# Home Affairs Select Committee dismisses claims of two-tier policing as baseless



A recent report by the Home Affairs Select Committee has alarmingly dismissed claims of a "two-tier" policing system following last summer's riots, deeming such assertions as "disgraceful" and "baseless." The committee took aim at statements made by various political figures, suggesting that these comments undermined the critical work of police officers who faced unprecedented violence.

The chaos that erupted in July and August 2022 was sparked by the tragic murders of three young girls in Southport, but the report conveniently glosses over how far-right groups exploited this horrific incident to incite disorder, deliberately targeting mosques and asylum hotels. Cross-party MPs asserted that the police's response to the riots was "entirely appropriate," completely overlooking that more than 300 police officers were injured during these tumultuous events.

Dame Karen Bradley, the committee's chair, insisted that the narratives of "two-tier policing" misinterpret the reality, claiming that policing tactics were a reasonable reaction to escalating violence. However, this simplistic view fails to consider the broader context of societal outrage towards perceived policing disparities that provoke genuine concern among the public. “This was not protest. Those participating in disorder were not policed more strongly because of their supposed political views but because they were throwing missiles, assaulting police officers, and committing arson,” the committee proclaimed, ignoring the growing sentiments of mistrust among law-abiding citizens.

Police forces grappled with the unpredictable violence that erupted amid rampant misinformation, particularly concerning the murder suspect's immigration status. A troubling lack of communication from police and the Crown Prosecution Service created an environment ripe for hysteria and suspicion, further eroding public trust in law enforcement.

Elon Musk and other political figures highlighted a widespread perception of unfairness in policing, noting that swift penalties against rioters could illustrate a bias in law enforcement decisions. Alarmingly, the report fails to acknowledge the genuine and escalating concern among the populace regarding perceived disparities in the treatment of individuals based on their backgrounds.

The committee recommended immediate reforms, calling for the elimination of obsolete disclosure laws that extremists have manipulated to advance their agendas. Dame Karen Bradley acknowledged the challenges posed by social media’s pervasive influence, stating, “It is clear that bad actors sought to exploit the unspeakable tragedy that unfolded in Southport.” Yet, the solution lies in fostering transparency and improved communication to reclaim public confidence in the police rather than merely shifting blame.

In an alarming turn of events, police required an additional 40,000 officer shifts to contain the unrest and made over 1,800 arrests. The injuries sustained by officers, with 69 requiring hospital treatment, raised significant questions about the government's commitment to law enforcement resources. The financial burden on police departments has been estimated at around £28 million, indicative of a system under strain.

Instead of addressing the alarming state of policing and the necessity for reforms, the committee seemed more concerned with deflecting criticism rather than confronting the need for a substantial overhaul of police practices. Emily Spurrell, chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, emphasized the importance of retaining officers and enhancing their working conditions, seemingly oblivious to the fact that public trust is eroding due to failure at the top.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson from the Home Office acknowledged the pressing need to reevaluate communication strategies in light of this chaotic period, stating, “It is always important that we learn lessons.” While they profess to work closely with law enforcement, there remains a clear lack of accountability for the governing body, especially in light of public sentiment that grows increasingly detrimental to confidence in state institutions. The call for the Law Commission to review current rules concerning Contempt of Court serves as a reminder that without serious changes, the gap between the police and the communities they serve will only widen, and the forces of reform cannot come quickly enough.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/state-of-policing-the-annual-assessment-of-policing-in-england-and-wales-2023/> - Corroborates issues with policing and public trust, highlighting the need for systemic reforms and improved communication to address public concerns and reinforce trust in law enforcement.
* <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmhaff/635/report.html> - Supports the discussion on policing priorities and the Home Affairs Committee's role in addressing issues related to policing culture and public trust.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - Although unrelated to the specific events described, this URL provides context on legal and procedural matters, which can inform discussions on the governance and accountability of law enforcement actions.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - Similarly, this URL offers legal context, albeit in a different jurisdiction, demonstrating the importance of legal frameworks in addressing public and procedural concerns in law enforcement.
* <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Consolidated-Review-Report-of-the-Fiji-Police-Force-2017-2018-and-2019-2....pdf> - Provides insight into police performance review processes in another jurisdiction, highlighting the universal need for effective police management and public trust.