



## AUSSIE ISLAMIC LEADERS UNITE AGAINST TERRORISM

Peter Adamis 2 July 2014

The news is good and it demonstrates the Abbotts government mature approach to dealing with those who are and were intent on leaving Australia's shores to fight or partake in foreign wars.

What is also of a relief is the governments sensible and commonsense approach to empowering Law enforcement agencies with the appropriate powers to come to groups with and prevent Australians leaving Australian shores to become involved in a war that is not in the interests of Australia. Attorney-General George Brandis has been instrumental in consulting far and wide with Australia's Islamic leaders to ensure that what was being proposed and put into acting allayed the fears of Australia's Islamic communities.

This in its a huge step forward in coming to grips with, understand ding and implementing countermeasures against the many Islamic online social media sites that attempt to seduce and recruit young and naive men and women to their cause. This is certainly not the first time that Australians have left Australia to take up arms in another country and despite all of the counter and preventive measures it will still be somewhat difficult to police without infringing on the privacy and rights of Australian citizens. Still it's a positive step forward and we can only support such measures morally, ethically and in kind support.

We can first begin by reviewing our natural mistrust of Islam and of cultures and communities that appear alien to our way of life and try to understand them. Alternatively those of the Islamic faith would require to provide programmes that assist new arrivals into Australia to understand our way of life, our culture and what freedom means to us. Although programmes in the past have touched upon cultural differences and understanding of diverse communities, such programmes require reviewing and upgrading in order to keep abreast of government and world events that ultimately have indirect affect on Australia and its citizens. The Syrian Civil war, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lankan Civil war, the unrest in Africa amongst its many nations and the volatile Middle East with its myriad of problems.

Australia's early warning systems are based upon maritime, ASIS intelligence gathering, our overseas embassies, trade missions. I addition, Air and ocean data intelligence as well as gathering intelligence via electronic means within Australia by targeting individuals and communities of interests without intruding on the privacy of its citizens. . ASIO and DSD should be provided with sufficient and favourable resources to monitor, prevent and counter online cyber warfare attacks upon Australian business and it citizens.

According to public online media reports and from government websites, the Australian government has consistently provide advice to the general public and to government institutions of the rise in cyber crime and business intelligence that are not in the interests of Australia by non Australian security partners. All Australians should become savvy with their computers and upgrade their own skills and knowledge to ensure they are safeguarded against cyber crime and cyber warfare.



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## ISLAMIC LEADERS VOW TO COMBAT HOMEGROWN TERRORISM AS THEY MEET WITH GEORGE BRANDIS

ABC JAMES GLENDAY 2 July 2014

Islamic leaders say they will do what they can to stop young Australians heading overseas to fight alongside extremists, after meeting with Attorney-General George Brandis. Several clerics this morning met with Senator Brandis at Parliament House in Canberra to discuss the problem of so-called home-grown terrorism. Senator Brandis says about 60 Australians are currently fighting in Iraq and Syria, with dozens more supporting them. The Abbott Government says most do not want to return home, but claims those who do are likely to be up to "no good".

Senator Brandis told the senior Islamic leaders that they are important partners and he wants them to use their moral authority to stop young Muslims joining ISIS, or other militant groups, in the Middle East. "In your communities in particular you have a especially important role as moral leaders, as charismatic figures, as authority figures, as religious leaders," he said. "The issue here is not religion - the issue is extremism." He confirmed security and intelligence agencies are still monitoring about 150 Australians here and abroad. It comes as an Australian preacher who has emerged as one of the high-profile supporters of the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq claims he is heading to Syria.

Social media and internet pose problems for authorities. Senator Brandis describes social media and the internet as two of the Government's biggest problems as it tries to combat home-grown terrorism. The Coalition is introducing new legislation that will allow security and surveillance organisations to better track Australian jihadists and their associates online. The Islamic leaders were briefed on the bills during the meeting. Sheikh Mohamadu Saleem from the Australian National Imams Council says all Muslims are shocked that so many Australians are fighting overseas.

He says he wants to make sure the nation is protected from violent extremism. "We really appreciate the fact that you have recognised the role of the imams in peace building in this country," he said. "And of course we have discussed various ways of de-radicalising our youth. "And we have been of course instrument in the past encouraging youth to engage positively, rather than negatively, in Australia." Senator Brandis says the Government's legislation will help save young men from "radical ideology". He expects the bills, which are largely based on the recommendations of a report from Parliament's intelligence committee, to receive bipartisan support.

"We've had this bizarre situation up to now that two agencies, in particular ASIS and ASIO, may perhaps in a hypothetical case be working together but powers exercisable by one were not exercisable by the other, although it's a joint operation," he said. "So the effect of the legislation will be to break down those silos which have inhibited operability." The Opposition has welcomed the meeting and says it will work productively with the Government. But Labor's immigration spokesman Richard Marles says Senator Brandis should not have been the minister leading the meeting.

"To have the Attorney-General, the man who led the charge to amend the Racial Discrimination Act, which can only lead to greater prejudice to communities such as the Islamic community in Australia ... lead these discussions I think is extraordinary," he said. The Coalition says it will continue to consult with Islamic leaders as it introduces the laws.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/24368530/islamic-leaders-vow-to-combat-home-grown-terrorism-as-they-meet-with-george-brandis/>



### **GEORGE BRANDIS FLAGS SPY LAW CHANGES, PLEDGES TO PROTECT AUSTRALIA FROM RETURNING JIHADISTS**

THE AUSTRALIAN JULY 02, 2014 Sid Maher National Affairs Editor.

George Brandis met with Islamic leaders at Parliament House in Canberra. *Source:* News Corp Australia

ATTORNEY-General George Brandis has held talks with Islamic leaders ahead of introducing legislation into parliament aimed at modernising laws covering Australia's intelligence bodies. Senator Brandis said he would introduce the legislation into the Senate in two weeks to modernise telecommunications interception powers and enhance cooperation between intelligence agencies, and he expected the Labor Party's support.

The Attorney-General also said the Abbott government was holding talks on how to close gaps in legislation to allow the government to detain Australian passport holders suspected of extremist activity on their return to Australia. Senator Brandis said there were 60 Australians currently engaged in "war fighting" in Syria and Iraq, with about 150 involved as either participants or facilitators.

"The Abbott government is absolutely determined that the troubles in the Middle East will not have an impact on Australia's domestic population," Senator Brandis said. Speaking after the meeting with Islamic leaders at parliament house, Senator Brandis said the government regarded the leaders as "partners" in the fight against violent extremism.

Islamic leaders pledged to use the holy month of Ramadan to preach a peaceful message to their communities, saying the issue crossed cultural divides. "I'm sure everybody in Australia is concerned with people who are being attracted to their cause, and who sympathise with the struggles that they are having in the name of Islam," said Sheikh Mohamadu Saleem from the Australian National Imams Council.

The new laws follow recommendations from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in the previous parliament, which recommended expanded powers for ASIO to monitor computers. The committee also recommended surveillance powers be modernised and the ability of ASIO and ASIS to cooperate be enhanced. Senator Brandis said the legislation would not be the only legislative reform on national security that would be pursued by the government. He said he had been in talks with his opposition counterpart Mark Dreyfus on the issue.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/policy/george-brandis-flags-spy-law-changes-pledges-to-protect-australia-from-returning-jihadists/story-fn59nm2j-1226975163551>



## BRANDIS FLAGS CHANGES TO SPY POWERS

Wednesday, 2 July 2014

Australia's spy agencies could be given broader powers to prevent would-be jihadists from travelling abroad to fight in religious conflicts such as those in Syria and Iraq. Attorney-General George Brandis on Wednesday met with Islamic leaders in Canberra to outline the government's proposed changes, which will be introduced to parliament this month.

Around 60 Australians are known to be fighting with terrorist groups in Syria and northwestern Iraq, where the notorious Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) is waging a jihadist campaign. Senator Brandis said these Australians and around 90 others actively involved in the war-torn region posed a serious risk to national security and it was vital no others were allowed to join. 'The radical Islamist ideology propagated by organisations such as ISIL ... holds nothing for young Australians,' he told reporters in Canberra on Wednesday.

The government has partnered with Islamic community leaders - described by Senator Brandis as 'agents of peace' - to help discourage those influenced by radical groups from taking up arms. Senior sheikhs from across the country pledged to use the holy month of Ramadan to preach a peaceful message to their communities, saying this issue crossed cultural divides. 'I'm sure everybody in Australia is concerned with people who are being attracted to their cause, and who sympathise with the struggles that they are having in the name of Islam,' Sheikh Mohamadu Saleem from the Australian National Imams Council said.

The proposed legislation will primarily affect the powers extended to Australia's domestic spy agency ASIO and its overseas counterpart ASIS. Senator Brandis said the changes would break down the 'bizarre situation' whereby the two agencies couldn't exercise the same powers despite working together on a case. Amendments to freshen up the outdated telecommunications law are also expected, as are changes to terrorism provisions of the criminal code to ensure there are 'no gaps'.

The government wants to detain and charge Australians returning from battlefields abroad with terrorism crimes that carry stiff jail terms. There could be obstacles to this, but Senator Brandis said the government was 'absolutely determined' that Australians are protected from the troubles in the Middle East. Shadow attorney-general Mark Dreyfus had been consulted about the legislative changes and Labor's support was expected, he added.

<http://www.skynews.com.au/news/top-stories/2014/07/02/brandis-flags-changes-to-spy-powers.html>