



Annual Member's Meeting 19th February 2015

Motion Name: Students not Suspects

Background:

1. On 26 November 2014, the Home Secretary Theresa May introduced the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill (CTSB) to Parliament highlighting some revised and new counter-terrorism powers that would be placed on a statutory basis.¹
2. CTSB seeks to make the controversial Prevent and Channel strategies statutory.²
3. Academics and campaigners fear the CTSB will criminalise ideas and create a culture where students are unwilling to speak out, this conflicts with the University's responsibility under the Education Act 1986 to secure and protect freedom of speech.³
4. The National Union of Students have condemned the Counter terrorism and Security bill and described the Prevent strategy and Channel policies as "further developing a culture of suspicion and surveillance on campuses, whilst also potentially conflicting with institutions' duties to promote freedom of speech, by making them overly risk-averse and unwilling to engage in important topics of discussion."⁴
5. Universities in the UK have expressed concerns about academic freedom in their parliamentary briefing on the counter terrorism and security bill.⁵
6. The Prevent strategy guidance in 2011 stated that university staff, lecturers and chaplains are to report to the police any Muslim students who are isolated or depressed.⁶

¹<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm141202/debtext/141202-0002.htm#14120262000001>

²<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm141202/debtext/141202-0002.htm#14120262000001>

³<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/dec/02/anti-terror-bill-making-radical-ideas-crime-campus>

⁴<http://beta.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/statement-on-counter-terrorism-and-security-bill>

⁵<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2014/CounterTerrorismandSecurityBillCommitteeStage.pdf>

⁶<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/aug/29/university-inform-vulnerable-muslim-students>



7. The Prevent strategy currently exists and operates on most university campuses. On the basis of a survey undertaken by Universities UK, Professor Petts considered that "the vast majority of institutions" have "signed up wholeheartedly" to the Prevent Strategy.⁷
8. Islamophobia has been on the rise in the UK⁸ and mainland Europe⁹ over the last decade.
9. A vote on whether to make the counter-terrorism policy known as the Prevent strategy into legislation took place on the 29th January.
10. According to the current Prevent Strategy, potential indicators of "radicalism" or "extremism" include:
 - "A need for identity, meaning and belonging."
 - "A desire for political or moral change."
 - "Relevant mental health issues."¹⁰
11. Through the PREVENT strategy, universities will be legally responsible for the ideologies of their students.¹¹
12. The Prevent Strategy has been criticised for demonising Muslim students on campus.¹²
13. Motions against the PREVENT strategy and statements against it have been made in student unions across the country including: SOAS, KCL, LSE, UCL, Cardiff and Queen Mary University.

⁷<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/1446/144606.htm>

⁸<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jun/05/islamophobic-hate-crime-getting-worse>

⁹<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/10/islamophobia-racism-dresden-protests-germany-islamisation>

¹⁰https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118187/vul-assessment.pdf

¹¹

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2014/CounterTerrorismandSecurityBillCommitteeStage.pdf>

¹²<http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf2/spooked.pdf> pages 26-27



Purpose:

1. Students should not be victimised and intimidated on their campuses and treated as suspects.
2. Students should be offered help and not victimised for suffering from mental health issues.
3. That rushed laws are often ill thought out and poorly scrutinised.
4. That any expectation by the state for academic staff to be involved in monitoring their students is deeply worrying, and could have a chilling effect on relations between staff and students.
5. That the CTSB could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection.
6. The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill discourages free expression and analysis of ideas.
7. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.

Action:

1. UBU will support an enquiry into the legality of the proposals under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education Act No. 2 1986 in so far as it would affect the interests of UoB students.
2. UBU will issue a public statement condemning the Prevent strategy and the government's counter terrorism and security bill for the impact it has on UoB students.
3. UBU will work with campus trade unions such as UCU and other trade unions recognised on campus on combating the Prevent strategy, and lobby them to condemn the Counter terrorism and Security bill.
4. Mandate the Student officers to lobby the university to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT, CHANNEL and other similar initiatives. This involves:
 - Demand publications of how the policy is operating within UoB.
 - This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.
 - Hold consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.
5. That UBU and the student officers will not engage with the Prevent strategy unless legally required to do so.
6. That UBU will educate students on the dangers of the counter terrorism and security bill and the Prevent Strategy.
7. UBU NUS delegation will ensure UBU students concerns are adequately taken to NUS conference.



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
STUDENTS' UNION

Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1LN
Tel (0117) 954 5800 • Fax (0117) 954 5817

www.UoB.org.uk

Proposed by:

Your first and last name: Noha Abu El Magd

Second first and last name: Sorana Vieru