



Public Safety Must Always Be The Priority

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Under pressure, Victoria Police have now finally admitted that gangs of young people from African backgrounds are causing fear and havoc in Melbourne's streets.

But despite that, Victoria's police chief seems to think arresting people is somehow unfair. Acting Chief Commissioner Shane Patton appears to spend more time fretting about the "human rights" of juvenile rioters than he does about the interests of communities being terrorised and individuals being assaulted, robbed and worse.

As reported in the Herald Sun this week, gangs have destroyed the community centre at the suburb of Tarneit. Residents are routinely intimidated and even assaulted by gang members and are desperate for a concerted police response.

In that, they are certainly not alone.

Recently a house party in Werribee turned feral as gang-affiliated youths trashed a property,



smashed windows and damaged cars. Police arriving on the scene dispersed the crowd and inexplicably declined to arrest anyone.

The violence in Werribee followed a rampage at St Kilda beach the previous week in which up to 60 young people of similar heritage engaged in a violent brawl which followed a series of assaults and robberies in the area.

Not coincidentally, that week also saw a young man who had been accused of a series of armed robberies being allowed by a judge to travel to his native Sudan while on bail.

Apparently these poor benighted “children” can’t help but act out violently amid the terrible oppression of modern Australia – which is, after all, only one of the most prosperous and stable democracies in human history.

Lost in all this hand-wringing about fairness is any concern for the rights and interests of victims and community members.

When the police have to worry more about identity than community safety, it is the innocent who suffer. And though it shouldn’t matter, we might do well to note that the victims of this violence are themselves very often immigrants as well.

No-one is blaming the police officers out there working on the streets. It is their leadership that is to blame – a leadership that appears too busy currying favour with the government and hunting promotions to stick up for the men and women in uniform who are actually protecting the public. We need the police leadership to urgently deliver this message to the government: let our officers do their jobs.

Similarly, when the judiciary disregards community standards, it abandons its duty to victims. Our criminal justice system exists to defend the rights of individuals and keep the community safe. That means punishing criminals.

It is hard not to see in all of this a collapse in our traditional standard of equality before the law. We are moving towards a system based on different rights for different people, based on their membership of multicultural groups.

No judge, for example, would give someone on bail permission to travel to Bali with the boys – so why should a trip to Sudan be considered acceptable?

Apart from the continuing violence, the other great shame of this weakness towards violent thugs is that it makes reforming our criminal justice system that much harder.

There are good reasons to believe that we could use alternative punishments like community service, home detention and restitution to victims more frequently and effectively. The incarceration rate, for example, has already increased 38 per cent over the past decade, with costs rising every year.



But making that case for alternative punishments is almost impossible when obvious wrongs like rioting and armed robbery go unpunished and when so many people seem to think that punishment is a dirty word.

Political interference in policing and weak judges, both supposedly motivated by concern for human rights and fairness, actually make good, sensible reform more difficult.

This is just one more way in which self-serving leftist do-goodery corrupts the criminal justice system.

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