



# Home Office

**James Brokenshire MP**  
**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CRIME PREVENTION**

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Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP  
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

*Dear Keith,*

**28 SEP 2010**

I am writing to let you know that the Home Secretary has decided not to renew the authorities issued under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968 which allow the current supplier in the UK, Pro-Tect Systems Limited, to import and sell Tasers. Section 5 authorities are subject to strict conditions regarding transfer and secure transportation and the Home Secretary was not satisfied that the company had complied with them at all times. A short term authority has been granted to allow the company to dispose lawfully of its remaining stock.

The specially dangerous nature of prohibited weapons and ammunition means that the Secretary of State's authority is given only where strict criteria are met. Authority holders must comply with the strict terms and conditions set out in their authority and their character must be such that they are suitable to be entrusted at all times with the possession, purchase or acquisition, manufacture, sale or transfer of prohibited weapons and ammunition.

Following the Raoul Moat incident and an investigation by Northamptonshire Police, the Home Secretary is satisfied that the company supplied X12 tasers and XREP ammunition to Northumbria Police and to another police force contrary to their authority, which only allowed them to supply these items to the Home Office Scientific Development Branch who were evaluating their effectiveness. The police forces concerned are deemed to be Crown servants under section 54(3) of the Firearms Act 1968 and were lawfully able to acquire these items.

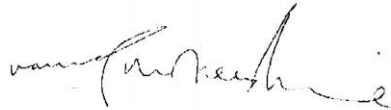
There was also a breach of the condition which requires prohibited weapons and prohibited ammunition to be transported under secure conditions as agreed with, and satisfactory to, the local police.

Under section 5(5) of the Firearms Act 1968 it is an offence to fail to comply with any condition of an authority. That is a matter for the police force concerned. The Secretary of State is empowered under section 5(6) of the Act to revoke an authority at any time, including where the holder is no longer suitable to be entrusted with prohibited weapons and ammunition. In considering what action to take, the Home Secretary has taken into account the representations made by the company's solicitors on their behalf but in view of the serious nature of the breaches has decided not to renew the company's current authorities.

You will wish to know that we are working with ACPO to ensure that police forces continue to have adequate Taser stocks to cover any transition period that may follow from Taser International identifying a new UK supplier.

You will appreciate that in light of the ongoing IPCC investigation into the Northumbria shootings, and the possibility of charges being laid against the company, it would not be appropriate for me to give any more details about this case at this time.

I am arranging for copies of this letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', written in a cursive style.

**JAMES BROKENSHIRE**