



Home Office

Stephen Rimmer Director of Prevent and RICU
Office for Security & Counter Terrorism

Room No: 6th Floor Peel, Mailpoint A NW Corner (secure area) 6th Floor Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF
Switchboard 0402 Direct Line 020 7035 4652

Mobile 07770 748178 E-mail Stephen.Rimmer@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Our Ref
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Date **17 February 2009**

Dear Colleagues

ALLEGATIONS MADE IN THE PANORAMA PROGRAMME 'MUSLIM FIRST – BRITISH SECOND' ON MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY

1. You may have seen the Panorama programme on Monday 16th January, which contained a number of untrue allegations, most seriously - that Prevent is being used as a front to spy on and infiltrate communities.
2. While the programme did contain a Home Office statement rejecting these claims, I want to give you my unequivocal assurance – as the Senior Responsible Officer for Prevent - that any allegation that Prevent projects are a cover for spying on people is completely untrue.
3. Ministers are clear that there is no hidden agenda in Prevent. Our long term objective is to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists. We cannot do this without working with communities to develop and sustain trust and mutual respect. The whole point of the Prevent Strategy, as you know, is to be open and transparent about the threat we are facing and how we are addressing it. We understand that goodwill and transparency between Government, police and communities are indispensable to maintaining trust and we would not put these long established and hard earned relationships at risk.
4. Prevent is not about criminalising or stigmatising vulnerable individuals. We want to support vulnerable individuals and help communities and projects intervene to divert them away from violent extremism before they become radicalised.
5. The fact that Prevent is not a front for intelligence gathering is evident from the many Prevent projects in operation around the country and overseas. These are successful projects led by dedicated and committed people who, very often, do not agree with aspects of Government policy, but are doing vital work nonetheless to build the

resilience of communities and protect our young people from extremists.

6. I am sure that these allegations will not jeopardise the excellent progress being made on Prevent by police, local authorities and communities working together. Please accept my assurances and do not hesitate to pass this letter to colleagues who would find it helpful.

Yours



Stephen Rimmer
Director of Prevent and RICU