

THE MUSLIM ASSOCIATION OF BRITAIN

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CHARING CROSS
GLASGOW
G3 6DT



Chief Constable John Vine
Tayside Police
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Dear Mr Vine

Special Branch Community Contact Unit

I write regarding the above division within your force, which has been coming to my attention time and again over the last few months. I have received numerous complaints including for example:

- Members of the Muslim community being questioned without cause
- Reports of officers turning up at the doors of young Muslims to ask questions
- Reports of officers turning up at the doors of members of the Dundee University Islamic Society to ask questions
- Muslim-owned businesses being targeted for questioning
- That during a DUIS event, one of the officers who was speaking there urged the audience of university students that if they couldn't speak English, they should take classes
- Young people being questioned about their political opinions e.g. the situation in Lebanon
- Freshers stalls being approached and questioned without officers identifying themselves

Additionally, Detective Sergeant Mark Charnley was quoted in the Sunday Herald on 11 June 2006 saying that school teachers should be looking for signs of "stronger religious faith" in children as a sign of "extremism".

I'm sure you can understand that these stories have been percolating around the community, leading to a feeling of apprehension about police activity and where this will all end up. Parents are now anxious about their children going to the mosque and taking part in religious activity for fear of catching the eye of Special Branch. I'm sure you can agree that this is not an ideal consequence of police activity.

We have to question these highly visible tactics employed by the SBCCU by also asking why they have been employed. Relations from what I can see are now strained between Tayside Police and the Muslim community, worse than any other force in Scotland. I know the Dundee Muslim community well and see no call for such an anti-terror focus in the city. As far as we can read, there has been no specific threat and indeed no arrests to date there.

As such it is difficult not to conclude that the SBCCU's activities have been unwarranted, unjustified and counterproductive. Anti-terror activity should be intelligence led, not led by the creed or race of people.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you further. I look forward to your comments.

Yours sincerely,

Osama Saeed
Scottish representative