



## World news

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# Clarke reveals terror deportation rules

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The government today substantially expanded its criteria for deporting or excluding foreign nationals it believes pose a threat to the national interest.

The home secretary, Charles Clarke, outlined the new guidelines following a three-week consultation period with faith groups - which saw the government drop one of its more controversial definitions of unacceptable behaviour.

That was a clause specifying views "which the government considers to be extreme and that conflict with the UK's culture of tolerance".

The list, which the Home Office says is "indicative rather than exhaustive", will cover any foreign-born national "writing, producing, publishing or distributing material, public speaking including preaching, running a website; or using a position of responsibility such as teacher, community or youth leader to express views which foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs; seek to provoke others to terrorist acts; foment other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK."

Although the list does not give the home secretary more powers to deport extremists than he currently enjoys, it specifies behaviours which will define the

basis of "not conducive to the public good."

A new wave of deportations - in addition to those already announced and the refusal to readmit the cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed to the UK - are expected to follow shortly.

Mr Clarke said: "As I said when the consultation started, we recognise the sensitivities around the use of these powers and intend to use them in a measured and targeted way. These powers are not intended to stifle free speech or legitimate debate about religions or other issues. Britain is rightly proud of its openness and diversity and we must not allow those driven by extremism of any sort to destroy that tradition."

But he said he intended to move "very quickly" to begin the process of deportations and exclusions.

"We have a number of names that we are considering at the moment. All our foreign posts throughout the world are looking at their particular country," he said.

"Of course, we have got the names that are widely in the public domain at the moment, people who the media are looking at who we will be considering in due course now I have published the list."

A database of those deemed to have breached the behaviour code anywhere around the world will be circulated to immigration officials at UK entry points, allowing them to bar admission to the UK to those on the list.

Although the measures have been given a cautious welcome by both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, human rights lawyers have expressed concerns about deporting individuals to countries accused of human rights abuses.

The European convention on human rights - incorporated into UK law - forbids such deportations, something the government hopes to circumvent by bilateral "memorandums of understanding" with such states.

However, Manfred Nowak, the UN special rapporteur on torture, said such assurances were "not an appropriate tool to eradicate this risk".

Gareth Crossman, the policy director of Liberty, today told the BBC that the civil rights group shared concerns about the assurances. "Of course they can give assurances, but what we would like to see is that those assurances are corroborated by some independent international body, such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch or indeed the UN, which has its own committee against torture," he said.

A Home Office spokesman defended the policy, saying: "We believe a memorandum of understanding is a good example of the sort of international cooperation necessary to confront and defeat terrorism."

David Davis, the shadow home secretary, said the Tories had been calling for the measures for a long time. He called on Mr Clarke to use them "robustly and effectively".

The Lib Dems' home affairs spokesman, Mark Oaten, said: "We broadly welcome the use of powers to deport people, as long as the individuals involved have a right to appeal and the case for deportation is reasonable.

"It would have been unacceptable to deport people on the basis of a lack of general commitment to UK values or to remove the right of appeal, both ideas that were suggested by the prime minister."

The London mayor, Ken Livingstone, however, warned of the dangers of banning controversial clerics, such as Dr Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who has defended Palestinian suicide bombers, and whom he invited to the capital last year.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that if the new measures were applied against people like him, "there will be very few Muslim scholars or leaders that will ever be admitted to Britain because the vast majority of Muslims identify with the struggle of the Palestinian people".

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) said it was "alarmed" at the Home Office list.

It warned that the new grounds for deportation amounted to the "criminalisation of thought, conscience and belief".

It said that the plan was based on the "fallacy" that foreign preachers who could not speak English were responsible for radicalising British youths who spoke only English.

The IHRC chairman, Massoud Shadjareh, said: "The fact that Mr Clarke's final list is almost identical to his initial proposals, despite numerous objections from interested parties, makes a total mockery of the consultation process."

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