

[INSERT ADDRESS]

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary,

CONTROL ORDERS

I very much welcome your government's early commitment to urgently review the control order regime. A regime as unsafe and as unfair as control orders cannot however be improved through review and possible amendment. The introduction of further judicial 'safeguards' would, for example, not make this rotten scheme right.

I am writing therefore to urge that you consider the swift transfer of all remaining control order case files to the Crown Prosecution Service for decisions on whether individuals should be charged or released. Once such decisions have been made the control order regime – only ever intended to be temporary - must be urgently abolished. In Opposition both your party and your coalition partners opposed the introduction of control orders. I am particularly encouraged by your own personal vote against their introduction. I am also encouraged that neither party now in Government has voted for the renewal of the policy in over three years. Indeed both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have consistently made clear their principled objections to the control order regime.

Needless to say, as a result of the scheme's dehumanising and punitive sanctions, the human cost of control orders continues to mount. These orders affect not only the suspects who have become suicidal under house arrest; they have also destroyed the lives of the wives and children of these men.

Indefinite punishment without charge or trial on the basis of secret evidence has no place in a liberal democracy. And as well as undermining the fair trial rights and the presumption of innocence, control orders also fail to protect the public from individuals who may be genuinely dangerous. Those we are told may wish to do us harm can easily remove their plastic tags, disappear and do their worst. Already a number of suspects on control orders have absconded. Proper criminal trials and custodial sentences for the guilty have shown to be far more effective at protecting the public than the use of control orders. The new coalition's other early and welcome commitment to consider ways to allow the use of intercept evidence in court would only bolster the effectiveness of criminal prosecutions.

Your government has promised to be strong in defence of freedom. Scrapping one of the worst legacies of the 'War on Terror' would demonstrate beyond any doubt the strength of your purpose.

Yours sincerely,

[INSERT NAME]