

JUSTICE PRESS RELEASE

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'The Future of Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights': a call for an end to unnecessary terrorism legislation

A new paper released by law reform group JUSTICE argues that successive UK governments have paid too much attention to public fears over terrorism, at the expense of basic rights.

The paper details the parallel history of counter-terrorism legislation and human rights over the past 10 years, highlighting how many high-profile measures have often been based on irrational policy decisions that have done nothing to increase public safety, while weakening long-standing guarantees of due process and other fundamental freedoms.

With Parliament now facing its fifth piece of terrorism bill in seven years, the paper argues for a more restrained approach to counter-terrorism policy. Eric Metcalfe, JUSTICE's director of human rights policy and author of the paper said:

When it comes to terrorism, it is not human rights groups that cry wolf, but governments.

The threat of terrorism is very real but the public are not made any safer by eroding basic liberties in the name of combating terror.

Any sensible counter-terrorism policy must put human rights first and not last.

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Notes for editors

1. 'The Future of Counter-terrorism and Human Rights' is the first of a 'Futures' series, designed to celebrate JUSTICE's 50th anniversary, in which staff members and others raise interesting and provocative ideas about the future direction of policy in essay form. It does not necessarily represent JUSTICE policy, but it does draw on JUSTICE's considerable experience as a leading human rights and law reform organisation.
2. Forthcoming papers in the 'Futures' series will include papers on the Future of the Rule of Law and the Future of International Law. For further details of JUSTICE's Futures series, please contact the series editor, Sally Ireland, direct line 020 7762 6414 or email sireland@justice.org.uk.
3. JUSTICE is grateful to the Network for Social Change for its support of this publication.

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