deciding who they allow to use their institution as a platform.

5.2.2 Earlier this year we deployed ‘Prevent’ coordinators to work with those universities and colleges across England and Wales which face the greatest challenge from radicalisation. They offer training, raise awareness among staff of the warning signs of extremist behaviour and have already helped institutions review their external speaker policies. These coordinators also give universities access to the information they need to make informed decisions about who they allow to speak on campuses. This move has

been welcomed by universities and as a result events have been changed or cancelled.

5.2.3 The Minister for Universities and Science met university representatives on 18 November. He set out clearly the government’s expectation for universities to take steps to prevent them being a permissive environment for extremism and what the government can do to assist them. Universities UK, in conjunction with representatives from around the sector have produced detailed guidance for universities on managing the risks associated with external speakers on campus.

5.2.4 The Task Force has agreed to work with universities and their student bodies to find trained Muslim chaplains who will be able to challenge extremist views on campuses and provide pastoral care for Muslim students. Although some universities have Muslim chaplains, they are not as widespread as Christian chaplains.

Prisons

5.3.1 Our prisons house some of the most dangerous terrorists and extremists in society who have rightly been locked up for the crimes they have committed. It is not acceptable that some prisoners are able to use their time behind bars to radicalise other prisoners. We must take the opportunity of having control over this difficult and dangerous set of individuals before they are released to manage them closely, confront robustly their extremist views and disrupt their activities.

5.3.2 Appropriately recruited Muslim Prison Chaplains are already employed to challenge the extremist views of prisoners and to provide religious direction for Muslim prisoners. Using their experience, they 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 to justify their extremist views.

5.3.3 The programme will be rolled out in full by April 2014. It will complement the existing education programme to develop all prisoners' understanding of Islam, already completed by 1,600 individuals.

5.3.4 Further steps will be taken to:

- **restrict the ability of extremist and terrorist prisoners to radicalise** by using special programmes to minimise the impact they have on other prisoners
- **tighten the rules on legal correspondence** to ensure prisoners and their legal representatives do not take advantage of them to smuggle extremist material into prison
- **ensure that prisoners who have demonstrated extremist views in prison receive intervention and support on release:** prisoners will be passed seamlessly to appropriate intervention when they are released, including the 'Channel' programme

Next steps

6.1 Taken together, these practical changes demonstrate the government's continued commitment to tackling extremism. They will give us the tools we need to confront extremism and ensure we can support other organisations and individuals to do the same. Although the work of the Extremism Task Force now comes to an end, the Prime Minister will receive regular updates from departments on how these steps are being implemented, their impact and any further steps needed for an effective and comprehensive approach to dealing with extremism.