

UK Veterans-One Voice

Dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Theresa May.

Firstly on behalf of all our members may we congratulate on your role and appreciate the heady times ahead.

As the previous Home Office Minister we are unaware if your attention has been brought to our group but we have written in the past to your predecessor.

UK Veterans-One Voice was initially formed on the news of Paratroopers who were involved in The Bloody Sunday Events in the 1970's.

Ex-servicemen now in their 60/70's were being arrested and taken to police stations, in some instances these Veterans were living in Northern Ireland and no one knew of their military past until the police knocked on the door, this has now raised concerns amongst the Veteran community for the safety of these individuals.

It is confusing that in the past The Good Friday agreement was passed allowing former IRA personnel to avoid prosecution, prison sentences were dropped and terrorists released.

We are aware of your own history with Terrorism and how you have defended this country by deporting known terrorists.

As our Prime Minister we are asking you to protect where possible the very servicemen and women who have protected this country.

Recently ex and current serving personnel have been accused quizzed and charged over alleged allegations whilst serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We at UK Veterans-One Voice marched to Downing Street and handed in a letter outlining our displeasure and validity over such claims. Mr Cameron responded publicly by calling them "Ambulance chasers with spurious claims" and we have been made aware that over 650 cases have now been dropped, the law firm themselves are being interviewed and that over £59 million pounds of tax payers' money was spent on these false charges.

During this time the news on the Para's was none existent until recently, as such there is again displeasure within the Veteran community that those who took the oath to defend this country, who carried out the orders that were given by those in authority are the very ones who face custodial sentences.

Any Veteran will tell you that they are prepared to sacrifice their life for Queen and Country and are now being sacrificed by the same Country in the Courts is this justifiable.

Our Armed Forces are a credit to this country, we are not conscripted, we volunteer, we choose to join and are proud to do so, we are trained to be the best and this has been proven in not only conflict but in peace keeping missions, assisting during the recent floods and back in the 1970's by covering the Dustbin and Fire strikes. We follow and always will follow any orders dictated by either the Queen or the Government.

Our worry now is that any future serviceman/woman would think twice before joining, what appears to be a good opportunity to learn a trade could turn into a knock on the door some 30 to 40 years later and arrested and facing prison, all for carrying out orders.

PTSD is now unfortunately a major factor for those who have been in conflict; a lot cope with it but how many cases of PTSD will be triggered by Veterans wondering if there is a knock on the door simply for obeying orders.

How do families of Veterans cope knowing their Son/Husband/Father etc. has been arrested for alleged offences, what will they think that person did, how will the public perceive our Armed Forces in future, as peace protectors or thugs with a licence ?

We are proud to know that our training means we are protectors of the peace, defenders of the faith and Her Majesty.

We ask that in your power you extend the Good Friday Agreement to both sides or retract the Agreement and continue with the prosecution of known terrorists, the same terrorists

Who currently hold parliamentary seats yet refuse to divulge where bodies of our soldiers lay in unmarked graves in Ireland.

Every member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces did what they were ordered to do and now face prosecution for this, this is wrong and has to stop and we implore you do so.

We have spoken to many Veterans who agree that should our Queen or Country call, we would gladly bear arms and defend but again we repeat, will the next generation be so quick to state the words "I bear allegiance to Her Majesty The Queen even knowing I may be imprisoned for carrying out orders".

We appreciate no one is above the law and do not condone those who have carried out criminal acts, but we expect those who obeyed orders as stated in The Queens Regulations not to be prosecuted for the same.

We have carried out numerous marches already and will continue to do so until our Veterans are free from prosecution.

Finally, on each occasion we have been supported by and proud to be associated with The Ghurkha's who are fighting for equal rights, we believe this should not have to be a fight but taken for granted that they are equal.

A Ghurkha is a proud man, who as a teenager goes through a selection procedure that many of our own would fail, they have supported our Country for the last 201 years, they have been in every conflict we have taken part in, always at the front and a common sentence heard from thousands of British Servicemen has been "Thank God I had a Ghurkha at my side"

Everyone knows they are Nepalese but they come over to defend the United Kingdom, a country they would never have normally seen, proud to protect it, proud to be in the British Army and would be even prouder to return home after service, unfortunately due to the reduced pay and pension they receive, home is somewhere they cannot go.

Thank you for listening to our grievance

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