

Home Secretary, Priti Patel MP  
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23 January 2020

By email only: [public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk)  
Cc: Home Affairs Select Committee: [homeaffcom@parliament.uk](mailto:homeaffcom@parliament.uk)

Dear Ms Patel,

I write to you on behalf of CAGE, an independent NGO founded in 2003, that has been monitoring the use of national security powers. This month, revelations that counter terrorism police have designated Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace and other campaigners as 'extremists' and terror risks were reported widely. There has been widespread condemnation of this.

My organisation has advocated for hundreds of people, many of them young, who have been negatively impacted by PREVENT. We have published several pieces of research into the operation of Prevent since 2011<sup>1</sup>. Our vast testimony-based case library, which has formed the foundation of a number of academic reports, have at their core the experiences of hundreds of British citizens under PREVENT.

CAGE has consistently sounded the alarm about PREVENT, warning society and government about its harm and ever expanding reach. Drawing on ordinary people's experiences, and our legal and academic expertise, we have continuously warned of this outcome.

Since 2013<sup>2</sup> we anticipated that counter-terrorism policy would encroach into civil liberties and freedom of expression. PREVENT initially targeted Muslim citizens, but in doing so it established test mechanisms for clamping down on other beliefs, expression and dissent.

In 2014<sup>3</sup>, we warned of the expansionary threat of PREVENT:

"Whilst at the moment this policy targets and impacts the minority Muslim community and draws little criticism, there is a real danger to wider society and democracy from the PREVENT narrative and practice..."

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<sup>1</sup> CAGE. (2011): Good Muslim Bad Muslim: A response to the revised PREVENT strategy report <https://www.cage.ngo/product/good-muslim-bad-muslim-a-response-to-the-revised-prevent-strategy-report>

<sup>2</sup> CAGE. (2013): Tackling Extremism in the UK report (pt I). <https://www.cage.ngo/product/tackling-extremism-in-the-uk-an-ideological-attack-on-muslim-communities-report>

<sup>3</sup> CAGE. (2014): Cradle to Grave Police state report. <https://www.cage.ngo/product/the-prevent-strategy-a-cradle-to-grave-police-state-report>

In 2016<sup>4</sup>, we warned that:

“Firstly, this tactic will quickly find its way into other areas of government policy and public life. Secondly, the crisis of public trust that already afflicts politicians and government will soon extend to the third sector as a whole...”

In 2017<sup>5</sup>, we warned that:

“...PREVENT implementation [will] go well beyond preventing political violence, and into the realm of pre-crime and the criminalisation of dissent and political and/or religious activism. This is beyond the S26 Terrorism Duty in the CTS Act 2015...”

We have undertaken comprehensive, detailed analyses of the framework of PREVENT, its architecture and the theories behind it, and shown that they have not only been disproved, but they are not fit for purpose.

Finally, as a constructive way out of the deadlock we enclose our report entitled Beyond PREVENT<sup>6</sup>. It has the support of over 100 academics and members of civil society<sup>7</sup>.

The report outlines why PREVENT cannot work to make us safer, and it presents an 8-point plan for the discussions we need to begin so we can move forward constructively as a healthy and safe society, without the need for PREVENT. This includes:

1. Scrap PREVENT
2. Abandon the frameworks underpinning PREVENT
3. Clean money: restore social spending without strings
4. Secure an ethical foreign policy
5. Stop managing social issues through security measures
6. Reinststate a society where civil rights can be exercised
7. Decouple welfare and safeguarding from counter-terrorism
8. Repeal counter-terror laws instituted since 2000

If remedial steps are not taken immediately, rule of law in this country will deteriorate rapidly and your Department will oversee Britain’s slide into totalitarian policy making as the norm.

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<sup>4</sup> CAGE. (2016): We are Completely Independent report. <https://www.cage.ngo/product/we-are-completely-independent-report>

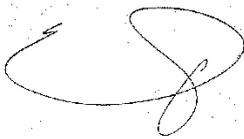
<sup>5</sup> CAGE. (2017). PREVENT is about Policing Dissent not Safeguarding. <https://www.cage.ngo/prevent-is-about-policing-dissent-not-safeguarding>

<sup>6</sup> CAGE. (2020). Beyond Prevent: A Real Alternative To Securitised Policies Report. <https://www.cage.ngo/cage-beyond-prevent-report>

<sup>7</sup> Simon Hooper. (2020). ‘End Prevent’: UK government faces new calls to drop counter-terrorism strategy <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/end-prevent-uk-government-faces-new-calls-drop-counter-terrorism-strategy>, Middle East Eye.

We urge you and the Home Office to repeal the PREVENT duty, discontinue PREVENT policy and halt the current trajectory of Counter Terror policies. Combined with yet another counter terrorism Law to add to the vast number the Home Office has overseen over the years, these policies threaten the very fabric of Britain, whose long history of dissent has shaped the country.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Adnan Siddiqui  
**Director, CAGE**