



Monday 14th December 2015

Press Release

National Black Police Association

Immigration Bill 2015 - 'An unwelcome return to the bad old days of SUS Laws'

- **NBPA: Bill would make police 'whipping boy of the immigration service'**
- **Shami Chakrabarti: Government should listen to those who have to 'clean up the mess'**

The National Black Police Association (NBPA) has warned that the Immigration Bill 2015 will see the police become the 'whipping boy of the immigration service'.

The Bill, which will have its second reading in the House of Lords on 22 December, introduces a series of proposals, including:

- restrictions on migrants' access to residential tenancies, driving and bank accounts
- landlords given powers to evict tenants who do not have a 'right to rent'
- banks carrying out immigration status checks on current account holders
- new powers to search for and seize driving licences held by irregular migrants
- creation of a new offence of 'driving whilst unlawfully in the UK'

The NBPA believes that the introduction of this draconian legislation would set back the hard work undertaken by the police and in particular the National Black Police Association to improve community and race relations – relations which are hard to build and easy to destroy.

The potential impact of this legislation will be an undermining of community cohesion and a stirring up of racial hatred and suspicion between different racial and religious groups. Furthermore, there is the very real danger that the proposals contained in this Bill will be exploited by far right groups and those involved in neighbourhood disputes in a malicious and vexatious manner. This will undermine community cohesion and create divisiveness and tension within communities.

Janet Hills, President of the National Black Police Association said:

"This proposed draconian legislation is a sad and worrying given the strides that have been taken to legitimize the use of stop and search. The Home Secretary, who has been very progressive and vocal in championing historic concerns held by the NBPA and black and minority ethnic communities on the use of stop and search, now appears to be operating under stealth.

"The divisive nature of the proposed legislation creates the conditions for making every person of colour in the UK a priori suspect, and a potential illegal immigrant. If enacted, this legislation will return the UK back to the bad old days of the SUS laws.

"The NBPA believes that this is a dangerous and toxic precedent to follow – especially when we recall the tragic death of Joy Gardner in 1993. It will create a culture of suspicion and a fertile ground for discrimination, harassment and injustice to flourish, threatening our rights and freedoms. The NBPA believes that the proposals contained in the Immigration Bill are populist and crude and will result in the police becoming the whipping boy for the immigration service."

Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty, said:

“The Immigration Bill would wreck race relations that black police officers and others have worked so hard to improve. New offences and stop, search and seizure powers will turn police into an in-country border force.

“Before turning the clocks back to the bad old days of disharmony and distrust, the Government should listen to those who will have to clean up the mess.”

The police service is a visible organisation, which works with and within communities. The NBPA is an integral part of the police service. It is inevitable that the police will bear the burden of hostility around the impact of the proposed legislation. This could potentially have an adverse impact on the numbers of BME recruits to the police and the reporting of crime, and contribute to severely damaging police community relations.

Note to Editors

Janet Hills, President of the National Black Police Association (NBPA) will be presenting the views of the NBPA on the Immigration Bill to the All Parliamentary Group on Migration on Monday 14th December at 17:00 - 18:00, in Portcullis House. The APPG, is chaired by Paul Bloomfield MP.

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