

LEGAL OBSERVATION AT THE



G20 PROTESTS

TOM BRAKE MP
REPORTING BACK FROM THE KETTLE

FINAL REPORT

Released on 11th May 2009

Wednesday, 1st April 2008
LONDON, BANK OF ENGLAND

FOREWORD:



“

I decided to join the team of legal observers at the G20 protests after reading the Kingsnorth report into the policing of the Kingsnorth power station demonstration which raised serious concerns that the police were preventing protests rather than preventing disorder.

I was at the G20 on the 1st April 2009 when violence broke out between police and protesters near the Bank of England. With a team of three other observers, we took pictures, videos and notes.

This report explains what my team and I saw on that day. We were in the thick of the crowd and I can honestly say that it was one of the most disturbing experiences of my life. The overwhelmingly peaceful crowd, contained within the police cordon, had to flee to safer parts of the cordon as the small minority of violent protesters ran backwards into the crowd to escape police charges prompted by their violent actions.

I was kept inside the police cordon formed to stop violent protesters from leaving, along with bystanders, peaceful protesters and even those in need of medical attention from 3.30pm to 9.00pm.

The police of course have a right and a duty to detain those intent on violence. However, the police strategy of locking in all the protesters, peaceful or otherwise for up to six hours, in my view, put peaceful protesters at greater risk, increased the likelihood of violence as well as having serious implications for peaceful protests in the future. These are matters that a full inquiry will need to consider.

I will be submitting this report to the IPCC inquiry, to Denis O'Connor's inquiry, the Joint Committee on Human Rights and also to the Home Affairs Select

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Committee.

Tom Brake MP

*Liberal Democrat MP for Carshalton and Wallington
Home Affairs Spokesman
Member of the Home Affairs Select Committee.*

Photos courtesy of David Cook.

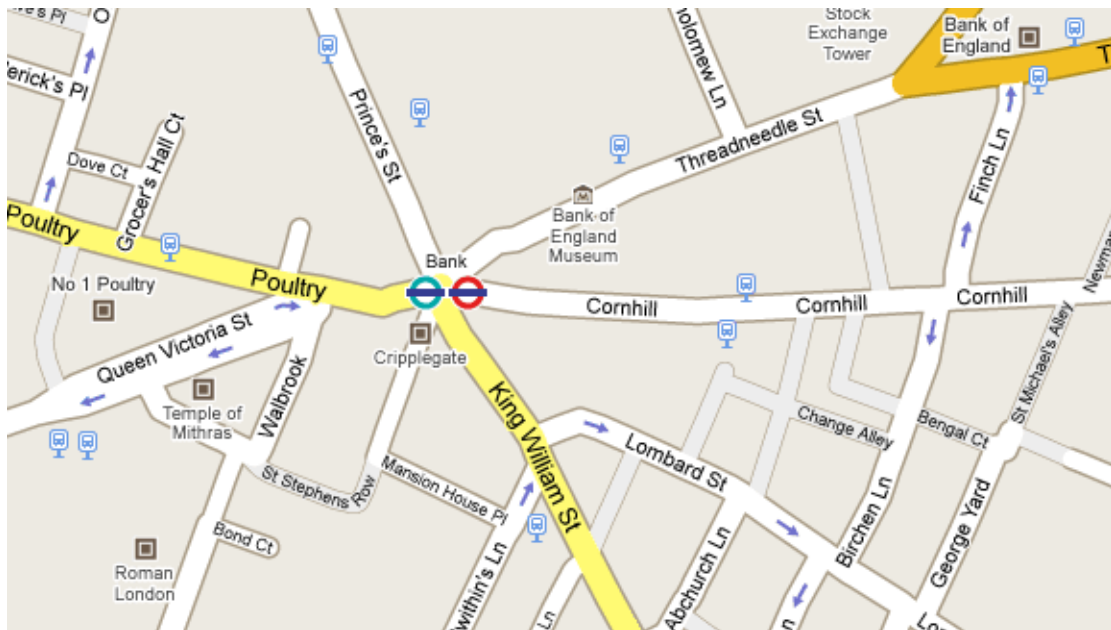
More info at www.davidcookphotography.co.uk or 07976753255

CONTACT AND PRESS ENQUIRIES

020 7219 0924

charvetb@parliament.uk

MAP OF THE AREA



source : Google Maps

2.15 pm



We arrived at Bishopsgate and met with Climate Camp's Legal team. They gave us orange tabards. We checked the area and found the atmosphere around Bishopsgate was peaceful. Police officers were wearing normal uniforms and not shields or helmets.



At this time I spoke to a senior officer. We both expressed the hope that the event would finish peacefully. I also questioned him about his view on having independent observers monitoring the event. He welcomed our presence.

2.45 pm

I saw Officers begin to put on their helmets and protective gear and walk towards Bank.

3.15pm

We decided to leave Bishopsgate as a large number of legal observers were already watching the area. We followed a group of policemen who were wearing helmets and protective equipment in the direction of Bank.

3.30 pm



We arrived in front of a police cordon, next to the RBS Branch at Threadneedle Street.



The police cordon was mainly composed of City of London police officers and specials in high-visibility jackets.



In the back ground, we could see a line of police horses. Most of the people there were peaceful demonstrators. A couple of drunken people were talking loudly to the police, but they did not use strong language. There was no provocation.



The police decided to extend the perimeter and did so in a very professional way. They warned that people needed to move back. Protesters listened and everybody moved back peacefully, with nobody getting hurt.

3.40 pm: Cornhill



3.45 pm

We arrived at Bank via Mansion House Pl and St Stephen Row.

During the next 10 minutes, we learnt that the police had decided to use the kettle tactic by detaining everybody. It was impossible to leave the area. All the roads were shut by a police cordon. Policemen were wearing helmets and protection. They did not explain why and when asked, could give no indication as to how long they expected the cordon to be in place.

4.30pm :



The riot police charged without any warning. Most of the people in front of the police cordon at the corner of Threadneedle Street were peaceful protestors. They were dancing, listening to music and there was no apparent threat.



The atmosphere changed, with people panicking. Some people were injured by the Police.



People were running and trying to escape but with the cordon completely sealed, there was no escape route.



We decided to talk to the Officer in charge of the area to find out why the kettling strategy had been implemented and why the police were charging the crowd without warning. At the different sections of the police cordon, we asked several police officers who was in charge. Officers either did not respond or said that they did not know who was in command.

Finally, one of my team met a sergeant and was able to highlight the fact that the police were charging the crowd before issuing any warning, causing greater panic. He said he would pass on our concern to senior officers.

By this time we had been detained by the police for two hours in a small area, with very little information being given out. The police were not very talkative and their reticence only added to people's agitation. Most of the people there were peaceful, and there was no mass violence, although small groups of people were trying to fight with the police. They were relatively easy to identify as they were very close to the police cordon, taunting and provoking the police. Their activities were being filmed by police officers, helping police to identify those committing violent acts.

Near Poultry's police cordon, demonstrators reported to us that a lady was panicking with her dog. The lady was sitting next to a building's door. She was really scared and she was struggling to control her dog. This was reported to the police officer. They refused to let her go, saying it was impossible for her to leave.

We went near Cornhill's police cordon. I formally requested to talk to the Inspector in charge of the area to raise several issues. We wanted to explain that most of the demonstrators were peaceful and that there was no reason to

keep them detained. The police officer I spoke to refused to pass the request to his inspector without explanation or justification.

A protester came to talk to one of my team, showing his arm which looked as though it could be broken. My team member escorted him to the nearest police cordon at Princes Street, and asked for medical assistance. The police agreed this but did not allow his friend to accompany him. The protestor then refused to receive medical assistance because of this.

Next, a man who was apparently a bystander asked me for some help. He was caught in the cordon and needed to go home to look after his elderly 83 year old mother. I went to the Poultry police cordon with him and spoke with the police who subsequently refused to let him go. We were informed by the police that he should have planned alternative cover. A young man who told the police on the cordon that he was diabetic and needed to return home for medication received the same response.

I spoke to an elderly couple who made the mistake of walking through the area and were completely unrelated to the protests. They feared for their safety and wanted to leave, but the police refused to let them go.

Near Poultry's police cordon, another man came to us for help, wanting water. He said he had not drunk for more than 9 hours. Considering that this was a sunny day and the temperature was around 16 degrees, a member of my team formally asked the sergeant in charge of Poultry police cordon to provide water. He refused to provide it, claiming that they did not have any. My team member pointed to a police van, with its door open, which contained many bottles of water.

During the afternoon we continued to ask for water. The police always responded in the same way, "you should have planned that you would be detained", and by now my team and I had not had a drink since midday. Later, some of the team suffered from headaches, tiredness and loss of concentration which are mainly caused by dehydration.



5.45 pm

The police began to slowly squeeze the cordon area. Still no one, to my knowledge, had been released from the perimeter.



At this point the tension rose significantly. Troublemakers refused to move back from the Bank of England. I began to fear for my own safety and preferred to stay back near to Queen Victoria Street. Some people, a small minority of around 50 to 100 people, were fighting with the Police with the police. They burned a banker's effigy and threw barriers at policemen.

Around this time, I was approached by a demonstrator, who asked me to go and look at a group of officers who were not displaying their badges. I could not find the officers concerned.

A photographer also approached me stating that he had been hit by a police baton when attempting to take photographs. Please find below his statement:

Pete Blackmore, journalist for Redbrick

“

I was dressed in jeans and a t-shirt for most of the day, but later on i wore my 'University of Birmingham' jumper, which has 'Head Photographer for Redbrick' (the student newspaper I work for) embroidered on the front. I also had my Redbrick Press Pass tied around my neck. I was carrying two Digital SLR cameras and had a rucksack on my back.

At 6pm on the 1st of April I was standing in the junction between bank underground station and poultry approximately here on Google maps:

<http://tinyurl.com/d5efwo>

The crowd that had been against the cornhill police cordon had turned and started running towards poultry following the cordon being moved closer and the kettle becoming tighter. As I turned around and started moving away from the coming crowd, I moved between the crowd

away from the oncoming cordon. The crowd thickened, and then about here <http://tinyurl.com/d8ylgc>

There were several officers out of one of the other police cordons, using batons and riot shields on protestors. As I carried on moving I turned around to see what had happened to the crowd that was moving away from the other police cordon, I could see more people running, turned back to keep on moving away and a police officer swung his riot shield in an upwards motion and hit me in the face. I was initially stunned. I moved away quickly after that, then as I realised there were no more officers out of the police line I turned and took several photos. I then tweeted about what had just happened. <http://twitter.com/petebakemore/status/1432748829>

Although I didn't see the officer's police identification tags the photos taken moments after show the back of their helmets may be a step closer to identifying them. They are clearly Metropolitan Police and the officer was one of the three seen behind the three men walking away in the middle of the attached photo. (17 of 20)

My nose was bleeding and I also had a cut on the bottom part of my nose about cm wide, but as I had a first aid kit in my rucksack I was able to stop the bleeding. I did not see a doctor after that.

I witnessed another incident earlier in the day when I was standing on the roof of a bus stop, taking pictures of the advancing police cordon on Queen Victoria street here: <http://tinyurl.com/dmx93o> As the police line advanced one of the protestors in front of me tried to climb down the pole. As he was doing so, one officer shouted "You're not climbing quick enough" and then 4 moved into to hit him with extendable batons and one tackled him off the pole. A Photo of the incident is attached (12 of 20) (but I do not have access to the other

3 as I send this as I am away from home currently)I moved to climb down the other end of the bus stop, and as I started to do so an extendable baton and tried to hit my feet from the right hand side of the bus stop. I shouted "I'm Press, I'm Press" but as I did so he took another swing, but then stopped. I was unharmed but shaken up.

I was not stop and searched, but as I was leaving the kettle (around 8pm) I spoke to a protestor who said that he had tried to leave an hour before out of cordon on queen victoria street, but as when he was being taken out my an officer he refused to be search without cause and was put back in the kettle.

I left the kettle through the cordon Prince's Street. When leaving the kettle (escorted my an officer holding onto my arm) I asked why it was necessary to escort a press member out by

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the arm he replied 'it's so you don't fall over'.

Just before 6.30pm

A demonstrator and a different photographer (from a national newspaper) then claimed they had seen one people in the crowd, believed to be a police officer, throw something from the crowd at the police lines. They mentioned that to me and I observed two men leaving through the police lines in King William Street I believe. Please find below the photographer's statement:

Antonio Olmos, freelance photographer for The Observer Magazine:

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During the G20 protests which I was photographing for the Observer Newspaper I witnessed an incident which I relayed to Tom Brake MP. I had seen an individual wearing black clothes who in my mind looked like a rugby player not a protester, who who seemed to be encouraging his fellow protesters to be more aggressive toward to police, ie, in the throwing of bottles, pushing against police lines etc. Just as I noticed this behaviour several protesters turned on this individual and accused him of being police. The individual quickly went past me and then past where Tom Brake and a legal observer where standing. He produced some sort of ID when he approached the police lines and he was quickly let through, at a time when no one, including press where being allowed to leave the police cordon around the Bank of England. Soon after witnessing this I told Tom Brake and the legal observer next to him of what I had seen and if they had witnessed it as well.

I must be clear that while I witnessed this, it is only after the individual in question crossed police lines did I take notice. It is obvious to me that the man in question was a policeman. I don't doubt that the police have to do covert surveillance of certain violent individuals among the protesters. What I find disturbing is that they may be encouraging a type of behaviour that justifies an over the top police response to what is otherwise a peaceful protest.

I can not say that I could now identify the individual I saw or say for certain that he was a

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policeman. What I saw did make me suspicious and disturbed of police tactics.

6.30 pm

Near King William Street, a journalist asked to leave the police cordon. He showed his press card to the policeman but still the police refused to let him go. He reminded the police of the number to check that he was a journalist, and of the protocol in place which allows the press to leave.

Initially toilets were available for protesters. But these were only available until 7.00pm on King William Street. Around 7.00pm, the police tightened the police cordon further. The toilets were inaccessible from this time as they were now behind the police cordon.

7.15 pm



I was interviewed by a journalist from Reuters. The cameraman explained to a member of my team that he had been hit by a police officer earlier that afternoon.

Additionally, by keeping me in the cordon, the police prevented me from attending a vote in Parliament at 6.40. I have written to the Speaker to complain.

8.00 pm

With a view to letting people exit the kettle area, the police decided to implement stop and search procedures.

The stop and search began at around 8.00 pm. We asked to monitor the stop and search but the police refused. In addition to that, all the legal observers from my team, except me, were stopped and searched and had their details recorded.

It should be noted here that policemen did not give a copy of the form which is normally issued for stop and searches. We had to request it.

Upon exiting the cordon, my team were stopped and searched under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which allows officers to use stop and search in a specific area at a specific time where there is a threat of public disorder.

The power must be authorised by a senior officer before use. The police do not need to have reasonable suspicion about the individual to either stop or

stop and search, but an authorisation to operate in this way must be in existence.

CONCLUSION

- The overwhelming majority of the police handled a very difficult situation professionally. However, a small minority resorted to unreasonable violence against peaceful protestors, journalists or photographers.
- The police rightly took action to detain some protestors who were there to cause violence.
- The police strategy of locking in all the protestors, peaceful or otherwise for up to five hours, put peaceful protestors at greater risk, may have increased the level of violence and threatens our right to peaceful protest

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The police need to show greater flexibility in who they allow to leave a police cordon, taking into account medical conditions and other valid reasons.
- The police's ability to enact collective punishment, 'arresting' all demonstrators within the cordon for many hours, must be challenged.
- Further training is required to ensure police at demonstrations are aware of the protocol agreed between the ACPO and the NUJ which enables the press to go in and out of a demonstration.
- Further training is required to ensure the police issue warnings before charging a crowd in order to avoid mass panic.
- If the police are to contain crowds for extended periods, water should be provided.
- Better communication and information for demonstrators should be provided.
- Officers are required to wear ID at all times and senior officers should be required to instruct any police officer not wearing an ID badge to display one immediately.

VIDEO FOOTAGE OF A JOURNALIST UNABLE TO LEAVE THE KETTLE:

Press release issued 20/04/2009:

Tom Brake MP, member of the Home Affairs Select Committee, has released video footage of a journalist . The video was taken by Tom Brake MP who was inside the kettle during the G20 protest at Bank on 1st April 2009 as legal observer.

Tom Brake MP commented on the video :

“This video raises concern about the relationship between the police and the media during the G20 protests.

“This journalist was obstructed in his work as we was not allowed to leave the area. This is not fair. There are clear guidelines laying out how the police should deal with the media: they have to allow them to go about their business.”

The video has now been submitted to The Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Tim Gopsill, an official of the National Union of Journalists, attended the G20 demonstration as an observer, commented on the video :

"Trapping people in a cage for hours on end was an outrage, whether they were press or not.

"For journalists it meant they couldn't get out to work on their reports, which was an assault on press freedom - journalists should have freedom to leave events as well to get into them."

Last year, a UK parliamentary committee asked the police not to obstruct journalists doing their work during protests. In its report the parliamentary committee said: “It is unacceptable that individual journalists are left with no option but to take court action against officers who unlawfully interfere with their work.

"Journalists have the right to carry out their lawful business and report the way in which demonstrations are handled by the police without state interference, unless such interference is necessary and proportionate, and journalists need to be confident that they can carry out their role.

"The public in turn have the right to impart and receive information: the media are the eyes and ears of the public, helping to ensure that the police are

accountable to the people they serve. Effective training of front line police officers on the role of journalists in protests is vital.

"Police forces should consider how to ensure their officers follow the media guidelines which have been agreed between ACPO and the NUJ, and take steps to deal with officers who do not follow them."

Note to the editor :

Link to the video :

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSI_UwuOwTI&feature=channel_page

Response from the Metropolitan Police:



**Directorate of Professional Standards
Prevention and Organisational Learning Command**

Mr Brake
Office 389/390
Portcullis House
Bridge Street
London
SW1A 2LW

DPS South West
Tintagel House
Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TT

Telephone: 020 7230 5216

Your reference:

Our reference: PC/02306/09

Date: 30 April 2009

Dear Mr Brake

I am writing about the concerns you raised regarding events connected to the G20 summit that occurred recently in Central London. Thank you for contacting us.

We take any complaint against the police very seriously. It has been my responsibility to investigate your complaint in detail and I have now examined all the circumstances very carefully.

I have to tell you that while we take a serious view of what you have told us, this is not a complaint that we are legally required to take any further. The Police Reform Act 2002 sets out the kind of complaints we must always follow up. Yours does not fall into this category because it is a complaint against the policies and procedures of the Metropolitan Police, which falls under direction and control.

This means that I do not plan to take any further official action in connection with your complaint

However, It has been announced that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) are to conduct a Review of Policing of Public Protest, "Keeping the Peace". It may be that the matters you have raised could inform that Review. The review team can be contacted by way of letter to:

The Review Team
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ

Tel: 0207-035-2182

Email: thereviewteam@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

You also have the right of appeal to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) against my decision not to record your complaint. You have 28 days within which to make your appeal to the IPCC. You are advised to post your appeal in good time to ensure it reaches the IPCC before the end of the 28th day. ***Appeals received after 28 days may not be allowed unless there are exceptional circumstances.***

You might want to consider using guaranteed next-day delivery post service ***to ensure that your appeal is received within time.*** If you do decide to appeal, this is the address to write to:

The Independent Police Complaints Commission
90 High Holborn
London WC1V 6BH

Yours sincerely

Nick Preston
Detective Chief Inspector

Clarification from the Metropolitan Police:



Working together for a safer London

**Directorate of Professional Standards
Prevention and Organisational Learning Command**

Benoit Charvet
Tom Brake MP office
Office 389/390
Portcullis House
Bridge Street
SW1A 2LW

DPS – Operation Seco
Room 831
Tintagel House
Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TT
Telephone: 020 7230 5225
Facsimile: 0207 230 5242

Your reference:

Our reference: PC/02306/09

Date: 07 May 2009

Dear Mr Charvet

Re: - Public complaint made by Tom Brake MP regarding the treatment of a member of the media during the G20 Protests.

Following our telephone conversation yesterday I spoke to DCI Preston regarding your query. In short you were concerned that the issue raised by Mr Brake had been treated as a Direction and Control matter, when there appeared to be a clear breach of ACPO guidelines.

I have accessed the Media Relations Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that were published in June 2008 and would draw your attention to the following section: -

7.5 Press Identification cards

The bona fide media should carry a 'UK Press Card' that is recognised by ACPO. The card does not carry an automatic right of access to the scene of an incident or authority to pass police lines. However, officers are expected to be helpful to cardholders and where possible try to accommodate their needs.

You will see that although officers are expected to be helpful to cardholders, the possession of identification does not provide an automatic right to cross police lines. In essence the officer is required to use his/her discretion when dealing with members of the press. We do not know what the circumstances were at the time of

the incident, highlighted by Mr Brake, and as such we would be unable to comment any further.

As you are aware the tactics used on the day are being reviewed by HMIC and I would refer you back to the letter dated 30/04/2009. I hope this has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Detective Sergeant Lee

LETTERS SENT BY TOM BRAKE MP:

Letter sent to the Speaker :

29th April 2009

I am writing to draw your attention to one of the consequences of police action on the 1st April 2009 during the G20 protests.

There was a vote at 6.40pm, Division 95, Geneva Conventions and United Nations Personnel (Protocols) Bill.

I apologise for not being present to vote in this division. My absence was caused by the police tactic of kettling demonstrators at Bank. I was eventually allowed to leave at 9pm after around 5 and a half hours of containment.

I am afraid my inability to vote was just another illustration of the way in which our citizens' rights can be adversely affected by disproportionate police action.

Yours sincerely

Tom Brake MP

Letter sent to Sir Paul Stephenson, copy to Denis O'Connor:

Sir Paul Stephenson
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
Broadway
London SW1H 0BG

My reference; braket2tb

5th May 2009

I am writing to draw your attention to the MPA Question and Answer session to the MPS, relating to the policing of the G20 demonstrations. As you may be aware, I was on the ground on the 1st April 2009 as a legal observer with a number of other people including other parliamentarians. Three members of my team and I spent five and a half hours (from 3.30pm to 9pm) in the kettle at Bank.

When I read the responses given by the MPS to the MPA members about the police kettling in the Bank area, I was astonished. The responses given by the MPS bore no resemblance to what I experienced at Bank.

I have set out below how my personal experience and that of my fellow observers was at odds with the police evidence.

▪ Question 5:

The MPS stated that : 'portable toilets [were] delivered into the area'

This is true. There were portable toilets on King Williams Street. But around 7.00pm, the police tightened the police cordon further, meaning the toilets were inaccessible from this time as they were now behind the police cordon.

Can the MPS confirm whether there were any other toilets available at Bank and at what point the portable toilets on King William Street were no longer available to the public?

The MPS stated that '500 bottles of water were provided specifically for the protestors at a number of locations'

As we were wearing orange high visibility jackets, stamped with the words 'legal observer', when we were contained within the police cordon a number of protestors came to us and asked for water. We approached officers at different police cordons for water at different times. Officers never offered bottles of water.

Around 5pm, near Poultry's police cordon, a protester came to us for help, wanting water. He said he had had nothing to drink for more than 9 hours. Considering that this was a sunny day and the temperature was around 16 degrees, a member of my team formally asked the Sergeant in charge of Poultry police cordon to provide water.

He refused to provide it, claiming that they did not have any. My team member pointed to a police van, with its door open, which contained many bottles of water. The officer said the water was for the police not protestors.

During the afternoon we continued to ask for water. The police always responded in the same way, "you should have planned that you would be detained", and by now my team and I had not had a drink since midday. Later, some of the team suffered from headaches, tiredness and loss of concentration which are mainly caused by dehydration.

Please can the MPS confirm where this water was available, from what time and when did it run out? What instructions were issued to officers about the circumstances in which water was to be provided?

The MPS stated that 'peaceful protestors were allowed to leave in small numbers'

In spite of the fact that my team and I were wearing orange high visibility jackets, stamped with the words 'legal observer', when we asked where we could leave the police cordon, we were sent from police line to police line and were not allowed to leave.

Nor were the press allowed to leave. I released and submitted to the IPCC, footage of a journalist who was not allowed to leave the area. It was near King William Street at around 6.30pm that this journalist asked to leave the police cordon. He showed his press card to the

policeman but still the police refused to let him go. He reminded the police of the number to call to check that he was a journalist, and of the protocol in place which allows the press to leave.

The police were reminded in March by the UK Joint Select Committee on Human Rights not to obstruct journalists doing their work during protests. In its report the parliamentary committee said:

“It is unacceptable that individual journalists are left with no option but to take court action against officers who unlawfully interfere with their work.

“Journalists have the right to carry out their lawful business and report the way in which demonstrations are handled by the police without state interference, unless such interference is necessary and proportionate, and journalists need to be confident that they can carry out their role.

“The public in turn have the right to impart and receive information: the media are the eyes and ears of the public, helping to ensure that the police are accountable to the people they serve. Effective training of front line police officers on the role of journalists in protests is vital.

“Police forces should consider how to ensure their officers follow the media guidelines which have been agreed between ACPO and the NUJ, and take steps to deal with officers who do not follow them.”

Around 5pm, near Poultry’s police cordon, demonstrators reported to us that a lady was panicking with her dog. The lady was sitting next to a building’s door. She was really scared and she was struggling to control her dog. This was reported to the police officer. They refused to let her go, saying it was impossible for her to leave.

We went near Cornhill’s police cordon. I formally requested to talk to the Inspector in charge of the area to raise several issues. We wanted to explain that most of the demonstrators were peaceful and that there was no reason to keep them detained. The police officer I spoke to refused to pass the request to his inspector without explanation or justification.

A protester came to talk to one of my team, showing his arm which looked as though it could be broken. My team member escorted him to the nearest police cordon at Princes Street, and asked for medical assistance. The police agreed this but did not allow his friend to accompany him. The protester then refused to receive medical assistance because of this.

Next, a man who was apparently a bystander asked me for some help. He was caught in the cordon and needed to go home to look after his elderly 83 year old mother. I went to Poultry police cordon with him and spoke with the police who subsequently refused to let him go. We were informed by the police that he should have planned alternative cover. A young man who told the police on the cordon that he was diabetic and needed to return home for medication received the same response.

I spoke to an elderly couple who made the mistake of walking through the area and were completely unrelated to the protests. They feared for their safety and wanted to leave, but the police refused to let them go.

I made no attempt to use my position as an MP to secure release from the police cordon, so I do not know whether a Member of Parliament would have been able to leave the police cordon. I had expected to be able to leave the demonstration in time for a vote in Parliament around 6.30. Unfortunately, I was not able to vote on that day. I have written to the Speaker to complain and told him that:

“I apologise for not being present to vote in this division. My absence was caused by the police tactic of kettling demonstrators at Bank. I was eventually allowed to leave at 9pm after around 5 and a half hours of containment.

I am afraid my inability to vote was just another illustration of the way in which our citizens' rights can be adversely affected by disproportionate police action."

I have no evidence from the five hours spent within the police cordon that 'peaceful protestors were allowed to leave in small numbers'. On the contrary, I witnessed numerous peaceful protestors being refused the right to leave. We were effectively arrested for a five hour period.

Please can the MPS confirm how many peaceful protestors were allowed to leave, via which police cordon, what instructions were issued to officers about how to respond to requests from demonstrators to leave and what criteria were used to establish it was safe to release them?

▪ Question 11:

The MPS stated that 'police tactics are communicated in a variety of different ways'

The ACPO Manual of Guidance on protest entitled 'Keeping the peace' is very clear: 'some tactical options require a warning message'. Some of those tactics were deployed in the Bank area:

- Police dogs
- Mounted police
- Batons

My team's observations would indicate that if warning messages were issued, they were issued infrequently and often without being audible to the crowd.

Around 4.30pm, the riot police at the corner of Threadneedle Street charged without any warning. Most of the people in front of the police cordon were peaceful protestors. They were dancing, listening to music and there was no apparent threat. The atmosphere changed, with people panicking. Some people were injured by the Police. People were running and trying to escape but with the cordon completely sealed, there was no escape route. One of my team decided to talk to the Officer in charge of the area, to find out why the police were charging the crowd without warning. At the different sections of the police cordon, we asked several police officers who was in charge. Officers either did not respond or said that they did not know who was in command.

Finally, one of my team met a sergeant and was able to highlight the fact that the police were charging the crowd before issuing any warning, causing greater panic. He said he would pass on our concern to senior officers and did not deny the fact that no warning was issued.

Only around 9pm, did we hear a policeman using a megaphone to explain how people were going to be allowed to leave the area, but this message was hardly understandable.

In conclusion, I must state that the overwhelming majority of the police handled a very difficult situation professionally. However, the strategy adopted by the police meant that, contrary to the impression given by the MPS evidence, many peaceful demonstrators were not allowed to leave; communications with the crowd were poor and water (to my knowledge) was not provided.

I must therefore stress how important it is that the evidence that is presented by the MPS to Denis O'Connor of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is accurate. If it is not, severe doubts will remain about the willingness of the MPS to address the public's legitimate concerns about the police strategy used during the G20 protests.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

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Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesman

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