

Dear friend,

The new weekly email has only been going for a fortnight and I'm already straying from the schedule, but I thought this was too important to wait until next week.

Before I was elected to parliament, I was a human rights lawyer. I represented people with complaints against the police and was chairperson of human rights charity Liberty.

As an MP, I appreciate I have to balance the rights of suspects against everyone's safety and security. Terrorism attacks our most fundamental right: the right to life. Living and working in London, the people I represent are perhaps at particular risk.

So it's a difficult balance to strike - and a subject that rightly arises strong opinions on both sides. My job is to listen to my constituents, do my best to influence the proposals and ultimately decide how to vote.

In 2005, I voted against Tony Blair's proposal that pre-charge detention be extended to 90 days. I also proposed that the limit be set at 28 days, which became the current law.

To me, the key questions are: how much time is required by the police to obtain and consider the evidence before deciding whether someone should be charged or released? And what checks are in place to ensure that the power of detention is not abused?

It's clear that terrorist operations are constantly increasing in complexity and scale. Just compare recent attacks and plots against say how the IRA operated in the 1970s. The use of modern technology to communicate securely across the world. The use of multiple languages and dialects. Operations being organised and directed on a global scale.

Obtaining and decrypting evidence has become more complex as the terrorist leaders try to stay ahead of our security services. As technology advances, this trend is going to continue.

This is not just the view of faceless security experts. The five most senior police officers in the UK agree. So does Lord Alex Carlile, the universally-respected Lib Dem peer who acts as the independent reviewer of how terrorism legislation is working.

I believe we need to respond to this challenge, but in a way that ensures any new powers are only used when truly justified. In my view, the original proposal from the government didn't achieve this.

To their credit (and unlike in 2005) both the Prime Minister and Home Secretary have been genuinely attempting to reach a consensus among MPs, civil liberty groups and other interested parties. For example, last month I brought the Home Secretary to Tooting so she could discuss this issue with local community leaders.

I've spent a lot of time lobbying the government, resulting in a number of improvements to the legislation. I'm particularly pleased that the government has agreed to a compensation package for anyone released without charge after being detained for more than 28 days.

Taken together, the changes mean that the higher detention limit can only be used in exceptional circumstances. It will be temporary and subject to the approval of parliament and stringent judicial safeguards.

Bringing forward these proposals was never going to make the government more popular. So why did the Cabinet decide to do so? Simply put, because being in government brings responsibilities.

It's much better to have this debate now, rather than rush something through parliament to help the police investigate a terrorist atrocity – or worse, when they are trying to foil an expected attack. Based on my background in human rights law, I judged that the final proposal contained sufficient safeguards. That is why I voted for this legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Sadiq

To read more about my work in our community and in Westminster, read my diary by clicking [HERE](#)

#### **CONTACTING ME**

I hold four advice surgeries every month around the constituency. For more information about making an appointment and how to contact me click [HERE](#).

Whether it's a local issue or government policy, I'm here to help (whatever your politics). Click [HERE](#) for details of how to contact or meet me.

For more details on my work for Tooting constituency residents, please see my website: [www.sadiqkhan.org.uk](http://www.sadiqkhan.org.uk).

If you've been forwarded this email by a friend and would like to sign-up to receive it directly in future, please email [sadiqkhan@sadiqkhan.org.uk](mailto:sadiqkhan@sadiqkhan.org.uk) with 'Sign me up' in the subject box.

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