

Rt Hon. The Lord Strathclyde CH
Chair of the Constitution Committee
House of Lords
Palace of Westminster
London
SW1A 0PW

20 July 2026

Dear Lord Strathclyde,

NATIONAL SECURITY (STATE THREATS) BILL

Thank you for the Constitution Committee's report on the National Security (State Threats) Bill on 24 June. I am grateful to the Committee for its consideration of the Bill and for highlighting a number of constitutional issues arising from its provisions.

I am writing to respond to a number of the points raised in the Committee's report.

Fast-tracking

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that Parliament is provided with a clear justification whenever legislation is fast-tracked. As the Committee notes, I set out the case for urgency in more detail during Second Reading in the House of Lords.

The Bill responds to a gap in the legislative framework identified by Jonathan Hall KC in his report of May 2025.. It was in response to a series of heinous antisemitic arson attacks in north London that the Prime Minister committed to bringing the Bill forward within weeks. The Bill was included in the King's Speech in May and brought forward in both Houses at the earliest opportunity.

The Islamic Movement of Companions of the Right (IMCR), otherwise known as Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamiyah, have publicly claimed seven attacks at UK locations linked to Jewish and Israeli communities, and Persian-language media, including the antisemitic arson attack on four Hatzolah ambulances in Golders Green on 23 March.

On 13 July, the Foreign Secretary made a Written Ministerial Statement regarding those attacks which made clear that sitting behind IMCR were members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Qods Force, who almost certainly directed IMCR attacks across Europe.

By fast-tracking this legislation, the Government has been able to act quickly to lay the statutory instruments necessary to designate IMCR and those behind them in Iran's IRGC. Designation will make it an offence to support or assist those organisations.

Use of the Made Affirmative Procedure for Designations

The made affirmative procedure allows, in exceptional circumstances, for the Secretary of State to designate bodies without prior approval of both Houses. Instead, both Houses must approve a statutory instrument within 28 or 40 sitting days. This is reserved for where there is an urgent operational need to designate a body, and whereby waiting for parliamentary approval could be significantly detrimental to national security. This provision mirrors the arrangements for terrorism proscription under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Designating multiple bodies under a single Statutory Instrument

We recognise the Committee's concern that designating more than one body in single Statutory Instrument affects how the Home Secretary's decisions are scrutinised in Parliament. Grouping organisations is long established practice in terrorism proscription and ensures that we make the best use of limited Parliamentary time, particularly where there is an urgent operational need to act.

We will take a case-by-case approach in the future. However, it is important to be able to act quickly and decisively in the interests of national security.

Humanitarian assistance and safeguards

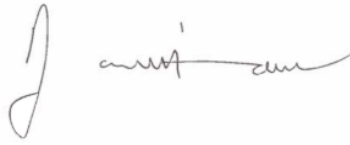
The Committee noted that the Government had stated that the offences are without prejudice to humanitarian assistance, while observing that this was not expressly reflected on the face of the Bill.

During the Bill's passage, Ministers listened carefully to concerns raised by parliamentarians, humanitarian organisations and NGOs regarding the potential impact of the offences on legitimate humanitarian activity. Although the Government has always been clear that the offences were not intended to, and do not give effect to criminalise legitimate humanitarian assistance, Ministers concluded that it would be preferable to put the matter beyond doubt and guard against any perceived chilling effect.

To that end, the Government supported amendments introducing specific defences to ensure that legitimate humanitarian aid activity is protected. These amendments provide additional reassurance and ensure that there should be no uncertainty regarding the treatment of such activity under the legislation.

I hope this provides the reassurance you sought.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hanson', written on a light blue rectangular background.

Rt Hon Lord Hanson of Flint
Minister of State