

Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 195
Submission By: 
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name

Subject: Deep concerns regarding the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express serious concerns about the **Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026**.

I want to be clear from the outset: I absolutely support the goal of fighting antisemitism and keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals. These are important and legitimate aims.

However, I was raised in a cult, and that experience taught me something I carry with me every day: **freedom of speech is not abstract theory—it is a lifeline**. When governments gain the power to ban organisations, criminalise expressions, and punish people for what they say or recite, it is almost never the guilty who suffer first. It is ever the vulnerable, the minority, the unpopular, and the dissenter.

This bill, as drafted, uses a worthy cause to introduce several legal mechanisms that significantly expand executive power and threaten the very freedoms my community lacked.

The four most troubling aspects are:

1. Removing courts from Firearm Prohibition Orders (FPOs)

The bill gives the Police Commissioner sole power to issue FPOs and **removes the ability for courts to make or review them**. A Firearm Prohibition Order is not trivial—it can mean losing your licence, surrendering your firearms, and facing restrictions like curfews or bans from attending certain places. Currently, this requires a court. Under this bill, it becomes an administrative decision with no mandatory judicial oversight. That is a fundamental shift of power from the judiciary to the executive.

2. Criminalising speech, not just conduct

The bill creates offences for displaying or reciting "prohibited expressions"—a term not clearly defined in the legislation itself. This risks criminalising the quoting of religious texts, political discussion, or peaceful protest. Having been in an environment where speech was controlled, I know that once you criminalise expression, you give the state power over thought itself. This bill targets words, not just violent action.

3. Executive power to ban organisations

The bill allows the government to designate any group a "prescribed organisation" by regulation, without a specific criminal finding by a court. Displaying that group's symbol becomes a crime. This could be used against non-violent advocacy groups, religious minorities, or political opponents. A free society does not let the government ban organisations by decree.

4. Warrantless search powers

The bill expands "prescribed circumstances" for police to search people and vehicles without a warrant, linked to the new offences. This increases the risk of racial or religious profiling and further erodes the presumption of innocence.

In summary:

This bill uses the fight against antisemitism and gun crime as a vehicle to significantly expand police and executive powers while reducing judicial oversight. I have seen what happens when the state gains unchecked power over speech and association. It does not protect the vulnerable—it silences them.

The bill as drafted removes crucial safeguards. I am not asking you to oppose all action against hate speech or gun crime. I am asking you to amend the bill so that:

- *Courts, not the Police Commissioner alone, issue Firearm Prohibition Orders*
- *'Prohibited expressions' are clearly defined and require intent to incite imminent harm*
- *Organisations cannot be banned by executive decree without court oversight*
- *Symbols cannot be banned without parliamentary approval*
- *Warrantless searches require reasonable grounds and imminent threat*

These amendments would achieve the bill's goals while protecting the fundamental freedoms that matter most to those of us who have seen what happens when governments control speech.

Yours sincerely,

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