

E.R

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

HOME OFFICE

Exclusions Review

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Jacqui Smith): My right honourable Friend Prime Minister made a commitment in the National Security Strategy statement of 19 March to take “stronger action against those we suspect of stirring up tensions”. In the light of that, I have reviewed existing policy on the exclusion from the UK of those individuals who encourage violence or hatred in support of their ideology. We will:

Create a presumption in favour of exclusion in respect of all those who have engaged in the types of behaviour set out in the Home Secretary’s statement of 24 August 2005;

Provide that where an individual claims to have repudiated their previous extremist views or actions the burden of proof is on them to demonstrate this is so and that this has been publicly communicated;

Introduce changes that will allow me to exclude from the UK nationals of the European Economic Area, and their families, before they travel to this country where they constitute a threat to public security or policy;

Work with other agencies and community groups to improve the evidence base underpinning our exclusion decisions to ensure that we identify those who pose the greatest threat to our society;

Consider in all future cases whether it would be in the public interest to disclose that an individual has been excluded with a presumption to inform the public;

Make greater use of UK watch lists to ensure that individuals who might fall to be excluded, should they seek to come to the UK, are identified and any future visa application is considered with full regard to previous extremist activities.

Over the summer my officials have been working to implement these measures, in consultation with key partners across government and representatives of community groups. Most of these measures have been implemented today and amendments will be brought forward shortly to the Immigration (European Economic Areas) Regulations 2006 to ensure that I personally may exclude EEA nationals and their family members.

I am clear that these proposals should be implemented in a way that has the greatest impact on those who seek to enter the UK to stir up hatred within our society. It is therefore right that we have an on-going engagement with interested parties in order to strike the appropriate balance and ensure we protect public safety and vital national interests here and abroad. Therefore my officials will continue to engage with community representatives to seek their views on the way this policy is operating.