

Sack civil servants who gave funding to Islamist extremists, says expert

Oooh, this is music to my ears, being one of those officials who were made superfluous in 2008 (from other departments as well as the Home Office) to make way for inexpensive youngsters who would increase diversity. From [The Times](#) and Arab News

[LONDON: UK](#) Prevent program officials who have overseen the public funding of Muslim groups that promote extremism should be sacked, a counterterrorism expert has said in [The Times](#) newspaper.

Prof. Ian Acheson, a senior adviser to the Counter Extremism Project, which contributed to the long-delayed Shawcross review of the government's anti-extremism Prevent program due to be released this week, called for a stricter approach to Muslim groups that "undermine social cohesion."

The review, led by William Shawcross, is [expected to criticize Prevent](#) for using its \$48 million fund to provide money to controversial groups, ostensibly to support religious and community moderation in the UK.

Acheson, a former prison governor who published a review of Islamist extremism in UK jails in 2016, criticized Prevent's "mission creep," arguing that "'securitizing' growing numbers of young people for thoughts that will not translate into actions is a waste of time and scarce resources."

Professor Ian Acheson, who is now a senior adviser to the Counter Extremism Project, said the UK should take a far tougher approach to non-violent Islamist groups who "undermine social cohesion" by spreading hatred.

Acheson writes in today's Times: "There will also be huge concern at the Home Office with Shawcross detailing how Prevent funding has been given to those who have used it to undermine the effectiveness of the programme.

"Inexplicably we lag behind other European governments – Austria for one example – who take a much dimmer view of non-violent Islamist groups who undermine social cohesion. Delegitimising our counterterror strategy is an article of faith with some of these groups.

"We need to trace these funding decisions right back to the officials who made them. There must be accountability, if only on behalf the huge numbers of British Muslims in this country who are wrongly associated with those who preach division and attack moderate Islam." *He has to add that caveat but more and more people are realising that peaceable Muslims are tolerant and decent despite their religion, not because of it, due to some natural core of decency nurtured by what a Christian would recognise as the Holy Spirit, other religions as their moving deity and humanists as a natural condition.*

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He cited statistics showing that despite a surge in referrals in recent years – including 2,127 boys classed as "vulnerable" – a majority of terror attacks in the UK since the program's launch were carried out by individuals known to the program.

He writes further in The Times

We also pointed to the unseemly scramble, which has almost turned into a preoccupation, of senior figures in our security establishment to equate the threat posed by far-right neo-fascists with the pre-eminent risk to this country's national

security: Islamist extremism. While this sort of cosy comparison plays well with the chattering classes, it has real-life consequences. It is not surprising to see this narrative feed into the prevention sphere, where referrals to Prevent for extreme right-wing ideology have now overtaken that of Islamism. Put bluntly, however difficult this is for officials the body count does not lie.

As I have mentioned here more than once I have been required to undertake AND PASS several courses concerning safeguarding of children and young people required by my diocese and another activity. In order to achieve the pass I have had to click 'agree' that I would turn in to the authorities any boy (the case examples are usually boys, and white English ones) expressing views similar to those that I hold myself, and which are still mainstream opinions outside the chattering classes bubble.

He ends – Shawcross has done the state some service at some cost to his reputation, maligned by some figures. Politicians must not let him down.