

Government to ban white supremacist group in the UK

Priti Patel has today (19 April) moved to outlaw the white supremacist group, Atomwaffen Division and list National Socialist Order as its alias.

The Home Secretary has asked Parliament to proscribe Atomwaffen Division, which is a predominantly US-based white supremacist group that celebrates and promotes the use of violence in order to bring about a fascist, white ethno-state by means of a 'race war'.

This will make it a criminal offence to be a member of, or invite support for the group, with those found guilty facing up to 10 years in prison. Through the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill, which will shortly receive Royal Assent, we are increasing this to 14 years.

Atomwaffen Division claimed it had disbanded in March 2020 following pressure from US law enforcement agencies, but in July 2020, National Socialist Order announced itself online as its 'successor'. The government assesses that it is the same group operating under a different name but adhering to the same twisted ideology as it did when it was called Atomwaffen Division.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Vile and racist white supremacist groups like this exist to spread hate, sow division and advocate the use of violence to further their sick ideologies.

I will do all I can to protect young and vulnerable people from being radicalised which is why I am taking action to proscribe this dangerous group.

The terrorist group has inspired other loosely affiliated groups abroad, including Feuerkrieg Division, which the UK proscribed as a terrorist organisation in July 2020.

Proscribing Atomwaffen Division and listing National Socialist Order as its alias will support the police in their work to disrupt the threat that these white supremacist groups continue to pose to the UK's national security, including by supporting efforts to remove online content associated with the group.

The decision to proscribe the group follows a meeting of the Proscription Review Group, which brings together representatives from operational partners, the intelligence community and other experts from across government to assess the risk posed by groups which may be considered for proscription.

The proscription order laid in Parliament today will now be debated and,

subject to approval, will come into force later this week.