14 years in prison as a TERRORIST for a quote

Izvor: https://minbarlive.com/videos/14-years-in-prison-as-a-terrorist-for-a-quote

> A UK National Security Bill is moving to criminalize the receipt of information from designated groups, potentially imprisoning journalists, aid workers, and researchers for over a decade. The legislation grants the Home Secretary unilateral power to designate organizations as threats without parliamentary vote, effectively criminalizing legitimate news gathering and humanitarian operations in conflict zones.

SAŽETAK

This talk examines the UK's proposed National Security State's Threats Bill and its implications for journalism, humanitarian work, and democratic freedoms. The speaker argues that the legislation fundamentally expands the definition of 'material benefit' from tangible assets to include information itself, meaning anyone who receives or retains data from a designated group can face terror prosecution regardless of financial exchange. The bill grants the Home Secretary unilateral designation power without parliamentary oversight, bypassing constitutional checks. The speaker highlights three critical impacts: foreign correspondents and investigative journalists face a chilling effect on reporting as they weigh public interest against prison sentences of up to fifteen years; humanitarian aid organizations operating in conflict zones are forced into an impossible choice between life-saving operations and legal exposure, as interaction with designated groups—necessary for logistics and staff safety—becomes criminalized; and researchers face a reversed burden of proof in complex geopolitical landscapes where group affiliations are fluid. The speaker notes that the independent reviewer of State Threat Legislation recommended a reasonable excuse defence, which the government refused. The speaker argues this legislation represents a fundamental inversion of justice and the rule of law, sacrificing press freedom, the right to dissent, and humanitarian decency in service of state narrative control.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

- The bill redefines 'material benefit' to include information itself, not just tangible assets, meaning journalists and researchers can face terror prosecution for

receiving or retaining data from designated groups with no financial exchange involved.

The Home Secretary is granted unilateral power to designate organizations as state threats without a single parliamentary vote, bypassing standard constitutional checks and democratic oversight.

Humanitarian aid organizations face criminal liability for necessary interactions with designated groups—such as Hamas or Hezbollah—required for logistics, staff safety, and aid delivery in conflict zones.

Journalists and foreign correspondents face potential fifteen-year prison sentences for legitimate news gathering, creating a chilling effect on reporting that contradicts the state's narrative regardless of public interest.

The legislation reverses the presumption of innocence and places the burden of guilty proof on workers operating in complex geopolitical landscapes where group affiliations are murky and fluid, as ignorance of designation status is no longer a defence.

The government refused to include a reasonable excuse defence despite recommendation from the independent reviewer of State Threat Legislation, creating a legal minefield with no protection for legitimate workers.

The bill represents a fundamental erosion of democratic freedoms including freedom of the press, the right to dissent, and basic humanitarian principles in pursuit of state narrative control.

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Expanding the Definition of 'Material Benefit'

The UK government is rushing through shocking legislation that could see someone like me sent to prison for over a decade as a terrorist, simply for sharing information from a group they deem to be hostile to the British state. Under the new National Security State's Threats Bill, it's a criminal offence to receive material benefits from proscribed organisations. Historically, a material benefit meant tangible assets like money or weapons. Not anymore. The government now categorises information as a standalone benefit if you obtain, accept or retain data from a source linked to a designated threat. Even with zero financial exchange, you can be treated like a terrorist.

Unilateral Designation Power and Parliamentary Bypass

Worse still, this bill bypasses standard constitutional checks, granting Shabana Mahmood as Home Secretary the unilateral power to designate any group as a state threat, treating them just like proscribed terrorists without a single vote in parliament. The bill's first target will be Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, quite possibly making it illegal to give an interview to the Iranian state broadcaster or to even speak with Iranian nuclear scientists. Prescription of the IRGC has been a consistent demand of the Israel lobby, and the Board of Deputies has publicly come out in support of the legislation.

Impact on Journalism and News Gathering

This bill is a disaster for foreign correspondents and investigative journalists, pulling legitimate news gathering into the orbit of terror prosecutions and forcing journalists to weigh the public's right to know against a decade and a half in prison, effectively killing off reporting that contradicts the state's narrative. By criminalising the receipt of information itself, the legislation creates a chilling effect on journalism that covers designated groups or their activities, regardless of the public interest in such reporting.

Humanitarian Crisis for Aid Organisations

For humanitarian aid workers, the situation is equally dire. Charities operating in conflict zones have to interact with local groups, including designated ones like Hamas or Hezbollah, just to deliver aid and keep their staff safe. Under this legislation, logistical survival is reclassified as assisting a threat. Charities face an impossible choice: stop life-saving operations or risk fourteen years in prison. The independent reviewer of State Threat Legislation, Jonathan Hall KC, asked the government to include a reasonable excuse defence to protect legitimate workers from accidental prosecution. The government refused, creating a legal minefield.

The Burden of Proof Inverted

The standard that applies is whether an individual ought reasonably to have known a body was designated, yet this operates in a chaotic war zone where affiliations are murky and fluid. Ignorance is no longer a defence, effectively placing a burden of guilty until proven innocent on any journalist or aid worker operating in a complex geopolitical landscape. This reversal of the presumption of innocence fundamentally undermines the rule of law.

Broader Implications for Democratic Freedoms

Ultimately, this bill represents a profound inversion of justice in a desperate bid to control the political narrative. The UK is willingly sacrificing foundational pillars of a

free press, the right to dissent and basic humanitarian decency, leaving researchers, reporters and aid workers as collateral damage in a relentless expansion of state power.

#UK National Security Legislation #Press Freedom and Journalism #Humanitarian Aid and Conflict Zones #State Surveillance and Designation Powers #Rule of Law and Due Process #Palestine-Gaza Reporting

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