



Monday, 30 April 2018

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ref: HoC/JEF

Dear Sajid,

I write to you regarding the upcoming Al Quds day demonstration, scheduled for 10 June 2018.

Al Quds Day Demonstrations in previous years have featured the flying of the flag of Hezbollah. Hezbollah is not only deeply anti-Semitic – its Secretary General having previously declared: “If all Jews gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide” – its ‘military wing’ is proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Under Section 13 of that Act: “A person in a public place commits an offence if he wears an item of clothing, or wears, carries or displays an article, in such a way or in such circumstances as to arouse reasonable suspicion that he is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation.”

The continued brazen flouting of this Act is an affront to Britain’s commitments to fight extremism and a cause of serious distress to the Jewish community who have to witness an annual display of support for an organisation which actively seeks their destruction.

As we approach Al Quds Day again, I ask that you give your personal attention to this issue. The Government has the power to make clear, either through proscription of Hezbollah’s political wing or through further clarification regarding the powers the Crown Prosecution Service and the Metropolitan Police have under the existing legislation, that it is illegal to show support for a terrorist group on the streets of London. Indeed, I am concerned that, when I met the Metropolitan Police to discuss this issue, it became clear that the Met considers the government’s decision to proscribe only the military wing of Hezbollah is key in preventing police prohibiting the display of the flag.

This view is challenged by Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, Minister of State for Security at the Home Office:

*“Whether it is part 3A of the Public Order Act 1986, or part 3 itself, which is about racial hatred, that Act gives police the powers to prosecute people. It is perfectly possible for someone to stand up with a national flag and incite hatred or religious hatred, and to then find themselves prosecuted for and convicted of a criminal offence. **Not proscribing Hezbollah in no way prevents the police or the Crown Prosecution Service from taking action against that type of incitement. I certainly hope that the CPS and the police listen to the concerns expressed by Members today—I shall certainly raise those concerns when I next see them** [emphasis mine].”*

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this important issue.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Louise Ellman MP

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LOUISE ELLMAN MP
LABOUR/CO-OPERATIVE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LIVERPOOL RIVERSIDE



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Commissioner Cressida Dick
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police
New Scotland Yard
London, SW1A 2JL

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ref: HoC/JEF

Dear Commissioner,

I write to you regarding the Al Quds day demonstration, scheduled for 10 June 2018.

Al Quds Day demonstrations in previous years have featured the flying of the flag of Hezbollah. Hezbollah is not only deeply anti-Semitic – its Secretary General having previously declared: “If all Jews gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide” – its ‘military wing’ is proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Under Section 13 of that Act: “A person in a public place commits an offence if he wears an item of clothing, or wears, carries or displays an article, in such a way or in such circumstances as to arouse reasonable suspicion that he is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation.”

In a brazen attempt to circumvent this law, supporters of Hezbollah last year affixed stickers to their flags to suggest they were showing support for the political wing, not the military wing. This distinction is a dangerous game of semantics and one that the leaders of Hezbollah themselves do not subscribe to.

Nevertheless, from discussions with your colleagues after last year’s march, it became clear that, according to the Met’s interpretation, the government’s decision to proscribe only the military wing of Hezbollah is key in preventing police action in prohibiting the flying of the flag.

I was therefore interested to hear the Minister of State for Security at the Home Office, the Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, say the following to Parliament on 25 January 2018 during a debate on the proscription of Hezbollah:

*“Whether it is part 3A of the Public Order Act 1986, or part 3 itself, which is about racial hatred, that Act gives police the powers to prosecute people. It is perfectly possible for someone to stand up with a national flag and incite hatred or religious hatred, and to then find themselves prosecuted for and convicted of a criminal offence. **Not proscribing Hezbollah in no way prevents the police or the Crown Prosecution Service from taking action against that type of incitement. I certainly hope that the CPS and the police listen to the concerns expressed by Members today—I shall certainly raise those concerns when I next see them** [emphasis mine].”*

I would appreciate, in advance of this year’s Al Quds day demonstration, clarification on whether Hezbollah flags will be allowed to fly on the streets of London. It seems clear that, as outlined by the Security Minister, there is no impediment on the grounds of proscription to stopping the display of flags that cause such distress to the Jewish community and damage community relations.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Ellman MP