



Press Release

23 August 2019

The Coalition of Race Equality Organisations send an open letter to the Home Secretary

“Priti Patel please don’t politicise the police”

A coalition of 20 race equality organisations has sent an open letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel.

The letter reads ...

“We the undersigned wish to express our grave concerns regarding the recent announcements by Home Secretary Priti Patel on the 3rd and 11th August 2019, that have removed the enhanced Section 60 authorisation conditions introduced by The Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme.”

“Rather than adopt an approach that embraces effective evidence-based policy, the Prime Minister and Home Secretary worryingly seem to be going in another direction.”

The Coalition of Race Equality Organisations (CORE) comprises of 15 charity and voluntary organisations working in the sector. Their joint letter goes on to say...

“Whilst the use of Section 60 powers can be a useful policing tool when used sparingly as part of intelligence-led operations, it is largely ineffective for taking weapons off the street.”

Data for the period April 2017 to March 2018 revealed that only 2% of stop and searches carried out under Section 60 led to an arrest for an offensive weapon.

The Section 60 Stop and Search pilot study in seven areas of the UK started in April 2019 and was meant to have concluded and been independently assessed in September 2019. According to the Office of National Statistics, in the time of the pilot, stop and search increased from 19% to 22% but so too did knife crime and the number of homicides.

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Both the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister have rolled out this change of policy nationally, without awaiting the results of pilot study.

“Home Secretary Patel’s claims that ‘stop and search’ tactics are the foremost way to curtail serious youth violence are erroneous at best and disingenuous at worst. The Office of National Statistics recorded in 2016/17 that approximately two thirds of all stop and searches were targeted at drugs rather than possession of weapons.

“The latest announcements by the Home Secretary represent regressive and counterproductive policing policy and cheap political point scoring.

Deliberately or not, the Section 60 proposals are too often discriminatory, inflammatory, ineffectual in reducing serious violent crime, and ultimately alienating to a generation of young children and adults that are from Black, Asian and Ethnic minority heritage.”

Katrina French of StopWatch UK, who was one of the letter’s 20 signatories said, “To ensure that policing is fair, effective and accountable it is essential that evidence based policies are devised and adopted. Police forces and government departments must be held to account for promoting stop and search practices that are acknowledged as having a limited impact on violent crime.”

Dr Zubaida Haque of The Runnymede Trust said, “It’s particularly concerning that the government have rolled out S60 stop and search without waiting for the results of the pilot. If the evidence suggests that stop and search is not fit for purpose, and it doesn’t have the consent of the many BME communities, then what makes the government and police forces think that “removing reasonable suspicion” in stop and search powers will make it work better?”

The full letter is attached.

Katrina French of StopWatch UK and Dr Zubaida Haque of The Runnymede Trust are both available for interview.

For further details contact Lee Pinkerton, CORE communications officer on 07985 446 280

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