

EMBARGO: Not for publication before 6.30pm on Tuesday 24 October 2017



**‘We as a nation must not be terrified’ – Max Hill QC,
Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation**

London, 24 October 2017 – Max Hill QC will give the 2017 Tom Sargant Memorial Lecture on Tuesday 24 October, talking about his work as Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation. The event will be preceded by the JUSTICE Annual General Meeting, including the election of new members to the JUSTICE Board and Council.

During his fully booked lecture titled ‘Rights vs Security: the challenge engaged’ Max Hill QC will discuss the tension between rights on the one hand and security on the other and the potential for terrorism legislation, in the interests of national security, to impinge upon fundamental rights of the general population.

His speech will cover many aspects of the way the UK deals with terrorism, including sentencing. ‘Sentencing must fit the offence, but it must also be flexible according to the characteristics of the offender,’ he will say, while also arguing that wide discretion must rest with the experienced judiciary who try these cases. He questions whether in ‘more modest or middle ground terrorist offences’ there is a real need – as opposed to a political desire – to mark the offenders with far longer terms in jail.

When it comes to prosecution, Hill argues that there are already many ways of catching them and their criminal activity and that investigators and prosecutors need to be encouraged to use the full range of current powers at their disposal, including financial, identification, fraud, firearms, public order and conspiracy offences, in order to capture the full range of criminality represented by future cases.

‘These offences are all tried and tested, they sit solidly within the mass of general crime statutes, and terrorism neither deserves nor requires special treatment in the name of identifying criminal activity and bringing it before our courts,’ Hill will say.

Hill points out that many people within Muslim communities are already doing a great deal to combat terrorism and argues that there is an urgent need to address the feeling of lack of engagement within these communities: ‘A more proactive role ought to be taken by government at all levels to address wider concerns, and not just to engage with these communities when things have gone wrong.’

During his lecture, Hill will warn that ‘the struggle for national security must not be used as a stick to beat down the rights we hold dear. If that were to happen, terrorism would have prevailed.

‘We as a nation must not be terrified, nor must we allow our Parliament to enact measures that might make things worse not better.’

The Tom Sargant Lecture 2017 will take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24 October 2017, hosted by Shearman & Sterling LLP, 9 Appold St, London EC2A 2AP.

Notes for editors

1. Max Hill QC’s full Tom Sargant lecture is attached to this email and will be published on the JUSTICE website on 25 October 2017.

2. Now approaching its 60th anniversary, JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system – administrative, civil and criminal – in the United Kingdom. For more information about JUSTICE visit www.justice.org.uk.
3. The annual JUSTICE lecture is named after Tom Sargant who died in 1988 and was JUSTICE's Secretary from its foundation in 1957 to his retirement in 1982. As a result of his commitment, persistence and determination, JUSTICE played a key role in taking up the cause of miscarriage of justice cases. His tireless campaigning resulted in some 25 people being released, or released early, from prison. Tom also played a major role in bringing about other key measures such as the creation of the office of Ombudsman and the establishment of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Each year, JUSTICE recognises Tom's work by inviting a high profile speaker – from practice, the judiciary, academia or politics to speak at the Memorial Lecture.
4. Please direct all queries to Amy Hall, Communications Coordinator at JUSTICE on ahall@justice.org.uk and 0207 7626410.