Dear Bernard

Definition of Domestic Extremism

Thank you for your letter dated 11 March, which included the new definition of Domestic Extremism used by the National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence Unit.

I was pleased to hear at the Assembly Plenary on 5 March 2014 that you had updated the definition to reflect the recommendations made by HMIC at the start of 2012. However, in a letter from the Mayor dated 13 November 2013 I was informed that the MPS was still using the old working definition. When I wrote to the Mayor on 6 December 2013 specifically about the working definition and HMIC’s recommendations the response I received from the Mayor on 20 January 2014 said he had asked the MPS to look into this. Therefore, I was a little surprised to hear that the NDEDIU changed the definition back in October 2013 and that it appears the Mayor’s office was not informed of this change?

I should have liked to have been informed too when the NDEDIU changed the definition. If for no other reason than I have been publicly criticising the MPS for using a definition that is not fit for purpose and for failing to follow the recommendations of HMIC from two years ago.
I do still have concerns that the definition could still be considered broad enough to target the wrong people. In your letter to me you wrote: “This definition addresses issues arising from your previous concerns and would not usually apply to low levels of civil disobedience such as civil trespass or minor obstruction.” While I am pleased to have this reassurance I should like to clarify what you mean when you state “would not usually apply to low levels of civil disobedience”? In what circumstances could this definition be applied to low levels of civil disobedience? Also, does this mean that in some circumstances it could be used to justify the surveillance of groups whose only intention is “low level” civil disobedience?

I should also like to know whether “aggravated trespass” would come within this definition? If not, then please could you explain why the new definition would not be applicable and also confirm that it will not be used to target protestors who plan aggravated trespass?

Please could you also explain to me what oversight or arrangements are in place to ensure that if groups or individuals are targeted who do not fall within the definition, that this is recognised and stopped?

Jenny Jones  
Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb  
Green Party Member of the London Assembly

CC: Boris Johnson, Mayor of London