

11:27 AM PDT, August 5, 2005

latimes.com : [World News](#)

Print E-mail story Most e-mailed Change text size

Blair Proposes Stricter Deportation Rules Against Terrorism

From Associated Press

LONDON -- Prime Minister Tony Blair proposed strict anti-terror measures today that would allow Britain to expel foreigners who preach hatred, close extremist mosques and bar entry to Muslim radicals. "The rules of the game are changing" following last month's bomb attacks, he declared.

The proposals, which also target extremist Web sites and bookshops, are aimed primarily at excluding radical Islamic clerics accused of whipping up hatred and violence among vulnerable, disenfranchised Muslim men.

ADVERTISEMENT

"We are angry. We are angry about extremism and about what they are doing to our country, angry about their abuse of our good nature," Blair said. "We welcome people here who share our values and our way of life. But don't meddle in extremism because if you meddle in it ... you are going back out again."

The July 7 suicide attacks on London's transit system and the failed July 21 attacks stunned Britons, and raised fresh concern about the freedoms Britain offers to individuals and groups known for extremist activities. Blair said the focus of the anti-terror proposals was on foreigners because authorities believe "the ideological drive and push is coming from the outside."

But some members of Britain's 1.8 million-strong Muslim community expressed concern that moderate Muslims would be subjected to new prejudices and restrictions.

Britain has been criticized for lagging behind its European neighbors in responding to the growing threat of terrorism. Since last month's attacks, France has expelled two extremist Muslim prayer leaders and plans to ship home eight others. Italian authorities deported eight Palestinian imams.

Some British officials feel human rights legislation has hampered Britain's ability to deport foreigners. As a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, Britain is not allowed to deport people to a country where they may face torture or death.

Blair is hoping that by winning pledges from countries that deportees would not be subjected to inhumane treatment, Britain can take a tougher line. An agreement has already been reached with Jordan, and London is talking to Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt.

The prime minister said some of the measures will require legislation and that he would consider asking Parliament to reconvene next month -- rather than October -- to take up the proposals. Other measures, such as broadening the grounds for deportation, can be enacted immediately, but likely will face court tests.

Blair said the government was prepared to amend human rights legislation if legal challenges proved insurmountable.

Under the proposals, anyone who preaches hatred or violence could be deported, those linked to terrorism would be automatically refused asylum and steps would be taken to make it easier to strip naturalized citizens of their British citizenship if they preached violence.

The government also will consider a request from police and security services to hold terror suspects for three months without charge. The limit is 14 days. The measures also would extend the use of home arrest for Britons who can't be deported.

New powers would be created to allow the closure of mosques that foment extremism.

Authorities will draw up lists of radical preachers who will not be allowed to enter Britain, and a list of radical Web sites and bookstores. Any foreigner who "actively engages" with those places could face deportation.

Membership in extremist Islamic groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir would also become a crime, as would glorifying terrorism.

VIDEO



British Prime Minister Tony Blair
(AP)
August 5, 2005
(Windows Media)

WORLD

[In Niger, Hunger Hits Crisis Level](#)
[Israeli on Bus Kills 4 Arabs](#)
[Four Weeks On, London Teems With Police](#)
[Jafari Offers Security Plan for Iraq Amid Talk of U.S. Pullback](#)
[Bird Flu May Hit Europe, Russia Says](#)
[World section >](#)

MOST E-MAILED

[How Bush thinks: intuition over intellect](#)
[The myths of Hiroshima](#)
[New Chapter in the Mystery of Marilyn: Her Own Words?](#)
[> more e-mailed stories](#)

RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

[Europe](#)
[United Kingdom](#)
[World News](#)

 Powered by [Topix.net](#)

[CLICK HERE](#) to have Times news sent to your inbox

[SIGN UP NOW](#) FOR HOME DELIVERY!


It isn't immediately clear how the measures would have affected those suspected of carrying out last month's attacks. Three of the suspected July 7 bombers, who killed 56 people including themselves, were Pakistani Britons; the fourth moved from Jamaica as a child. At least three of the four men in custody for allegedly carrying out the botched attacks July 21 were immigrants from East Africa.

The proposals, however, could affect their ideological leaders, as well as people such as jailed Egyptian-born cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri, who allegedly encouraged the killings of Jews and other non-Muslims and is wanted in the United States, and Omar Mahmoud abu Omar, a Palestinian Islamic extremist better known as Abu Qatada.

Sheikh Omar Bakri, who has frequently shrugged off allegations that he preaches extremism, criticized Blair's proposals, particularly suggestions that he could be targeted for remarks made years ago.

"If they believed what I said was illegal, why didn't they arrest me at the time, they know my work well," he told The Associated Press. "However, I feel I've done a great service for Muslims. I've addressed the anger and frustration so many youth feel." He said if asked to go, he would return to Lebanon rather than challenge the decision.

Iqbal Sacranie, who heads the Muslim Council of Britain, said the group would be seeking more details from Blair, but his early response was concern. "Our democratic values need to be upheld, not undermined," he said.

"No one should have the right to close down an institution such as a mosque, it will only ignite further anger and frustration in the hearts and minds of Muslims," Ajmal Masroor of the Islamic Society of Britain told The Associated Press.

Other Muslims called the proposals long overdue. "Day after day these lunatics on our behalf ... are really messing up our lives here," Omar Farooq, also of the Islamic Society of Britain, told the British Broadcasting Corp.



If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at latimes.com/archives.

TMSReprints

Article licensing and reprint options

Copyright 2005 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)
[Home Delivery](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#)

PARTNERS:  