

MP to continue the fight for Khat Ban

Milton Keynes MP, Mark Lancaster's 7 year campaign to secure a ban on the drug Khat has been dealt a blow this week, as the Drugs Council have failed to recommend that the drug become illegal.

Mark said, 'Having provided a great deal of evidence of the damage this drug wreaks on minority communities, it is such a shame that the ACMD have decided not to recommend a ban to the Government. I appreciate that their main thrust seems to have been on the medical impact, but I am not convinced they have taken significantly into account the adverse impact that the culture surrounding the drug is having on communities.'

"Ultimately however this is just a recommendation to Government and I am hopeful that the Home Secretary will take more than just the medical concerns into account and follow other leading nations in banning Khat."

This announcement is a particular disappointment as Government minister Sayeeda Warsi recently backed a ban, stating in the Telegraph, 'we would not legitimise marijuana to please the Rasta community, so why do that with Khat?'

The leafy green plant is chewed for hours to achieve its potent hallucinatory effects.

Mark's involvement with the report has included an MP's evidence session with the Drugs Council in Westminster, and a forum involving members of Milton Keynes' 6,000 strong Somali community.

The report's key findings state that whilst there was some association of significant liver toxicity, the ACMD said that the evidence of harms associated with the use of Khat was insufficient to justify control.