



Committee supports re-listing of terrorist organisations

Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee has tabled a report today supporting the Government's re-listing of five organisations, including the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), as 'terrorist organisations' under the Criminal Code.

Section 102.1A of the Criminal Code provides that the Committee may review the regulations specifying an organisation as a terrorist organisation as soon as possible after the making of the regulation.

The listings make it a criminal offence to direct the activities of, become a member of, recruit for, train or receive training from, get funds to, from or for, provide support to or associate with members of the organisations.

The Committee was satisfied that each of the groups—which also included Al-Shabaab, Hamas' Izz al-Din al Qassam Brigades, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Palestinian Islamic Jihad—continued to engage in terrorist acts and recommended that the regulations to re-list them as terrorist organisations not be disallowed.

For the PKK, the Committee sought additional information from government agencies and conducted a public hearing with representative community groups to assist its consideration of the group's re-listing. The Committee was satisfied that the PKK continues to engage in terrorism as defined in Australian law.

In forming this conclusion, the Committee acknowledged the Kurdish people's desire for autonomy and the right to maintain a Kurdish ethnic identity in Turkey, but noted that expressing support for these goals was not a criminal offence as a result of the listing of the PKK.

Committee Chair, Mr Dan Tehan said "the listing of the PKK is not a result of the PKK's support for greater Kurdish autonomy. Rather, it is the organisation's activities, which are of a distinctly terrorist nature, that give rise to its listing under Australian law."

In its report, the Committee expressed support for peace talks, and encouraged the Australian Government to work, in cooperation with international partners, to encourage all parties to engage with the peace processes in good faith.

The Committee also presented today its *Annual Report of Committee Activities for 2014–15*.

The reporting period saw significant activity by the Committee amid a national focus on counter-terrorism measures. In addition to its existing oversight responsibilities, the Committee conducted four major bill inquiries into reforms to Australia's national security legislation. In all, the Committee made 109 recommendations in the four bill inquiries, all of which were accepted by the Government.

The period also saw an expansion of the functions, oversight and scrutiny responsibilities of the Committee. This included a new function of monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Australian Federal Police's counter-terrorism functions, which the Committee commenced during the year.

Copies of the two reports can be accessed via the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/pjcis>.

For media comment, please contact the Office of the Chair, Dan Tehan MP, on 02 6277 4393.

For inquiry information, please contact the Committee Secretariat on 02 6277 2360 or email pjcis@aph.gov.au.