

Submission from

MUSLIM VOICE UK

on the

Proposed Anti-terror laws

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Executive Summary

Introduction

To enable consultees to evaluate the government's case for their proposals objectively, more data and statistics relating to the existing terrorism legislation should have been made available. The discussion papers were written in a leading way and only provided information that helped make a case for the government's proposals. However, prior to developing a response to the counter terrorism proposals, MVUK consulted Muslims from around the UK and interviewed 184 Muslim males and females from diverse ethnic backgrounds and ages.

Extending Pre-Charge Detention Time

The government have not provided compelling evidence to justify increasing detention time further although they insist that more time is needed as cases have become more complex with an international dimension:

- There is no evidence to show why a pre-charge detention limit of 56 days has been chosen - the current pre-charge detention time has simply been doubled.
- Decrypting computers and accessing phone data cannot justify an extended pre-charge detention. Rapid automated searches can be carried out on large numbers of computers and there are expedited processes for obtaining call logs and location history from phone companies.
- Establishing identities of terrorist suspects should not present any significant hindrance, since multiple identities are not a new phenomenon in criminal investigations and people can be charged under an identity they have assumed.
- The government is merely speculating that more than 28 days may not be enough in the future as they concede that the current 28 day limit has been sufficient so far.
- At 28 days, the UK limit already far exceeds that found in any other Western country including those that have also suffered terrorist attacks. There is no evidence to show how investigations in the UK are more challenging than those in other countries facing similar threats.
- The pace of response from foreign countries should not dictate detention time as this could vary considerably from one country to another depending on legal, evidential or procedural practices.
- If the government, as they claim, are intending to only go beyond 28 days in exceptional circumstances, then the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 already provides for temporary emergencies such the circumstances they describe. It contains a broad power to make emergency regulations subject to parliamentary and judicial oversight- including a power to extend pre-charge detention periods for up to 30 days at a time.
- 85% of Muslims surveyed are opposed to the proposal. An assessment of the current legislation's impact on the Muslim community and on innocent individuals detained and released has not been provided.

Retention and Use of DNA Samples

The DNA data of individuals who have never been charged or convicted of terrorism or terror related offences should not be stored either on the national or new Counter Terrorism Database:

- There are no compelling arguments for storing DNA profiles of innocent people.
- All people on the Counter Terrorism database are being referred to by the government in their discussion papers as terrorist suspects – this will also include innocent individuals who will be on a permanent ‘list of suspects’ which undermines the principle of innocent until proven guilty.
- With the current discrimination within the criminal justice system it will mean that a disproportionate number of innocent Muslims will be on the Counter Terrorism database.
- Accepting lower standards for the Counter Terrorism database increases the risk of the wrong people being convicted.
- There is no such thing as an error-free DNA database. Mistakes can lead to ‘false positives’ where an innocent person is wrongly identified.
- The fact that the information on national and Counter Terrorism databases can be shared with foreign law agencies means that such personal data could not only be open to misuse and abuse in the UK, but internationally as well.
- Most Muslims either strongly disagreed or disagreed on the storage of such information on both the national database (84%) and the stand alone Counter Terrorism Database (85%). They felt that such action was discriminatory and that it would criminalise the Muslim community as innocent Muslims would be treated as terrorists and suspects.

Police Powers to Seize Travel Documents at Ports

- The police already have powers to arrest individuals if they have evidence that they intend to travel abroad to commit or assist in terrorism. The law should not be extended to allow the police to confiscate travel documents and prevent individuals from travelling abroad on mere suspicion.
- The Muslims surveyed were strongly against (approximately 87%) giving the police these powers as they were concerned that such powers would be abused and targeted towards Muslims as the stop and search powers have been.

Post Charge Questioning

- Allowing suspects to continue being questioned after charge is a better alternative to extending pre-charge detention providing there are safe guards in place such restrictions and limitations on the number of times and the length of time suspects can be questioned in addition to the presence of a lawyer.
- Muslims surveyed had mixed feelings on the acceptability of post charge questioning – just under half supported the measure while one quarter opposed it while one quarter were uncertain. The uncertainty and opposition reflects the lack of trust in the police.

Enhanced Prison Sentences

Due to distrust in police, the Muslims surveyed had mixed views on giving enhanced sentences to non-terrorist crime that was linked to terrorism. There is a fear that suspects may have to prove their innocence rather than police prove their guilt. Hence, one third of Muslims were against such a move while just under half supported this measure.

Notification Requirements for Convicted Terrorists

A register of convicted terrorists, similar to that for sex offenders which involves police being notified by convicted terrorists on names and address changes as well as foreign travel plans are sensible measures. However, the Muslims surveyed had mixed opinions on this issue due to mistrust in the police and government - half of those surveyed supported the measure, one quarter opposed it while the remainder were unsure or neutral.

Control Orders

Control orders undermine the presumption of innocence as it allows the government to punish someone without having to prove they have committed any crime therefore any move giving police more powers in relation to control orders is unacceptable. Muslims want individuals on control orders to be treated like any other criminal and processed through the normal criminal justice system rather than a parallel legal system – 72% of Muslims want them to be put on trial rather than see the control orders made even more stringent.

Seizure of terrorist assets

Extending court power to seize assets of convicted terrorists, if it believes the finance may be used for terrorism in the future, will be problematic. Not only will intent be difficult to prove but the families of the convicted terrorists who are unlikely to be aware or involved in terrorism would suffer and be punished if assets are seized.

Concluding Remarks

The counter terrorism measures proposed by the government are not proportionate and will be counterproductive. The MVUK survey findings confirm the resentment amongst ordinary law abiding Muslims towards the police and government due to the way existing counter terror legislation has been applied. Further erosion of civil liberties of Muslims with more stringent and unnecessary anti-terror laws will further alienate the Muslim community. Good security depends on sound intelligence and community support. However, under the current circumstances it will be difficult to encourage and collect the much needed information from the Muslim community. Also widespread alienation should be regarded with concern and alarm as it will become a powerful tool that extremists have for recruiting angry Muslims. Government action to ensure law abiding Muslims are not being unfairly targeted will be essential to winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim community. The government should therefore pay particular attention to consultations from the Muslim community as it will be innocent Muslims that will be most affected by any new legislation.

About Muslim Voice UK

Muslim Voice UK (MVUK) was established in 2005 by Shaista Gohir. The aim of the organisation is to research Muslim opinions and making these available to policy makers, academics, researchers and others to enhance Muslim participation in the decision making process and for the data to be used in studies and policy projects. The information provided by MVUK can be used as a tool to understand the Muslim community in the UK.

Muslim male and female members of MVUK who have registered to participate in surveys are from diverse ethnic backgrounds, from all over the UK, from various sects in Islam, of different ages and social backgrounds. At present there are 850 members, but membership is continuously growing.

Introduction

MVUK welcomes the Government's consultation on their new counter terrorism proposals prior to introducing them in a Bill. However, I am dismayed that in their discussion papers, the government provided limited, biased and incomplete information. To enable consultees to evaluate the government's case for their proposals objectively, more data and statistics relating to the existing terrorism legislation should have been made available. Impartial information would have allowed a fair and detailed debate. Unfortunately the discussion papers were written in a leading way and only provided information that helped make a case for the government's proposals. The onus was put on the consultees to either find the additional information themselves or probe the government for further details. However, this may have been difficult for some organisations or individuals due to limited resources, lack of legal knowledge and lack of time.

Prior to developing a response to the counter terrorism proposals, MVUK consulted Muslims from around the UK via a survey and asked for their views. The full results of the survey which was carried out between 22nd September and 15th October 2007, can be found in Appendix 1. All comments made by the participants of the survey can be found in Appendix 2, 3, 4 and 5. A total of 184 Muslims were interviewed. Due to Ramadan, the sample size was smaller than expected – however I am confident their views reflect the sentiments of Muslims in the UK. The main focus of MVUK's submission is on the pre-charge detention time, retention of DNA profiles and seizure of travel documents at ports as these were the issues that Muslim respondents felt most strongly about. However, the submission does include a response on some of the other anti-terror law proposals.

Although the government will be consulting widely with all communities and all political parties to reach a consensus on the proposals, I hope the government pays particular attention to the input from the Muslim community as it will be innocent law abiding ordinary Muslims that will be most affected by any new legislation.

Extending Pre-Charge Detention Time

The government want to extend the detention limit for holding terrorist suspects without charge yet again and are expected to double the length of time and push for 56 days. When the Terrorism Act was first brought into force, the limit on pre-charge detention was seven days. This was increased to 14 days in 2003 and 28 days in 2006. Each time the government have insisted that more time has been needed for police to gather evidence as terrorism cases have more become complex with an international dimension. The existence of complex cases cannot be and should not be accepted as justification for extending the detention time. If this becomes acceptable, then we will end up with indefinite detention without trial as cases become even more complex. If police are given more time, they will take more time regardless of whether they need it or not. The government should consider alternative solutions.

Analysis of Muslim views

Although I have attempted to summarise the views of Muslims that participated in the survey, I have also listed all comments made on the pre-charge detention in **Appendix 2**. It is important these views are read to gauge the strength of Muslim sentiments on this controversial proposal.

The majority of UK Muslims are opposed to increasing detention time – approximately 85% of Muslims surveyed either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the government proposal. Most were very critical of the new measure and some wanted pre-charge detention time to be decreased rather than increased. Many were concerned that police would abuse these additional powers. There was also a perception that human rights were not applicable to Muslims and the principle of ‘innocent until proven guilty’ did not apply to Muslims as far as the government was concerned.

A major factor in opposing increased detention included impact of the legislation on innocent Muslims that would inevitably be detained for long periods before being released. For example, some feared that the longest periods of pre-charge detention were being used for innocent people as there was the least evidence against them. Muslims were concerned about the stigmatisation of such individuals; impact on their families, their mental health; their job and their reputation. These are very legitimate concerns which the government have not addressed in their consultation documents. I can only conclude that absence of these important issues indicates the government’s lack of interest in them and are perhaps viewed as unimportant considerations. This is an example of the biasness of the government’s consultation documents.

It should be the duty of government to take factors into consideration that have serious implications on individual civil liberties and human rights. The government should have provided an assessment of the impact on individuals that have been detained and released without charge for all periods of up to 28 days. Such information should have included:

- the number of innocent people detained and released
- ethnicity and religion of those detained and released

- number of days individuals were detained for prior to being released
- the impact of the detainment on the individual's mental health, job, reputation, family etc
- media's role in the stigmatisation of the individual
- the reasons why the individual was arrested e.g. quality of intelligence and evidence
- the ratio of the number of people released and charged

It is clear from the sentiments expressed in the survey that Muslims are more likely to take the difficult step of reporting someone if they know a person will be charged or released promptly. They will be reluctant if they believe innocent people could end up being detained for long periods which amount to internment.

Analysis of government's arguments

If the 28 day pre-charge detention period is to be increased then it should be based on evidence. The government has not provided any evidence to show why they have chosen a pre-charge detention limit of 56 days. It appears that the government have simply doubled the current pre-charge detention time. Also analysis of government justifications, which are detailed below, shows that their proposals are based on mere beliefs and suppositions. It appears that the decision on 'how long to detain someone' is a political one rather than one based on protecting the public. It may simply be to look tough on terrorism. The arbitrary and speculative arguments put forward by the government are not good enough reasons to change the law.

1. Is more time needed to analyse evidence due to complexity of cases?

One reason given in the discussion papers for needing more time is for the analysis of the growing amount of evidence which includes encrypted computers and multiple mobile phones. The government also claim that resources are not the answer as the use of greater resources is only beneficial in the initial stages of the inquiry and that later stages require methodical police work which is extremely time consuming.¹

However, the government has not demonstrated that the current detention time-limit is a serious impediment to investigations. According to the evidence submitted to the Home Affairs Select Committee by the Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR), decrypting large numbers of computers and accessing phone data cannot justify an extended pre-charge detention. The FIPR confirm that rapid automated searches can be carried out on large numbers of computers and there are expedited processes for obtaining call logs and location history from phone companies. Their findings also suggest that the police are not up to date with technology used by suspects and raised concerns that UK police devoted less time, money and effort into IT matters. According to the FIPR, the police need to be equipped with better experts, more tools and better training on digital forensics.²

1. Options for Pre-Charge Detention in Terrorist Cases. Home Office. 25 July 2007

2. Inquiry into Terrorism Detention Powers. Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR). Response to the Home Affairs Committee. Cambridge. 27th January 2007.

Another reason given by government for needing increased detention time is the use of false and multiple identities by suspects which add to the complexity of the cases.¹ However, according to Liberty, establishing identities of terrorist suspects should not present any significant hindrance, since multiple identities are not a new phenomenon in criminal investigations and people can be charged under an identity they had assumed.¹

The government say that complexity of cases is further increased by the international links of terrorist suspects which can slow investigations while police wait for information from other countries.² The pace of response from foreign countries should not dictate detention time as this could vary considerably from one country to another depending on legal, evidential or procedural practices. If this becomes a determining factor, we will end up with internment.

2. Has the current pre-charge detention of 28 days been insufficient so far?

The government states that: the growing complexities of the plots, the sequential nature of the investigations, and even greater foreign links, means that despite an increase in police resources, there is a clear risk that we will require more than the current pre-charge detention limit in the future.² To reinforce the need to extend the pre-charge detention limit, the same discussion paper also quotes Lord Carlisle and Sir Ian Blair:

Lord Carlisle (June 2007) – ‘I expect in the course of time to see cases in which the maximum of 28 days will be proved inadequate.’²

Sir Ian Blair (2006) – ‘I believe that an extension to the 28 days time for detention will have to be examined in the near future’²

However all of the above statements clearly indicate that the government is merely speculating that more than 28 days may not be enough in the future. Furthermore, the government concede in the same discussion paper that the current 28 day limit has been sufficient so far: *‘In the year since the 2006 legislation came into effect, there has been no case in which a suspect was released but a higher limit than 28 days would definitely have led to a charge.’²*

Sir Ian Blair has also conceded that no case had yet arisen when detectives had wanted to hold someone beyond 28 days.³ Hence, the government has not provided any compelling arguments to increase the detention period further. The government has attempted to strengthen their case by giving examples of two suspects (in the alleged airline plot) that have been charged on the 27th day of detention, thus illustrating how some investigations have gone right down to the wire. However, the government have been selective in the information and statistics they have provided.

1. Terrorism Detention Powers. Home Affairs Committee. House of Commons. Fourth Report of Session 2005-06. Volume 1. July 2006.
2. Options for Pre-Charge Detention in Terrorist Cases. Home Office. 25 July 2007
3. The Times. October 9 2007. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article2622692.ece>

For example, government discussion paper states that in the alleged airline plot, 9 people were detained for between 14 and 28 days and that 3 were released and 6 were charged. The government fails to mention that 11 suspects which included eight of the alleged "main players" in the conspiracy were charged fairly quickly - within 11 days of their arrest which was well within the time frame of the old 14-day limit. At the other end of the spectrum, it is significant that of the five people who were authorised to be detained for the maximum 28-day period, three were released without charge. A fourth was charged on evidence that was available to the police at a relatively early stage of the investigation.¹ In considering the acceptability of an extended pre-charge detention, one must think about the three innocent people detained for the maximum permissible period, only to be released without charge. Under a 56 day regime, they might easily have remained in custody for many more weeks.

3. Is the threat in the UK unique compared with other countries?

At 28 days, the UK limit already far exceeds that found in any other Western country, including two other countries that have also suffered serious attacks terrorist attacks in recent years – Spain and the United States.² Examples of countries with maximum pre-charge detentions less than the UK limit include: Germany (2 days) , France (4days), Spain (5 days) and US (2 days).³ Although the government discussion papers state that terrorism cases are complex with an international dimension, they have not provided any evidence to show how that investigations in the UK are more challenging than those in other countries facing similar threats.

4. Will the powers be used under exceptional circumstances?

The Government states that ‘it will only be necessary to go beyond 28 days in exceptional circumstances.’⁴ This statement is contradictory to the discourse present in the same government documents which attempt to try justify the need to extend beyond 28 days. The government believes that the complexity of terrorist plots is increasing in terms of material seized and international links and shows no signs of diminishing.³ To reinforce such statements, the government has given statistics on items seized; individuals charged towards the end of the 28 day detention period; countries involved in investigations. Such information clearly indicates that the powers are likely to be used routinely rather than in exceptional cases as claimed by the government. Such a contradictory statement is a cause for concern. One must question the fact – are the government trying to allay fears just to obtain consensus on obtaining the powers?

There is a real danger that British Muslims will be detained for extended periods on suspicion of terrorism, but then released without charge due to a lack of evidence. Since 2001 most of those arrested on terrorism offences are eventually released without charge. Home Office statistics indicate that between 11 September 2001 and

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1. Pre-charge detention in terrorism cases. Bajwa, A.N. <http://mpacuk.org/content/view/4045/34/>
 2. Counter Terrorism Proposals. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, July 2007.
 3. Counter Terrorism Legislation and Practice: A Survey of Selected Countries. Foreign and Commonwealth Office. October 2005.
 4. Options for Pre-Charge Detention in Terrorist Cases. Home Office. 25 July 2007

31 March 2007, 1165 arrests were made under the Terrorism Act. Of these 132 individuals were charged solely with terror offences and 41 have been found guilty under anti-terror laws.¹

If the Government's intention is genuine to use such powers under exceptional circumstances, then an extension is not actually necessary. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 already provides for temporary emergencies such the exceptional circumstances the Government describes. It contains a broad power to make emergency regulations subject to parliamentary and judicial oversight- including a power to extend pre-charge detention periods for up to 30 days at a time.

Retention and Use of DNA Samples

The discussion papers suggest retaining DNA data obtained through lawful searches such as crime scenes and arrests in relation to terrorism on a standalone Counter Terrorism DNA database. The police have already begun to do this and the government want legislation to cover it so the information it contains can continue to be retained.²

At a meeting that I attended in September 2007 at the Home Office, I raised very serious concerns about this database. After the meeting I received a letter from the Home Office to further explain the database to allay my fears. After reading the letter, I still have grave concerns and remain unconvinced that it needs to contain any information on individuals who have never been charged or convicted of terrorism or any terror related offences. I do not object to the retention of DNA data of individuals who have been charged with or convicted of terrorism or terror related offences in the UK and abroad.

Analysis of government's arguments

The Home Office letter states 'the police wish to establish a standalone counter-terrorism DNA database, separate but linked to the National DNA Database (NDNAD), on which to store DNA profiles of terrorist suspects.'³ However, the government also acknowledges that these databases will contain DNA profiles of people who have never been charged or convicted of any crime including terrorism or terror related offences. This means that all innocent individuals stuck on the Counter Terrorism database are being viewed, by the government's own admission as terrorist suspects.

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1. Liberty. <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/news-and-events/1-pressreleases/2007/alternatives-to-imprisonment-without-charge.shtml>
 2. Possible measures for Inclusion in a future Counter Terrorism Bill. Home Office. 25 July 2007
 3. Retention and use of DNA samples. Home Office letter. October 2007.

The Home Office letter also gives assurances that individuals ‘stopped and searched’ would not have their DNA taken unless they were arrested on suspicion of having committed a crime. However, the fact remains that those arrested may not necessarily be charged or convicted of any crime and would have their DNA profiles permanently stored on both national and Counter Terrorism databases and be viewed as ‘terrorist suspects.’ Furthermore, once the Counter Terrorism database has a legal footing, then discriminatory policing may result in increased arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 in order obtain more DNA profiles.

The Home Office letter provides statistics to illustrate the substantial public benefit of using the DNA as a tool to solve serious crimes and states that the national database also includes information on citizens that have not been found guilty of any crime. Although DNA databases of those convicted of crime is a perfectly sensible crime-fighting measure, I am deeply disturbed by the fact that those innocent of any crime but who happen to have been caught up in the criminal justice system have their DNA profile retained indefinitely. It is clearly an infringement of civil liberties - if a person is innocent, there is no compelling reason why their sample should be retained permanently. It is important to balance the rights of individuals and the interests of society.

The fact that the UK already has the largest DNA database in the world, with 5.2% of its population on record has received much criticism as it is biased against ethnic minorities and innocent people cannot usually get their details removed.¹ Critics of the national database include Gene Watch UK, an independent genetic research group. According to Gene Watch UK, there is no such thing as an error-free database. Mistakes can lead to ‘false positives’ where an innocent person is wrongly identified. Also in some cases DNA evidence can be difficult to interpret, particularly when samples from crime scenes can be degraded and therefore are incomplete. The criminal justice system does not always take sufficient account of the possibility of error and people may wrongly be convicted either by mistake or by being ‘framed.’²

Instead of resolving difficulties with the existing national databases, the government is exacerbating the problem further by creating yet another DNA database. With the current discrimination within the criminal justice system it will mean that a disproportionate number of innocent Muslims will be on the new database. The Counter Terrorism database may as well be called a Muslim database. Including the DNA profiles of innocent Muslims on the Counter Terrorism database will put increasing numbers of innocent Muslims on a permanent ‘list of suspects’ which undermines the principle of innocent until proven guilty.

The fact that the information on any of the databases can be shared with foreign law agencies is an additional concern. The databases could not only be open to misuse and abuse in the UK, but internationally as well. DNA data already reveals private data about a person and according to researchers may even reveal other characteristics

1. BBC News. September 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6979138.stm>

2. The Police National DNA Database: Balancing Crime Detection, Human Rights and Privacy. Gene Watch UK. Staley, K. January 2005.

such behavior and skin color in the future. I am concerned misuse of the database will reinforce discriminatory policing. I am also not convinced that adequate safeguards could be built to try to prevent the system being used for illegitimate purposes as there is plenty of evidence on unauthorised access to computer systems.

I am also troubled by the standard and quality of some of the data that may be stored on the Counter Terrorism database. The Home Office letter says that one of the reasons for requiring a standalone Counter Terrorism database is that some DNA profiles of terror suspects (which will include innocent people) cannot be stored on the NDNAD, as they do not reach the required standard to be loaded to the NDNAD.¹ The question then arises, why the data stored on the Counter Terrorism database is not required to reach the same standards as the NDNAD? Surely standards have been set for good reasons such as minimising the risk of error. Accepting lower standards for the Counter Terrorism database in combination with discriminatory policing practices that are likely to occur, there is a high risk of disproportionate number of Muslims not only ending up on the database but also being wrongfully convicted.

Unfortunately we have become very casual about the value of personal privacy and so far the database has expanded without any serious debate on the proper balance between individual's entitlement to privacy and the government's power to tackle crime. Before proceeding further with yet another database, we should consider carefully whether the benefits of giving the government DNA profiles of innocent individuals outweighs the risks.

Analysis of Muslim Views

Although I have attempted to summarise the views of Muslims that participated in the survey, I have also listed all comments made on DNA retention in **Appendix 3**. It is important these views are read to gauge the strength of Muslim sentiments on this controversial proposal.

My sentiments were echoed by the majority of Muslims surveyed on this issue. They were very concerned that the police are storing the DNA and fingerprints of individuals who have never been charged with any crime including terrorism or terror related offences. Most Muslims either strongly disagreed or disagreed on the storage of such information on both the national database (84%) and the stand alone Counter Terrorism Database (85%). Just under two thirds of Muslims either strongly agreed or agreed that storage of DNA and fingerprints of those convicted of terrorism or terror related offences, was a sensible measure. The fact that one third of Muslims disagreed or were unsure about storage of information of convicted terrorists, indicates the distrust that Muslims have in the police and government.

Muslims surveyed indicated that they are very concerned that large numbers of innocent Muslims will have their details stored on the databases indefinitely. They felt that such action was discriminatory and that it would criminalise the Muslim community as innocent Muslims would be treated as terrorists and suspects. Muslims

1. Retention and use of DNA samples. Home Office letter. October 2007.

were also alarmed at the possibility of DNA data and other information of innocent Muslims being shared by other countries, especially those known for torture and human rights abuses. Muslims felt that such sensitive and personal information was likely to be abused in the current political climate. Furthermore there were concerns that mistakes could be made as DNA was not error proof.

Police Powers to Seize Travel Documents at Ports

The government discussion papers propose allowing the police to have powers to enable the temporary seizing of travel documents at ports from individuals that are suspected of wanting to travel abroad for terrorism related purposes.¹ The powers appear to be very broad. The discussion papers do not mention any mechanisms of accountability nor adequate safeguards. The police already have powers to arrest individuals if they have evidence that they intend to travel abroad to commit or assist in terrorism. The law should not be extended to allow the police to confiscate travel documents and prevent individuals from travelling abroad on mere suspicion.

The government has provided no evidence to show that the impact on those individuals already being detained at ports. And the likely affects of disrupting travel plans further by confiscating travel documents. There is already much resentment within the Muslim community as many Muslims are already being stopped at ports and questioned for hours because they visibly appear Muslim. Numerous cases have been highlighted in the media where Muslims have been detained under the Terrorism Act at airports due to racial profiling rather than random stops.

I have highlighted a few examples below and have purposely chosen examples where the detainees are unlikely to warrant suspicion as some are high profile Muslims. If such Muslims are being detained, then how many other Muslims, whose stories do not make it into the media, are also affected? Giving the police such broad powers will be a worrying development.

Example 1 – July 2004

The Labour party peer has been stopped twice at airports - something he has raised in the House of Lords. On one of the occasions, he was with the Mayor of Lahore in a queue of 65 people who were all white when they were selected to come forward for searching.²

1. Possible Measures for Inclusion in a Future Counter Terrorism Bill. Home Office. 25 July 2007.

2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3860505.stm>

Example 2 – January 2006

*Leicester City Council's education chief, Hussein Suleman was detained at Nottingham East Midlands airport for nearly three hours. The 43 year old Liberal Democrat Councillor who is a council cabinet member for education and the authority's race relations spokesman was told by police that he was stopped because he was Muslim. He had his luggage searched, had copies of pages taken from his business diary and numbers from his mobile phone.*¹

Example 3 – April 2006

*Mohammad Asif, president of the Scottish Afghan Society was stopped at Glasgow airport and asked by Special Branch if he knew the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. He also had the numbers on his mobile phone recorded by officers.*²

Example 4 - April 2006

*One Glasgow-based Muslim who sits on the mosque's executive committee was stopped after returning from a charity event in Pakistan involving the city's Labour MP Mohammad Sarwar. The group, which included an imam from another Glasgow mosque and a businessman, were singled out from other passengers and questioned about where they had been and who they had associated with. They were detained for around an hour and then released without charge.*³

Example 5 – December 2006

*A Muslim couple missed a flight out of Britain after being detained under terrorism laws. Aisha Pritchard and her husband, Sadi Elhaloul, a Palestinian, were trying to board their flight from Cardiff International Airport to Dubai on 14 December. Officers from South Wales Police questioned them for around 20 minutes and then decided to remove their luggage and search it. When they were released they were told their plane had departed and, as their tickets with the KLM airline were not transferable, they would have to pay £1,500 to take the next flight. They have received no apology and Ms Pritchard said she believed her husband's nationality and race were the sole reason they were held.*⁴

Although I have attempted to summarise the views of Muslims that participated in the survey, I have also listed all comments made on this issue in **Appendix 4**. It is important these views are read to gauge the strength of Muslim sentiments on this controversial proposal.

The Muslims surveyed were strongly against (approximately 87%) giving the police these powers as they were concerned that such powers would be abused and targeted towards Muslims. Such concerns are justified with the already disproportionate number of stop and searches of Muslims. Under section 44 of the 2000 Terrorism Act searches can be carried out without suspicion. It is the very subjective nature of this

1. <http://www.uk-airport-news.info/nottingham-east-midlands-airport-news-040206.htm>

2. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4156/is_20060430/ai_n16211051

3. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4156/is_20060430/ai_n16211051

4. <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article2110316.ece>

law that has led to its misuse. Even the government-appointed independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Lord Carlile QC, has said stop and search was being used too widely.¹ Given the evidence of stop and searches being used in a disproportionate manner against Muslims, there is a high risk that additional police powers of seizing travel documents will be used in a discriminatory way against Muslims.

Such intrusive treatment of ordinary law abiding citizens will not only breed resentment of the police and government but will lose the support of the very Muslims that could help fight extremism within Muslim communities. It is clear from the comments expressed in the survey, that most Muslims have no confidence in the police especially as intelligence in some cases has proved to be wrong with devastating consequences. Examples were cited such as the shooting of Jean Charles De Menezes and the Forest Gate incidence where a house was raided after reportedly receiving intelligence that there could be a chemical or biological weapon inside the home – police shot Mohammed Abdulkayar, and arrested him and his brother, Abul Koyair; the men were released without charge a week later.

Post Charge Questioning

As police officers cannot question a suspect once charged, the government discussion papers propose allowing the questioning of a suspect on the same offence after they have been charged.² I have no objections to this on principle providing there are safe guards in place such restrictions and limitations on the number of times and the length of time suspects can be questioned in addition to the presence of a lawyer. Such measures would be necessary to prevent individuals from being questioned oppressively for days and months. Allowing suspects to continue to be questioned after charge is also a better alternative to extending pre-charge detention – and not in addition to it as the government is proposing. Surprisingly the Muslims surveyed had mixed feelings on the acceptability of post charge questioning – just under half supported the measure while one quarter opposed it while one quarter were uncertain. The uncertainty and opposition is likely to reflect the lack of trust in the police.

Enhanced Prison Sentences

The government discussion paper proposes punishing non-terrorist crimes such as credit card fraud, forgery etc which are used to assist terrorism, with increased prison sentences.² The Muslims surveyed had mixed views on this issue. Just under half of Muslims supported this measure but one third were against such a move. It appears that there is fear that such non-terrorist crimes may be linked to terrorism and suspects may have to prove their innocence rather than police prove their guilt. The distrust in police is highlighted in their response to who should determine whether such non-terrorist crimes are linked to terrorism. Approximately half said that a jury should decide, while one quarter said a judge should decide and only 5% wanted the police to decide.

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4368524.stm> (BBC News October 2005)

2. Possible Measures for Inclusion in a Future Counter Terrorism Bill. Home Office. 25 July 2007.

Due to the extremely serious nature of such an accusation, there should be strong evidence to substantiate allegations that non-terrorist crimes are linked to terrorism. The burden of proof should be on the police to establish that there was intent on the part of the accused "for the purpose of facilitating or carrying out terrorist activity." I understand the government have not yet decided whether a judge or jury would determine whether the non-terrorist crimes were linked to terrorism – decisions made by a jury are more likely to be acceptable.

Notification Requirements for Convicted Terrorists

The government discussion papers suggest a register of convicted terrorists, similar to that for sex offenders. The plans would involve police being notified by convicted terrorist on any name change, address change and foreign travel plans for a limited number of years depending on length of sentence received.¹ Muslims surveyed had mixed opinions on this issue. Half of those surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed while one quarter strongly disagreed or disagreed while the remaining quarter were unsure or neutral. Such mixed sentiments on a measure which appears sensible again highlights the extent of mistrust in the police and government.

Control Orders

The government discussion papers propose that police are provided with a self-standing power of entry and search of premises to enforce and monitor the control order effectively.¹ Control orders are already incompatible with human rights, as they enable the Home Secretary to impose an unlimited range of restrictions on any person he suspects of involvement in terrorism based on secret evidence which the individual concerned is unable to see and powerless to dispute. Control orders undermine the presumption of innocence as it allows the government to punish someone without having to prove they have committed any crime. I therefore find any move that gives police more powers in relation to control orders unacceptable.

Instead of giving police additional powers in relation to control orders, it would be prudent to find an alternative solution that can result in a fair trial where guilt or innocence can be determined. Allowing the use of intercept evidence in the criminal courts so police and prosecutors can gather evidence to bring criminal prosecutions would be a step in the right direction. A majority of Muslims (72%) also want individuals on control orders to be put on trial rather than see the control orders made even more stringent. Interestingly, only 4% of Muslims wanted those accused to be released without a trial. These views indicate that Muslims accept the government view that these individuals may be a threat but simply want them to be treated like any other criminal and processed through the normal criminal justice system rather than a parallel legal system.

1. Possible Measures for Inclusion in a Future Counter Terrorism Bill. Home Office. 25 July 2007.

Seizure of Terrorist Assets

The discussion paper suggests extending the court's power to seize assets of those convicted of a terrorist or terrorist related offence where the court believes that their assets might be used for terrorist purposes.¹ I have grave concerns about this proposal as it is likely that the families of those convicted terrorists are unlikely to be aware or involved in terrorism and would be punished if assets are seized. For examples, innocent spouses, children and parents could be made homeless and suffer as a consequence. Also such allegations would be difficult to prove and would be very subjective.

Concluding Remarks

I believe the government has not provided convincing arguments to justify most of their new counter terrorism proposals. Although I accept that some measures need to be taken to curb terrorist activity, the measures proposed are not proportionate and will be counterproductive. The government seem to be further retreating from the presumption of innocence.

The MVUK survey findings confirm the resentment amongst ordinary law abiding Muslims towards the police and government due to the way existing counter terror legislation has been applied. The extent of mistrust is reflected in the reluctance of some Muslims to accept those counter terrorism proposals that appear reasonable such as post charge questioning, retention of DNA of convicted terrorists, a register of a convicted terrorists and extended prison sentences for non-terrorist crime linked to terrorism.

According to a another survey carried out by MVUK last year eight out of ten Muslims feel that they would be targeted just because of their faith, even if there is no evidence to warrant suspicion on them. The same survey, also revealed nine out of ten Muslims believe that anti-terror laws are alienating youth.² There is also a perception amongst the Muslim community that security is 'faith led' rather than 'intelligence led' and human rights and civil liberties of Muslims are unimportant to the government.

If the proposals go ahead, the further erosion of civil liberties of Muslims with more stringent and unnecessary anti-terror laws will further damage the already fragile relationship with the Muslim community. Good security depends on sound intelligence and community support. However, under the current circumstances it will be difficult for the security services to encourage and collect the much needed information from the Muslim community.

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1. Possible Measures for Inclusion in a Future Counter Terrorism Bill. Home Office. 25 July 2007.
 2. Survey: The Proposed Anti-Terror Laws – What do you think? Muslim Voice UK. January 2006.

Although I welcome the fact that the government has consulted with Muslim organisations, the government will need to show that these are not token gestures. It can only do this if they demonstrate they have listened to the serious and valid concerns raised by British Muslims. An acknowledgement of the negative impact of the current anti-terror legislation on Muslims in the UK will be vital. Government action to ensure law abiding Muslims are not being unfairly targeted will be essential to winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim community. Widespread alienation should be regarded with concern and alarm as it will become a powerful tool that extremists have for recruiting angry Muslims.

The new Prime Minister has a real opportunity to adopt a new approach to tackle terrorism and overhaul the existing counter terrorism policies which have undermined human rights and alienated Muslims whose cooperation is vital to combat terrorism. If preventing radicalisation and winning the battle of ideas is central to the government's counter terrorism strategy, then Prime Minister Gordon Brown needs to put human rights back into the UK's security policy as well as addressing the root causes of terrorism. The values of respect and fairness must be preserved by not only protecting the public from terrorism but to also protect minority communities from the abuse in the way anti terror laws are applied to them.

This submission has been written by Shaista Gohir from Muslim Voice UK

Contact Details

Shaista Gohir
Director
Muslim Voice UK
P.O. Box 12637
Birmingham
B28 1AH

08712 77712577
07802 225989
contact@mvuk.co.uk
www.mvuk.co.uk

APPENDIX 1

New Anti Terror Law Proposals 2007 – Survey Results

Date of Survey: 22nd September – 15 October 2007

Number of Muslims surveyed: 184

Gender: 49.5% male and 50.5% female

Ethnicity: Pakistani (49.5%), Bangladeshi (11.4%), Indian (10.9%), African (2.2%), Arab (2.2%), European/White (12%), Other (12%)

Age: Under 18 (4.3%), 18-29 (45.5%), 30-45 (39.1%), 45 plus (11.4%)

Area : North (20.1%), Midlands (31%), London (31.5%), Rest of South (8.7%), Wales (2.2%), Scotland (6%), Northern Ireland (0.5%).

Social Class: Middle Class (55.4%) and Working Class (44.6%)

Q1 The government want to extend the 28 days detention limit for holding terrorist suspects without charge and may want to extend this limit to 56 days. What do you think about this proposal?

- Strongly Agree **8.7%**
- Agree **3.8%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **2.2%**
- Disagree **14.7%**
- Strongly Disagree **70.1%**
- Don't know **0.5%**

Q2 What do you think of the proposal to question suspects on the same offence after they have been charged providing there are safe guards in place such as legal advice, freedom from oppressive questioning, limits on the length of interviews and number of interviews?

- Strongly Agree **6%**
- Agree **42.9%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **16.8%**
- Disagree **14.7%**
- Strongly Disagree **12.5%**
- Don't know **7.1%**

Q3 The government is proposing a register of convicted terrorists, similar to that for sex offenders where convicted terrorists must tell police if they change their name and address and about travel plans abroad. (How long they have to do this for depends on the length of prison sentence they received). What do you think about this proposal?

- Strongly Agree **10.9%**
- Agree **40.2%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **19.6%**
- Disagree **13.0%**
- Strongly Disagree **13.0%**
- Don't know **3.3%**

Q4 The government would like to punish non-terrorist crimes such as credit card fraud, forgery etc which are used to assist terrorism, with increased prison sentences. What do you think about this proposal?

- Strongly Agree **9.2%**
- Agree **35.3%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **17.4%**
- Disagree **20.1%**
- Strongly Disagree **15.2%**
- Don't know **2.7%**

Q5 Who do you think should decide whether a non-terrorist crime such as credit card fraud or forgery etc is linked to terrorism?

- A judge **25.5%**
- A jury **57.1%**
- The police **5.4%**
- Don't know **12.0%**

Q6 The government is proposing to store DNA and fingerprints on the national DNA and fingerprint databases from anyone detained under the Terrorism Act 2000, even if they are not charged. What do you think about storage of DNA and fingerprints of those who have never been charged with any crime?

- Strongly Agree **3.8%**
- Agree **4.9%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **4.9%**
- Disagree **13.6%**
- Strongly Disagree **70.7%**
- Don't know **2.2%**

Q7 What do you think about putting the DNA and fingerprints on the national databases of those who have been convicted of terrorism or terror related offences?

- Strongly Agree **14.1%**
- Agree **43.5%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **16.8 %**
- Disagree **13.0%**
- Strongly Disagree **10.9%**
- Don't know **1.6%**

Q8 The police have begun to set up a stand alone Counter Terrorism DNA database. This database contains DNA obtained through searches, crime scenes and arrests and will include DNA of people even if they have not been charged. What to you think about the storage of DNA of people who have never been charged with any crime on this database?

- Strongly Agree **2.2%**
- Agree **6.0%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **6.0%**
- Disagree **19.0%**
- Strongly Disagree **66.3%**
- Don't know **0.5%**

Q9 What do you think about the storage of DNA on the Counter Terrorism DNA database provided it only contained information on those convicted of terrorism or terror related offences?

- Strongly Agree **11.4%**
- Agree **50%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **13.6 %**
- Disagree **11.4%**
- Strongly Disagree **9.8%**
- Don't know **3.8%**

Q10 What do you think about DNA data and fingerprints of those who have never been charged with any crime being shared internationally after they have been placed on the national or counter terrorism databases?

- Strongly Agree **1.6%**
- Agree **5.4%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **7.6%**
- Disagree **15.2%**
- Strongly Disagree **66.8%**
- Don't know **3.3%**

Q11 The police already have powers to arrest and confiscate documents of any terror suspects if they have evidence that they are travelling abroad for purposes related to terrorism. What do you think about the police being given additional powers to seize passports and travel documents at ports on mere suspicion rather than evidence of travelling abroad for purposes related to terrorism?

- Strongly Agree **2.7%**
- Agree **4.3%**
- Neither Agree or Disagree **5.4%**
- Disagree **26.6%**
- Strongly Disagree **60.9%**
- Don't know **0**

Q12 Individuals on control orders are not put on trial but instead have restrictions imposed on them? Which statement below do you agree with on this issue, if any?

- *They must have done something - that is why they are on control orders* **6.0%**
- *They should be put on trial to see whether they are innocent or guilty* **71.7%**
- *They should be released* **3.8%**
- *Control orders should be made even stricter* **2.2%**
- *Control Orders should be abolished* **10.3%**
- *Other* **6.0%**

APPENDIX 2

ANTI-TERROR LAW PROPOSALS 2007

Survey Comments on Increasing Pre-Charge Detention Time

Survey Date: 22nd September – 15 October 2007

“People can be made to say anything if they are detained too long. 28 days is plenty of time to gather evidence.”

“It is unfair, it will infringe on the rights of innocent people and it will have a huge impact on the Muslim community.”

“It is against human rights. They should have enough evidence to deal with matters within a shorter timescale if they need longer the suspect must be innocent.”

“What is the reasoning behind this i.e. what evidence suggests another 28 days will be of benefit, and how do we know this will not be abused?”

“I think 28 days is more than enough. I can’t remember the Irish terrorists being detained for that long!!”

“The powers are at present being totally abused. If human rights are to be abused we may as well live in a country where human rights are not recognised.”

“I feel 28 days is more than enough time for police and investigation services to conclude whether someone is guilty of an offence.”

“Most of those detained are released within a few days anyway about 1 in a million have links to al queeda. Isn't the 28 days enough??”

“I do not think that there is any objective evidence that shows a marked increase in the amount of relevant information that the government can obtain from suspects if the detention period is extended from 28 to 56 days. In addition, I think we are losing sight of the fact that those detained are merely suspects and not proven criminals. To take 56 days of their liberty without just cause is totally outrageous. This presupposes guilt before trial and already the setting is prejudicial to justice.”

“Many continue to fall victim to the oppressive powers already conferred by the existing 28 days provisions. In some cases, serious stigmatisation has occurred and the lives of innocent people have been destroyed. This can only heighten oppression and feelings of alienation within the Muslim community.”

“I think the policies of this government are to attack Islam as their new enemy and the police have no choice in that and if they disagree they lose their jobs and get shamed by the establishment so they have a lose lose situation.”

“Some limitations could be imposed on a suspected terrorist, e.g. not leaving the country with 56 rather than the shorter 28 days, but some evidence MUST be required to hold someone for almost 2 months, otherwise this is a clear breach of our individual freedom.”

“Innocent until proven guilty - many of the previous arrested/accused have been later released without charge, hence this would just make an undue blemish on their records - unfair and unjust and against human rights.”

“This will certainly open the door for unjust detention; bullying and the targeting of certain groups; Creating friction within the community; and distrust of the government.”

“Suspects should be charged based on strong evidence. If the evidence is clear then the terrorist suspects should be charged and dealt with. This should be aimed at anyone, not particularly to just Muslims.”

“28 days would be sufficient in my view given that ample time would have been spent in advance of the arrest in tracking and building knowledge of what the suspects are up to.”

“Individuals who are detained for terrorist-based suspicions is based on intelligence received by the government. Many Muslims, however, have been arrested due to suspicion and then released without charge because no connection of them to any terrorist activity has been found or proven. This raises concerns on what type of intelligence this is based on.”

“This is an erosion of individual civil liberties. You arrest people because you already have evidence to show this person is a criminal or a threat not arrest people first and gather evidence later. We are moving toward a police state.”

“If there is strong evidence, then the suspect should be held and charged. Further charges can be placed upon them if subsequent evidence emerges of other activities. Many innocent Muslims and minority groups will inevitably be held, as is already the case, but the impact of being held for 56 days is unacceptable - what about their jobs, their families? It will have huge implications on the individual.”

“British Society believes in innocent until proven guilty. This moral should not be changed. Detaining people without evidence is not justified.”

“28 days is long enough. Holding someone without them being guilty for so long is as good as convicting and sentencing without evidence. Isolating someone imprisoning them before their crime is proven...it doesn't make sense for holding someone for that long!”

“None should be held for any longer than necessary and suspects should not remain in custody while police are rooting round for evidence to charge them with - if this does not happen within the current 28 day limit, suspects should be released until charges can be made against them, if this is the case. Otherwise holding suspects without charge is completely against the principles of civil liberties. Human internment did not work during the Anglo-Irish conflict.....this will lead to arbitrary detention and almost indefinite detention.”

“This will then be extended to longer. If a suspect can't be charged in 28 days, what difference will another 28 make? This is just a ploy to increase fear and suspicion in the population so it is easier to introduce other ideas e.g. biometric ID, Iran war.”

“Evidence should be gathered before detaining suspects - not afterwards.”

“This equates to destruction of life for those who are innocent. If they haven't enough evidence to justify arrest they are unlikely to get more beyond 28 days unless they resort to flying them to other countries for torture. Maybe that is what they are after - to follow the US example of flying people to other places to torture them.”

“28 days make 672 hours to interrogate, investigate and ascertain charges. Any increase of further detention is against human rights especially overwhelming majority detainees are found innocent. They will lose their job and social standing and own respect. This is very cruel.”

“The Anti-Terror Laws are already being abused and misused by the police, I am not confident in the proposal to give them greater power.”

“I feel that the interrogation of suspects should be able to continue after people are charged. This is what should be reviewed plus heavy surveillance. Even if one person is not guilty, then they have been robbed of almost 2 months of their lives. It is a violation of human rights!”

“28 days is more than sufficient. What happened to being innocent until proven guilty? First of all I firmly believe that their should be strong evidence on the first basis to arrest someone or at least some

sort of evidence that looks like it will lead onto something bigger, then and only then should someone be detained for 28 days. This time limit is more than enough to either arrest someone formally or let them go.”

“Think 28 days is about right. I feel that if they want to hold them longer then they should have the evidence first. What has happened to innocent until proven guilty and abuse of human rights – they will arrest anyone whose face fits a terrorist suspects. How many of the suspects have actually been charged?”

“I strongly disagree. The number of people charged under this law is minute. All this means is that the government will lockup innocent people for much longer without any charge while destroying lives. This is counterproductive to the fight against terrorism. Mr Brown seems to be sailing the same path as Blair, eroding our civil liberties.”

“You could be holding someone innocent for 56 days without a fair trial. This is to demoralise the community and to shut their voices out if they disagree with anything what goes on in UK and abroad.”

“To lock someone up for over a month when there is insufficient evidence to charge them is totally unacceptable. The result is large numbers of totally innocent people incarcerated on suspicion or so-called "intelligence". These people through no fault of their own can have their lives devastated. In my view it is cruel and inhumane.

I feel 28 days is too much and a man is innocent until proven guilty.”

“I understand the principle of acting on suspicion to avoid possible crimes being caused but this should only be done if the evidence is strong enough to warrant suspicion. Any longer than 7 days - it's a crime against the suspect.”

“This is a huge restriction on the civil liberties of all. Arrests should be information led and only where an attack is imminent should suspects be held for longer than the standard time. There is no reason to increase the existing limit.”

“Britain should first account for its own brutal terrorism and terrorist occupation of Northern Ireland, Spanish Giberalter & Argentinian Malvinas, before dealing with the terrorism of the others.”

“If the limit is to be extended then victims who are innocent should be given appropriate compensation and allowed to take members of the police to court with free legal aid.”

“Its like almost a 6 month sentence just based on hearsay and no hard facts – it's a joke. The present legislation is perfectly adequate.”

“There must be strong evidence available to justify holding suspects for 56 days
It would cause a lot of mental distress and unease to hold someone in detention for such a long period if it was found out that they were not involved with terrorism.
It should be reduced not extended.”

“There is substantial powers at the discretion of judges, but it seems that the police want this extra 'power' rather than to let the CPs and Judiciary decide independently based on findings. Also, this flies in the face of civil liberties.”

“Unfortunately for Muslims our life is all about other people's perceptions. I would rather be incarcerated for 56 days and proved innocent of anything than released after 28 days and have a shadow cast over me for all my life in this country.”

“The vast majority of people arrested and detained under the current anti-terror laws end up being released without charge. Extending the holding period would only add to the injustice that is being perpetrated on the innocent.”

“While it may be useful in some rare cases, on balance it is an infringement to be held for so long with out charge and is open to abuse. So I oppose such a law.”

“The heart of Islam is peace. We do not want those who use Islam for political ends with violence to disturb the people of Britain. If the price is that some innocents are detained there should be fair compensation.”

“28 days is enough time to detain the suspect and to find evidence to press charges
If there is strong evidence for terrorist holding, then no more time is needed to be granted. Otherwise innocent people are charged for a long time for no reason.
Need to prove guilt before holding suspects.”

“Police should have evidence and a charge before detaining anyone, but even when there is only a suspicion, a 28 day grace period is more than sufficient. It is oppression to hold any individual in custody without any sort of proof in any way, shape or form.”

Innocent people who are not involved in any form of terrorism would be held double the amount of time before being released which would be devastating to them and their families, especially if it is a woman with young children”

“It is unfair to hold someone for so long and if the person is a potential threat then I’m sure the government have ways to extend detention. In any case one is innocent until proven guilty. They should get all the relevant information before making assumptions based on religion.”

There is more than enough time in 28 days to determine whether someone arrested should be charged. What is not being represented in this Law is how someone who is innocent would literally have their life ruined because they are in custody for that long.”

“The current 28 days detention is already cruel. Undue detention without charge is against norms of liberty. Innocent till proven guilty is the principle I believe in. Why destroy people’s lives and then release them without any recompense? You can see what happened to the Irish community.”

“Taking the benefit on doubt of suspicion. No plausible reasons given for this extended detention. It grossly infringes on basic human rights.”

APPENDIX 3

ANTI-TERROR LAW PROPOSALS 2007

Survey Comments on Retention of DNA Samples

Survey Date: 22nd September – 15 October 2007

“There are many countries which actively torture people and Britain has been responsible for sending people to these countries to be tortured.”

“This will impact unfairly on the Muslim community. It makes no sense. This could potentially lead to innocent people being detained for questioning or treated as convicts.”

“I think it is despicable that the Government is thinking of this. Especially if the person in question has not been convicted but still has their details saved. I am absolutely against such a move.”

“These powers are abused continuously. We saw in Scotland what happened to the police women whose finger prints appeared at a crime scene she never went near. Also at present rapists and murders seem to get off easier than anyone charged on so called terrorism charges.”

“This will be creating a climate of distrust by officially categorising someone even if they are not guilty. The suspects are largely going to be Muslims, and the processes will lead to mistrust and creation of hate against real official processes of real value.”

“The collection of not guilty DNA is pointless and a waste of taxpayers resources. If they haven't been charged them why does a Muslim man or woman's privacy have to be invaded??”

“I strongly believe that someone who is merely suspected of a crime should not be prima facie treated as a criminal. This would include sharing their personal information with other countries etc. These would lead to oppression rather than justice which is the primary aim of the law.”

“It is not undesirable to store DNA information on convicts of any type of crime. The danger though remains that there are always cases of wrong convictions and the appeal process and vindication may be long in coming after the stigmatisation that accompanies such identification/categorisation. So, it should be approached with much caution.”

“If a person is a threat to society then rather than put people's DNA on show use the information you have on the person and pass it around for example through e-mail etc.”

“This is extremely worrying - that our government could criminalise portions of the population who are effectively innocent of any crime is really to pour salt into an already painful wound. This is devastating to me as a Muslim, as a British citizen, as a human being.”

“This is a ridiculous proposition - I am fully against this entire idea of a big borthor state and having DNA databases in any case! But particularly so for uncharged people, these will be abused by authorities and is unfair for the people concerned.

Again, this should be based on the strength of the evidence and in most cases it should be a strong one. Further studies need to be made to identify key factors of terrorism that lead to a conviction.”

“Only people who have been charged and convicted should have their DNA data placed on the database. No one else!”

“Storing DNA of people not found guilty, or of people who may inadvertently be in a place where a terrorist has been, can only be wrong.”

“If they have not been charged then they have not been found to be guilty and are hence innocent. Why should they then be treated as being guilty by storing their DNA data and fingerprints? If they have not been charged they should have the same rights to have this information withheld as any other innocent citizen.”

“This would put innocent people at risk of being victimised, arrested and tortured by other countries with a poorer human rights record than the UK.”

“That is unacceptable. If the government expects minority groups to be fully integrated, then it must respect our privacy, strive to protect its citizens and deal justly with its problems. It is deeply unfair - this is common sense! - to provide third parties with information if the individual has not been charged. That information should be destroyed if the person is innocent - no excuses.”

“It’s wrong they will be invading privacy...there’s absolutely NO need for it. Storing DNA/ fingerprints of those convicted of terrorism and terror related offences can serve as a deterrent, both for those convicted and for others. However, storing and passing on such details for those who have never been convicted of any crime is an assault on civil liberties, and can cause unnecessary problems and distress to innocent people, if for e.g. they find themselves in awkward situations.”

“No one has the right to my DNA as an innocent citizen. A DNA database is too insecure and open to abuse. I do not trust the government or its efficiency enough to entrust my DNA to them.”

“I am not convinced that all those charged/arrested/imprisoned for terrorism are guilty. Those imprisoned for terrorists offences would be in prison for a long time - so they do not need to have DNA data taken.”

“This would only be appropriate for those convicted of terrorism by a jury. Innocent until proven guilty entitles one to confidentiality.”

“So the assumption will be they are all guilty but it cannot be proven. This is wrong in principle of natural justice and discriminatory attitude towards a section of citizens.”

“It depends entirely on the basis of the terrorism database collection if you’re not charged then it’s a bit suspicious.”

“DNA shouldn’t be too heavily relied on as it can lead to mistakes being made...also having non convicted peoples DNA on the database ...could help criminals who might be able to hack into the system as no system is ever foolproof or hacker resistant.”

“It’s difficult to balance, the rights of individual and the safety of the society. It seems as if the government wants to treat everyone the same. Even if you haven’t been charged or convicted of terrorism they want to treat you the same as a terrorist. Surely this is not how innocent people should be treated. Again the policy is counterproductive.”

“I would like to see the DNA database extended to all people present in the UK. Storing the DNA of people that have never been charged of any offence is an infringement of one’s right. Also- this storage is only directed towards Muslims- which is absolutely wrong.”

“I think it is dangerous to label some people as terrorists and treat them differently to other criminals particularly as terrorism is not very well defined. It opens up political manipulation of the judicial system to target specific groups or individuals. If someone carries out a criminal act they should be treated the same irrespective of whether that act is deemed to be one of terrorism or not.”

“The main issue here is that of someone were to access the DNA details there are various ways in which it could be misused. For someone never convicted of a crime this could be disastrous. This is also true of offenders who do not commit an offence again but they could be 'stitched up'.”

“This is an outrageous suggestion and is clearly against the right of an innocent individual. Besides this the organisation Interpol is already there to use in international information sharing.”

“The DNA and fingerprints of “BLAIR" should also be placed on the database and he, along with his master, Nazi Bush, who is the International terrorist of the contemporary world, should be charged, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment or execution for their crimes, which they have jointly committed against the humanity.”

“They talk about freedom but in reality this kind of thing is nothing other than a police state spying on its citizens.”

“This is totally unacceptable and places innocent individuals at risk in terms of their safety from unruly states and their enforcement agencies abroad.”

“It’s a major infringement of our human rights and opens the door for abuse by agencies around the world where there might be fewer safe guards. This could instil people with a fear of travelling abroad as they could be treated badly if they were to be arrested abroad. Preventing people from travelling abroad is destroying their freedom.”

“This is outrageous!”

“If you have been convicted under British law of terrorism, I strongly agree that these measures, including storing DNA on a counter terrorism database, should be passed.”

“The police have a hard job and likely large numbers of innocent people will come under scrutiny in the search for real terrorists. It’s a fact of life that innocent people will be investigated.”

“To root out the criminals who kill in the name of Islam, we must be prepared to surrender some civil liberties. It will not be long before everyone is fingerprinted, and has a DNA record as a matter of routine. If you have nothing to hide you have no worries. My fingerprint is on record at US airports as a condition of entry to the US and I have not committed a crime. It is not a problem.”

“That is oppression and corruption to the fullest force and it violates an individual’s privacy and places a limit on the individual’s freedom.”

“Some countries such as Egypt etc would use this information to detain people who had genuinely gone to the country for a visit to prove that there were terrorists from Britain wanting to reek havoc in their country.”

“It’s unfair to have people not been charged made to feel like a criminal and when they do not know about it, it is even worse. There needs to be more transparency in the system.”

“This is an infringement of human rights. Other countries would do not hold the same policies on torture so there is no way of knowing how they may treat someone on the records if they ever enter that country.”

“If you have never been charged with any crime why should your details be kept unless you are planning to use one of them for future crimes that have been committed by someone else and need an escape goat.”

“Such draconian legislation, if allowed to pass, will increasingly be used by State Agencies to silence any voice of dissent against government policy.”

“This sort of legislation is more akin to a dictatorship than a democracy. Freedom of the individual must not be compromised under any circumstances.”

“This is promoting suspicion of the innocent internationally.”

“This is clearly open to abuse and has serious implications to the individual. Not all countries respect civil liberties to an extent that UK does.”

“This may jeopardise one's life career, reputation, status etc...”

APPENDIX 4

ANTI-TERROR LAW PROPOSALS 2007

Survey Comments on Seizing Travel Documents at Ports

Survey Date: 22nd September – 15 October 2007

“This will impact unfairly on the Muslim community.”

“If they have evidence then they can do this if not then no they cannot.”

“This could lead to ethnic minorities, especially Muslims, being targeted on the grounds of the 'stereotyped terrorist' profile.”

“They basically just want to stop people who may be "terrorists" leaving the country or for that matter even living in their own country [UK].”

“Human rights abuse going to an extreme.”

“Suspicion will not be based on fact and will be influenced by the subjectivity of each officer therefore will lead to wrongful arrests and injury to feelings of individuals not involved in terrorism.”

“This country was based on evidence throughout history and I am sorry to say it is now going to be based on the colour of your skin or what religion you belong to”

“Allowing the police to have more powers amounts to a total trust in them, which I do not believe they merit. The police are human beings and thus not immune from bigotry and prejudice themselves. To allow them such wide-ranging powers based merely on suspicion would be to give them better opportunities for further prejudicial or intolerant actions against groups such as ethnic minorities.”

“The existing police powers are clearly oppressive and very much open to (and have been) abused. Racial profiling already exists and used on many Muslims. The existing powers should be abolished not extended. Seizure should follow proof and best after conviction.”

“Suspicion is not good enough and through this the police can get sued often if it goes wrong.”

“Evidence MUST be required like for any crime - why are Muslims always the exception - such criminalization without evidence would not be tolerated for any other section of the community - why is it tolerated for us? Do our lives and our rights hold less value?”

“Scaremongering - ridiculous!! Whatever happened to the traditional mantra of innocent until proven guilty? This is just another excuse to make a big fuss out of nothing. Remember... zero WMDs were located...!!”

“This will breed distrust of authority... and opens the door of institutional racism and bullying.”

“This must be based on strong evidence to support their confiscation, not on mere suspicion.”

“They take advantage of their uniform. I was stopped this year only because I'd mentioned that the law says to pick people randomly and NOT select - they agreed, but, said, I was selected because I was a MUSLIM!”

“They should possess some solid evidence. If they are suspects they should follow their activities under surveillance and gather the evidence instead.”

“Suspicion only is very judgemental - there has to be some evidence, subject to review by a court, to allow this to happen in my view.”

“Based on police suspicion many innocent Muslims have had their homes raided and have been arrested and Jean Charles de Menezes was shot and killed. I feel any additional powers based on mere suspicion increases the threat to those innocent who are suspected without evidence.”

“So you will be arrested on the suspicion of being Muslim? What are they going to do arrest every person going to visit aunty in Hyderabad?”

“Bring forth the evidence to justify the suspicion. If there is no evidence of substance, then the police must let go of their racist prejudices - if they are suspicious then they must ask themselves why. There is no point in creating all these grey zones, which leave minority groups and Muslims in particular living in limbo”

”Again it's wrong, unfair, everything should be evidence based...not on mere suspicion. Where is the democracy in this?”

“Again, the rule of 'innocent until proven guilty' MUST apply here.”

“Mere suspicion = he looks like a Muslim/Arab.”

“Not confident that this would be applied justly.”

“Innocent until proven guilty! Terrorists have killed small numbers (is that is not to condone them). Meanwhile we allow freedom of movement of tobacco barons who kill millions with their products and still promote smoking as good for you in the 3rd world.”

“This is liable to be used discriminatorily, in violation of human rights.”

“I feel that this although might restrict police effectiveness, it is a huge responsibility and based on discretion of individuals without concrete evidence. I feel this is unwise. However if this was revised somewhat with a way of measuring the suspiciousness of activity, then perhaps this would be acceptable.”

“A lot of inconvenience will be caused if they are wrong. A lot of the time police act on impulse e.g. Forest Gate incident and if they don't act then we may well have another 7/7 on our hands and I don't think anyone wants that. Catch 22 situation. Better to be safe than sorry at the end of the day if the government is willing to be responsible about it not be a police state where no one has any freedom.”

“Why do I feel that anyone with a beard and hat will be closely monitored and that any odd behaviour or even normal behaviour could be misinterpreted as being terrorist related!! This will only cause more friction between Muslims and the government hence possibly leading to organisations that are hell bent on recruiting and brain washing youngsters to have a sudden influx from those who have been held.”

“How do we know about the intentions of someone? Any action should be based on strong and clear evidence.”

“Definition of terrorism is so lucid each and every citizen could be suspected as terrorist.”

“It is now going to be a crime of travelling whilst Muslim.”

“There must be sufficient evidence, rather than on the whims of individuals and their opinions.”

“Mere suspicion is insufficient to stop someone's freedom of movement and is a dangerous precedent. Surely if there is suspicion then it would be better to track that individual's movements to gather more information.”

“Have had innocent friends prevented from travelling and others held for questioning. They want to make it easier for anyone brown to be hassled.”

"If based on the strength of the evidence they have, it may be agreeable, but there have been too many examples of ignorance and unfounded suspicion."

"It's giving the police too much power. They'll be able to do what they want. What constitutes as a "suspicion". It's too vague."

"You must have evidence for doing such harsh actions and restricting the movement of people."

"As long as there is sufficient grounds for suspicion and a reasonable time limit is imposed by which documents etc have to be returned if nothing is found"

"The passport of war criminal BLAIR should be taken away from him and he should be prevented from leaving Britain."

"Arrests must never be made because of suspicion."

"Mere suspicion. What happened to hard facts, look at the case of Charles De Menenez - they shot him 8 times in cold blood and then tried to cover it up."

"Suspicion must be supported by evidence."

"The police cannot be trusted to use these powers responsibly and anyway its again a major infringement of the rights of people who have never had any proof of an offence against them of being charged with any offence. It can be used to terrorise particular communities, ie the Muslim community."

"The additional powers may be abused and innocent people would be treated as terrorist suspects."

"Seizing passports and travel documents on suspicion is unfair as it is based on the personal opinion on the police at the time and this opinion is not necessarily justified."

"The police could be more harsh at some times than on other times so some people would be at greater risk of having their documents seized than others in similar situations."

"Authorisation to confiscate passport travel documents needs to be given by a body independent of the police. The independent body would decide whether the police suspicion is justified or not & rule accordingly."

"With the widespread use of ethnic profiling this would be a major step towards worsening the current situation."

"Police should have evidence which can be tested in court. Just mere suspicion from profiling or other means is too open to abuse."

"Its not very practical for innocent people!"

"It depends on the definition of the word terror or terrorist because in today's world terror/terrorist has been redefined to suit the purposes of the western colonialists."

"People could be genuinely travelling abroad to visit countries such as Pakistan on visits attending weddings and it is not acceptable that they are detained just because they happen to be for example a young Muslim brother going to visit his relatives to Muslim country alone."

"Ultimately if we keep going down this route, it will become a dictatorship style state and that's bad for all of us."

"Stop and search measures are already in place for situations where someone could be suspected. This should be sufficient if there is any sort of suspicion."

"This will be abused like stop and search powers with more Muslims being stopped who are innocent."

“How dare they? Get lost!”

“Suspicion is not conducive to social harmony. Acting on it breaks down society. Innocence must be assumed unless PROVEN otherwise.”

“This means a functionary at passport control desk could deprive any citizen, on the basis of a racial or religious profile, from exercising his/her right to travel.”

“You clearly have all the powers required to stop any potential terrorists. 9/11 7/7 would not have been stopped by further curtailment of individual freedoms.”

“The whole point about innocent until proven guilty goes out of the window - especially as you are arresting just on suspicion - what would be considered suspicious - a hijabi, a beard, someone speaking angrily in their own language?

Victimizing innocents like doctor in Australia”.

“Must have clear evidence otherwise this is also open to abuse. Reasonable suspicion needs to be defined. Preventing racial discrimination is important as is victimisation of Muslims.”

APPENDIX 5

ANTI-TERROR LAW PROPOSALS 2007

General Survey Comments on the Anti-Terror Proposals

Survey Date: 22nd September – 15 October 2007

“There are sufficient laws in place and we do not need any more laws in place.”

“Especially as they affect peoples liberties and take away people’s rights - this country is turning into a police state.”

“Existing and proposed legislation is used unfairly against innocent Muslims.”

“If there is evidence then arrest them if there is not then leave the innocent people alone.”

“It is government's job to ensure that the public is safe. It is also Muslim's duty to ensure that we are at forefront in initiating the dialogue and are seen to be pro-active in curbing this evil. Muslim community in their zest to protect their own community must not do this at the cost of other innocent lives. The need for spreading the message of Islam is now greater than ever before and lets make good use of our capacity and abilities to strike a balance where innocent Muslims are not made victims, Islam is not vilified and at the same time the peace prevails.”

“The proposals must be balanced and not invite abuse from authorities such as the Police etc. The proposals should retain one's right of being 'innocent until proven guilty' and must be applied fairly across all nationalities.”

“Well I am all for anti-terrorism measures but I am totally against anything which is against the person’s personal freedoms and prevention of basic human rights. These laws will just mean that innocent people will end up in extraordinary situations and will be most likely end up being charged with something they have not done, i.e. support a charity using their credit card, and yet the police will relate this to "sponsoring terrorism". We can’t deny that this does not already take place, because it does, and these new laws will just make all Muslims suspects for being Muslims and nothing more. I do not agree with these random proposals that the government come up with every time they have nothing better to do.”

“At present the government is in the same league as many governments were human rights abuses are rife. All they are doing at present are giving themselves the leeway to make it legal and isolating the one community. This is totally used against and this will only make life more difficult for all including Muslims.”

“I think they should include a proposal to educate the public and schools.”

“The Anti-Terror proposals are only going to increase tensions between the Muslim community and the wider community. The proposals will only serve to increase Islamophobic discrimination towards the Muslim community.”

“It is much desirable, compulsory even, for government to secure lives and property in this country. However, most of this would be achieved not by the existing or proposed harsher 'Anti-Terror' legislation. Govt should rather reform policies (national and foreign) that promote feelings of injustice among Muslim populations around the world and in the UK. It would do well to follow the adage 'No peace without justice.' There is excellent opportunity for anew beginning with this administration.”

“I think that if the governments of the west wanted to really implement democracy and help the people regardless of religion then they would stop colonialisms like they are doing to this day by divide and rule with the Muslims since 1924.”

“As a Muslim who has never committed any sort of crime in her life, let alone terrorism related, I actually feel victimized, isolated and scared of a government which is meant to not only represent me, but also protect me. I feel vulnerable and abandoned by the powers that be who seem willing to sacrifice our individual rights so easily - given that they of course are not the ones directly affected by these changes. These increasing restrictions remind me in many ways of what occurred in Nazi Germany - in that case, average Germans stood by whilst increasingly oppressive restrictions were placed on the Jewish population - one poet wrote of the time that he stayed silent when they came for the Jews. He stayed silent when they came for the Gypsies. And when they came for him, everyone else was gone.”

“The solution is not to introduce novel methods of detention and punishment, it is to get to the root of the problem - namely scaremongering and to educate the FEW misguided youth who may have fallen victim to the false premise of 'islamic terrorism' a fabricated concept promoted to angry youth in an attempt to misguide them.”

“It’s just a method of controlling the masses with fear.”

“Any approach to tackling terrorism must be based on strong clear evidence. There needs to be more studies as to why, in particular, Muslims are being singled to be terrorist and the Muslim communities are clearly being painting with the same brush. They are clearly being victimised. Target should be made on the individuals and not on the innocent community at large who had no connection to the individuals action or behaviour unless there is, again, clear evidence.”

“So being a Muslim or being suspected of being a Muslim is now an offence that warrants increasingly draconian laws that impinge on the human rights of all people in the UK regardless of whether they are Muslims or not?”

“The government must strike a balance in all these measures. While I agree that there is a security threat (for all sorts of reasons) that does not mean unjust legislation should be passed. 56 days is too much - so many innocent people will suffer this penalty and it would be such a huge disruption to their lives - what will their work say? It is NOT worth it. I will not accept it. And as a Muslim myself it will isolate me further from my own government. We already have enough stick from the media and Muslims are increasingly subject to verbal abuse - this will exacerbate this. If the police can't bring charges against an individual in 28 days then either they need more resources to find whatever they're looking for or need to let the person go.”

“This country is a democratic country isn't it? Some of these proposals make you doubt it very much. It seems the government consciously creating mistrust for themselves. People will begin to speculate about whether this is really about terrorism or control. All of this is very upsetting, I cannot believe that the country I consider to be my home, my place of birth seems to be turning against it's own citizens by imposing unnecessary control.”

“There is no point simply putting through new legislation which will have no real impact on our ability to counter threats of terrorism. The government should be extremely careful not to risk alienating communities/ large parts of the population by putting through loose legislation which is open to abuse and which does not guarantee civil liberties. Again, people MUST always be considered innocent until proven guilty; otherwise we will have a system of justice which is arbitrary, unjust and prejudiced.”

“Learn from the past.....eg anglo-irish conflict. More draconian legislation that will impinge on people's rights, especially targeted at one particular community.”

“I believe the government is over reacting. It is responsible for the current situation due to it's and the American government’s foreign policies.”

“Charge Babar Ahmad or let him go.”

“There needs to be a balance between public safety and individual rights, with the process being transparent and without targeting a specific religious or ethnic group.”

“I do agree with the proposals so far.”

“I do not have any confidence that this will be applied fairly. Detention without trial is only used when there is insufficient evidence for conviction and is therefore wrong. I think this legislation will only give power to act upon suspicion rather than evidence.”

“I would need to see the Bill in order to analyse the small print. My fear is like that of the ID Card Bill's first draft where the ambiguity of the wording (probably deliberate) meant that once the Bill was passed amendments to the Act could be made unilaterally by the Prime Minister or Secretary of State without recourse to Parliament. The threat to the UK from those we label terrorists today is considerably less than the threat we suffered under the IRA. Yet we combated them with less oppressive laws. I have yet to see a justifiable case for why we need these more oppressive and unjust laws than we had before. It is just another nail in the democratic state. Our government shouts 'democracy, democracy' yet actually opposes it in favour of 'capitalism under and authoritarian regime.’”

“I feel they are targeting one society and religion.”

“I think the current provision is a right balance of security necessity and demands by radical right wing thinkers. Any increase and tightening of further regulations may be seen as oppression and violation of fundamental human rights.”

“Police State - supporting corporative capitalism at home and abroad.

I feel that people should not be put in prison or on a list (control order etc.) when they have not been proven to be criminals. In fact I believe this action to be criminal morally to hold someone when the proof is not sufficient however sensitive the situation. A full engagement with the community at large is needed as within Islam.”

“The actions of terrorism against civilians are forbidden and this is a disgust (for such acts) which is universal. I feel it key that it is understood these individuals are not a bi-product of Islam or a misunderstanding of Islam but largely fuelled by Western intervention for countless centuries in these regions and these things must be handled sensitively and appropriately.”

“I hope that they don't bang up innocent people. We can't really trust the police these days or even the government for that matter. You never know what little exclusion clause they put in the legislation to convict people on suspicion rather than evidence.”

“The government cannot abuse human rights in the name of justice.”

“Control orders completely ruin someone's life...i mean they are left hanging, decisions need to be made one way or the other.”

“The whole proposed counter terrorism proposals seem designed to put fear into ordinary people. Those who commit terrorism do so anyway, it's the innocent people who end up being held for questioning and then seem to have no recourse of action. So many so called terrorists are unfairly imprisoned and treated inhumanly that the existing legislation is obviously not working in anyone's best interests and should be changed immediately - at least then, those unfairly detained can start to piece their lives back together - the government takes no responsibility for those who are innocent and detained.”

“The climate of scare-mongering is obviously for political purposes, to justify occupations etc”

“Spreading fear seems to be the game at present. Fear is the greatest tool that's been used to control people”

“The government should take some advice from Lord Ashdown. Sufficient checks are in place already, the proposed measures will take racial profiling to draconian levels, and are likely to result in gross miscarriages of justice.”

“These are measures to demonise particularly Muslim Community.”

“These are well crafted laws targeting Muslims only, they have been careful not to erode the freedoms of the general public. Our people need to be wiser in the way they behave and act, after all, the strength of this country is in its legal system and despite its shortcoming, it is still miles better than any Muslim country. Do you think there would be a debate of this nature in any Muslim country. I have to support the government, they are right on this one for once.”

“I think it is good to have laws in place - especially for the safety of the public. However, this should not be at the expense of Muslims. Because there are a very small number of extremists does not mean that all Muslims should be singled out.”

“There are 2 main concerns. One is detaining suspects with insufficient evidence to charge them which results in large numbers of innocent people being detained and being smeared with a terrorist label and consequently having their lives wrecked and ruined. The other is treating "terrorists" differently to other criminals which results in specific groups and individuals being unfairly targeted and paves the way for the oppression and persecution of certain minorities.”

“It vague. So much fuss is made over raids and arrests, when most people are released without charge!”

“Don't be hysterical towards the Muslims, all these problems can be easily solved through dialog. You cannot accuse people without proof.”

“Although some of the proposals are borne out of fear and/or scare tactics, we have to acknowledge and come to terms with the fact that there are those out there who are willing to kill anyone for their cause. We cannot say no, you the Government can't submit any proposal/law at all as it is the government who enforce law, not we the people. Balance is required.”

“The existing laws do not give enough access to legal support for the suspect to adequately defend themselves nor are they open enough to satisfy public opinion that all the evidences are being properly disclosed and evaluated before a judge with full disclosure before the legal counsel for the accused.”

“Britain is the biggest terrorist of the world. All in the Blair cabinet should be charged, tried and convicted of war crimes for lending their support towards the terrorist invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.”

“Their proposals are heavy handed and draconian: they smell of fascism.”

“The current laws relating to counter terrorism would only serve to distance the public from the government particularly Muslims. A public have to be trusted by its government to a certain extent to make society better for everyone. Suspicion and arrest without evidence sets a bad example in general for the whole public.

It's a complete and utter joke almost all the people they arrest are innocent and it deliberately targets the Muslim community creating an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. They would be better off targeting the causes of the anger which lead people to committing such acts ie their neo-colonialist foreign policy and support for the dictators that are plaguing the Muslim world”

“The proposals discriminate against Muslims and ethnic minorities.”

“This government should stop harassing the law abiding people of this country.”

“Terrorism is being singled out, but should be treated like any other crime. The statistics/ probability of some other crimes is far greater than this 'threat', which seems to have been blown out of proportion by politicians.”

“More consultation with Muslim Groups is required.”

“It's very worrying that our rights are being further eroded and I fear that the Muslim community will be targeted and harassed by the police and intelligence services. It amounts to terrorism against the Muslim community. We would support these proposals if: 1/ present legislation was not adequate 2/ if it was actually going to help catch terrorists. Its not needed and just right wing politicians trying to win

brownie points. Present legislation is being used in ridiculous circumstances where ordinary civil law could be used, but instead anti terror legislation is being used to give a longer sentence to Muslims. The law is being used to abuse Muslims rather than protect them.]”

“There is no such thing as privacy anymore. The Government is collecting personal info about people for no good reason. And to detain someone on mere suspicion is just ridiculous, what's happened to "innocent till proven guilty". With the Government being so awkward and making the situation difficult for many Muslims, it is just adding to tensions between the different races in the community.”

“If every suspect is held due to strong evidence and is treated accordingly to the severity of his or her alleged actions then the government’s proposal may prove to be more acceptable to Muslims.”

“The current anti-terror legislation is too strict and is depriving citizens of their freedom. Instead of making the legislation even more harsh, the government should aim to raise awareness of why terrorism is wrong.]”

“The real issue I have is not with the laws but the application of them, and the effects on innocent people. The track record in the past is not good. Guilford four, Birmingham five were all shown to be innocent. I am afraid these laws will only cause more suffering to innocent people and do little to stop terror. In fact they might only make it worse. Allah knows best.”

“The government needs to involve the Irish community in its consultations and it needs to 'really' listen to the feedback and not say this is 'coming' but these are the so called 'safeguards' we are ensuring. Also a strategy for exonerating publicly those who have not been convicted so that they can resettle in the community and resume a normal life, not one of suspicion and suffer discrimination as a consequence.”]

“The government should refrain from the temptation of giving itself more powers especially in a period like now when this is easier in terms of obtaining public support. This has happened time and again throughout history and we should learn from mistakes from the past. This would only serve to further alienate the Muslim community because the average Muslim feels this is aimed essentially at him.”

“Protect witnesses and legalise phone tap and intercept evidence with safe guards. the existing law is sufficient.”

“The vast majority of anti-terror legislation is nothing more than "knee-jerk" politics. We as a nation are being manipulated by the use of fear to ensure control and subjugation.”

“This is a serious problem, and not an easy one. I expect that just by virtue of being a Muslim brings you under suspicion in the current climate. This is unavoidable. It’s best that the authorities are honest about this and so you will find innocent Muslims cooperate. Those who are proven to be terrorists deserve the full weight of restrictions, monitoring, jail etc that we can give them. But innocent people, whether Muslims or not should not have their civil liberties infringed in any way, as this would be discrimination.”

“The last terrorists in England - the IRA - were "family" with a history of centuries of shared heritage. Islamic terrorism is an import with a history that is alien to this country, and deeply resented by the people of Britain. The police should have the power to explore any group of people - BNP or Muslims - who are planning to harm innocent people. Between suspicion and proof could be the deaths of hundreds of people. If terrorists have no respect for the rules of civil society why should they expect to be protected?”

“These laws target Muslims. It seems "evidence" is gathered from "suspect" sources and intelligence. Suspects should be told of the evidence against them so they can defend themselves. Police go in very heavy handed.”

“If the government really wants what it defines as 'terrorism', then it needs to stop committing terrorism in other countries itself.”

“Need to think before we act. There is no point in just acting on a hunch, because as we have witnessed most of the time, it ends badly. For example the Brazilian individual shot dead at a tube station in London. If extra powers are granted, there is room for more error, and less affiliation between the community and police.”

“I think that it should remain at 28 days, however if the suspects are innocent they should be released quicker and not have to wait for the full 28 days. Apologies should be given by the Government when mistakes are made, for example 'Forrestgate'. If not, the public continue to believe that the suspects must have done something for them to be arrested in the first place.”

“Why were these new anti terror laws not introduced some 10 or 15 years ago, when the IRA threat in the UK was very real and Muslim terrorism virtually non-existent. If the UK makes its foreign policy fair and just we won't need any new proposals. We should treat the cause not the symptom...”

“I don't know too much about it in detail but what is clear is there is now a shist towards the assumption that people of a certain background are more likely to have associations with terrorist style activities. This is neither fair and does not serve justice to what Britain is about.”

“I think if we keep moving towards more unnecessary hostile actions, it will blow up in our face. This does not mean free for all, but what it entails is a more detailed understanding and a better method to undertake any actions that need be when related to issues of terrorism.”

“There is not enough evidence being provided to even have to discuss extra measures. These measures are all extra infringements on a person's human Rights. I would rather not say that they are in place specifically for Muslims but evidence on convictions and charges of other cases under explosives act just provides more influence on the argument that these laws are for Muslims.”

“The terror can be controlled with the existing law if their intention is noble. I mean without any biasness.”

“The government should not just design any new law only for Muslims. They must also consider that Muslims are peace loving people.”

“Don't give the police too much freedom to do what they wish as they will only pick on the innocent people and destroy lives”

“I understand that there is a real threat posed by terrorism and this means that the way it is combated needs to be a process that is constantly under scrutiny to see how it can be improved. The ultimate goal of any anti terrorism policy must be to counter terror and not to add the problem. I feel that these anti-terror law proposals impinge on human rights and will serve to further alienate people. Surely the way to deal with any problem is to tackle the cause - when will the government tackle this issue?”

“I feel much of the legislation is affected by a political agenda as opposed to actually keeping people safe. e.g. high profile raids later resulting in no charges being brought and suspects being quietly released later. If government is serious about stopping terrorism then they should start by pulling out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Also they should stop interfering in the Muslim world. If they did this they would find most of the problem is solved”

“Terrorism has been cultivated since 2001 to be instinctively associated with or referring to Muslims. YouTube and the Internet are now slowly bringing into question many of media and governmental collaboration that has led to this. With the reawakening of the general public, Muslims will begin to be seen as victims of smear.

Tony Blair has done enough to incite hate and distrust among the cosmopolitan UK societies. The government does not need additional counter terrorism proposals but initiatives to restore the damage Tony Blair did - suspicion, distrust, racism etc all in the guise of public good.”

“Our civil liberties are being taken away, piecemeal, by the New Labour government in the name of security and public safety. We cannot be safe in our homes unless we desist from destroying people in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in Africa in their homes and towns.”

“Consultation with the Muslim community is key to winning the vote of the Muslim community. Otherwise people will be sceptical & cynical toward any legislation .i.e. it picks on Muslims. We must learn from history especially Northern Ireland!”]

“Extending the time limit to question suspects is a reasonable step.”

“Police should provide proof to the public, rather than making a mockery of innocents on suspicion.”

“It seems these laws and measures are being used unfairly to persecute and demonise Muslims.”]

“I agree with the government's terrorism proposals, the stricter they are with this category of people, the better and Britain will remain a safe place to live in for our children in the future.”

“I strongly disagree with any enforcement if there is no actual evidence to support accusations. Police turning up at residents' homes in the middle of the night and disturbing the community when it could have been carried out another way is wrong - that is terrorising people”

“The CIA and spies have means of finding out who the real terrorists are, so why aren't they being questioned? Acts can be prevented if they did their job and therefore not scaring the British public and the rest of the world”

“It won't affect the British but it will affect every Muslim guilty or not this is what worries me.”

“Simply stop seeing this as a tool to victimise/harrass Muslims. We are in favour of fair/proper legislation to stop terrorists/terrorism but so far the police have failed to apply existing legislation properly and fairly. Can they be trusted to apply enhanced powers?”

“There may be some very difficult repercussions of the proposals for the Muslim community. There must be consultations before they are put forward”

“Why are extreme right terrorists charged under legislation pre-dating anti-terror legislation? Why the need for changes if that is adequate?”