

## **Students not Suspects: LSESU Should Oppose the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill (CTSB)**

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### **This union notes:**

- 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.<sup>1</sup>
- That CTSB seeks to make the controversial the Prevent and Channel strategies statutory.<sup>2</sup>
- That academics and campaigners fear the CTSB will criminalise ideas and create a culture where students are unwilling to speak out.<sup>3</sup>
- 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.”<sup>4</sup>
- That Universities UK have expressed concerns about academic freedom in their parliamentary briefing on the counter terrorism and security bill.<sup>5</sup>
- That the Prevent strategy guidance in 2011 stated that university staff , lecturers and chaplains to report to the police any Muslim students who are isolated or depressed.<sup>6</sup>
- The Prevent strategy currently exists and operates on most university campuses.
- That Islamophobia has been on the rise in the UK and mainland Europe over the last decade.
- That a vote on whether to make the counter-terrorism policy known as the Prevent strategy into legislation bill on the 29th January.
- That according to the current Prevent Strategy, potential indicators of “radicalism” or “extremism” include:
  - “A need for identity, meaning and belonging.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

- “A desire for political or moral change.”
- “Relevant mental health issues.”
- That through the PREVENT strategy, universities will be legally responsible for the ideologies of their students.
- That the Prevent Strategy has been widely criticised for demonising Muslim students on campus by various Human Rights groups such as Liberty.
- That on university campuses PREVENT strategy enables the possibility of a No Platform policy being extended to any member deemed “radical” or “extreme” by the university, with no consultation.

**This union believes:**

- That students are not suspects.
- That students should be offered help and not victimised for suffering from mental health issues.
- That rushed laws are often ill thought out and poorly scrutinised.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill discourages the free expression and analysis of ideas.
- Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.
- The implementation of the Prevent strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists.
- The monitoring and exclusion of ideas from public debate opposes the basic function of universities; introducing students to a variety of opinions and encouraging them to analyse and debate them.
- The policy significantly undermines the freedom and activities of university staff and students.
- Our public services (i.e. hospitals, schools, universities, prison services) should exist to serve the general public and not be used against the very people it exists to serve.

**This union resolves:**

- That LSESU support an enquiry into the legality of the proposals under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education Act No. 2 1986.
- That LSESU should issue a public statement condemning the Prevent strategy and the government's counter terrorism and security bill.
- For LSESU to work with campus trade unions on combatting the Prevent strategy and lobby them to condemn the Counter terrorism and Security bill.
- To 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 the College and Student's Union.
- This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.
- Hold consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.
- That LSESU and the student officers will not engage with the Prevent strategy and cut any links it indirectly has with the programme via the university.
- That LSESU will educate students on the dangers of the counter terrorism and security bill and the Prevent Strategy.
- That the LSESU NUS delegation should support the motion condemning the Counter terrorism and security bill at the NUS National conference 2015.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf)

<http://www.cageuk.org/report.pdf>

Passed, 30.1.2015

Yes: 208

No: 42

Undecided: 9

Total votes: 259