

Letter from Westminster



Steve Brine:
Winchester MP

LAST Saturday's nightmare on the M3 was a reminder that the threats we face are becoming more complex and diverse.

I am very clear where blame lies for last weekend and that's with the individuals who threw something from a

bridge onto the motorway below.

We should praise our security and emergency services for the way they responded and, while it was right to close the M3, Highways England must account for their actions and honour the commitment they gave me to listen to those caught up and those of us who represent them about the lessons to be learned.

It could have been extremely serious but this time, for us at least, it turned out not to be terrorism related. But with terrorists and criminals innovating quickly to stay ahead of law enforcement, so must we.

So turning to the wider point, about extremism and the way the web is used to spread ideas and know-how, I think the Prime Minister Theresa May is right to call on internet firms to do more to stop the spread of terrorist material online.

Terrorists and extremists have sought to misuse online platforms to spread their hateful messages for too long. The UK has been instrumental in establishing the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism which aims to end the internet as a safe space in which terrorists can hide.

To be fair to them, internet companies are making progress. Twitter suspended 299,649 accounts between January and June this year and since 2010, social media providers have removed 280,000 pieces of illegal terrorist material in the UK.

However, terrorist groups are aware that links to their propaganda are being removed more quickly, and are placing a greater emphasis on disseminating content at speed to stay ahead. That is why the Prime Minister used her keynote address at the United Nations to call on industry to go further and faster to remove vile terrorist content.

She has called on internet giants to look to develop new technology to stop extremist content from appearing in the first place and she has joined with the leaders of Italy and France to say where terrorist content does appear, internet firms should have a target of two hours for taking it down. This is the period during which most of the material is disseminated.

To help, the Home Secretary Amber Rudd has announced an additional £24 million for counter-terrorism policing. We are determined to do all we can to stay ahead of those who seek to harm us.

Steve Brine
MP for Winchester & Chandler's
Ford

28.9.17