Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary condemns alleged murder of James Foley

2014-08-20

Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said:

We haven’t absolutely verified the video yet, but all the hallmarks point to it being genuine – an appalling example of the brutality of this organisation.

We’ve been saying for a very long time that there are a significant number of British nationals, both in Syria and Iraq, operating with extremist organisations. And that is one of the reasons why this organisation represents such a direct threat to the UK’s national security. Many of these people may seek at some point to return to the UK and they would then pose a direct threat to our domestic security. This is a poison, a cancer, what’s going on in Iraq and Syria, and it risks spreading to other parts of the international community and affecting us all directly.

We have policies aimed at deterring people at risk of radicalisation from being radicalised and going out to Iraq and Syria.

We do have a very major effort targeted at identifying people who may be sympathetic to these types of organisation and seeking to dissuade them from supporting them, seeking to prevent them from travelling – we have powers to prevent them from travelling, and monitoring what they’re doing while they’re out of the UK, and if they return to the UK and we can identify them, we have the power to arrest them and prosecute them for their activities outside the UK once they get back here. So we do have a wide range of powers. We have significant capabilities in our intelligence and security agencies to track and monitor what these people are doing, and we are putting a huge amount of effort into trying to keep tracks on them to make sure that they don’t come back here and pose a direct threat to us.

Read more about the

UK government’s response to the situation in Iraq.

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