

Jonathan Hall

KC <Jonathan.Hall@6kbw.com>

Tue, Jul 1, 8:58 AM (2 days ago)

Jonathan Hall's email response of July 1 to my email 25th June

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for your letter, and I welcome your organisation's support for truthfulness in media and political discussion.

You are right that I am not very familiar with protest movements, but I am more familiar with them than you may think, and I have had to think quite a lot about the application of terrorism legislation and criminal law in the context of protest.

You can read my analysis in relation to the pro-Gaza demonstrations (Nov 2023) here: [IRTL-Terrorism-and-Protests.pdf](#). My conclusion was that terrorism legislation should not be expanded, as was being suggested at the time. I was also on R4 Today this morning at c0750 talking about the Bob Vylan concert at Glastonbury (I am sceptical about the criminal law being applicable here). If you follow me on Twitter you can read my analysis of the proposed proscription of Palestine Action and why, in my view, it is within the bounds of acceptability (@terrowatchdog).

One of the principal lines I take is that terrorism legislation must be threat neutral. The correctness or otherwise of the political or religious or ideological cause that is being pursued is irrelevant. I am sceptical about people who say this cannot be terrorism because their cause is just or the people involved are brave. I think you fail to recognise that many extreme causes, for example on the extreme right wing, are considered by their adherents as saving people or getting justice.

You make a number of points about the risk of the misuse of strong terrorism powers, and ask me to consider how the powers are used. This is inevitably a question of fact and detail (unless the view is taken, as it is by some, that any divergence from the ordinary criminal law is wrong). I set out my conclusions in a lot of detail in my annual reports - all publicly available. I don't claim to be a perfect oracle but my view is that if I am open and public, then that is at least something, and I am grateful that you got in touch as a result of my Policy Exchange speech.

I won't take up your offer to meet on the back of your letter, which is quite wide-ranging, but I am happy to reconsider if there are any particular matters touching on the application of terrorism legislation.

Best wishes

Jonathan