

FINAL

July 2010

Issued by Mattison Public Relations on behalf of Sweet & Maxwell

Ten years of the Terrorism Act 2000

- 13% of those arrested under Act prosecuted for terrorism
- But ratio deteriorates rapidly to just 4% in the last year

In the ten years since the Terrorism Act 2000 was introduced just 12.9%* of people arrested under the Act have subsequently been prosecuted for terrorist-related offences, according to statistics obtained by Sweet & Maxwell, the leading legal information service.

That ratio has deteriorated in the last year with only 3.9% of those arrested under the Act being prosecuted for terrorist-related offences (eight prosecutions out of 207 arrests in the year to Dec 31 2009).

Sweet & Maxwell says that there have been 1,817 arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 since it was introduced but these arrests have only led to 235 convictions for crimes related to terrorism.*

The Terrorism Act 2000 gave police substantial new powers of arrest and detention of suspects without charge (see details below).

Stephen Grosz, Head of Public Law and Human Rights at law firm Bindmans LLP and co-author of *Human Rights: Judicial Protection in the United Kingdom*, published by Sweet & Maxwell, comments: "The concern has always been that most individuals arrested under the draconian powers of the Terrorism Act 2000 could have been dealt with just as effectively under other areas of criminal law."

"These statistics do suggest that the police may have been far quicker to make use of powers of arrest under the Act than was necessary."

"Nobody should underplay the threat of terrorism but the Government and the police need to ensure that the civil liberties of a rising number of individuals are not being unnecessarily curtailed."

Sweet & Maxwell, a Thomson Reuters company, explain that the Terrorism Act 2000, which received Royal Assent on 20th July 2000:

- Provided power to outlaw an organisation which encourages, promotes or prepares for acts of terrorism. It also made it an offence to arrange a meeting in support of an outlawed organisation, wear clothes or carry articles in public which arouse suspicion that an individual is a member of the outlawed organisation.

- Allowed the seizure money or other property likely to be used for the purposes of terrorism.
- Gave the police the power to arrest and detain a person without charge for 48 hours if they were suspected of being a terrorist, which could be extended to up to 7 days if the police could persuade a judge that it was necessary for further questioning. This was extended to 28 days in 2006.
- The police had the power to stop and search, although unlike existing stop and search powers the police did not have to have reasonable suspicion or warrant to suggest that an offence had been committed.

**Data from the Home Office - figures for the first six months not available

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

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Press enquiries:

Stephen Grosz
Head of Public Law and Human Rights
Bindmans LLP
Tel: 020 7833 4433
Mobile: 07803 126 589

Peter Wylie
Corporate Communications Manager
Sweet & Maxwell
Tel: 020 7393 7123

Nick Mattison or Nick Croysdill
Mattison Public Relations
Tel: 020 7645 3636