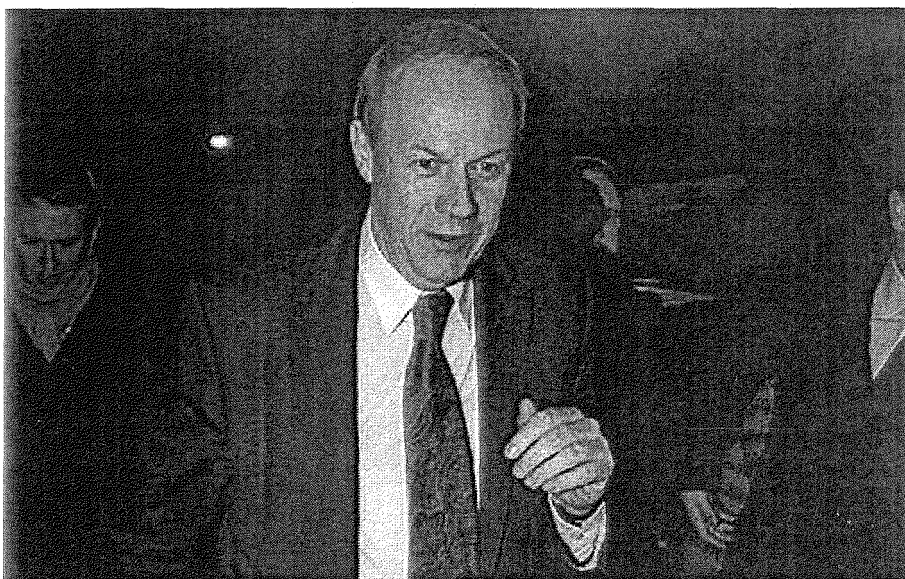


## Boris Johnson expresses 'trenchant concerns' over Damian Green arrest

### TELEGRAPH

The arrest of Damian Green last night provoked outrage from the Conservative mayor of London Boris Johnson who expressed "trenchant" concerns.



Damian Green MP returns home following his arrest. Photo: JONATHAN LODGE

By Aislinn Simpson

12:46AM GMT 28 Nov 2008

Mr Johnson said that unlike the Prime Minister, he was informed in advance of the Metropolitan Police's plan to arrest Mr Green.

He told Sir Paul Stephenson, who takes over as acting commissioner of the Met next week, that the move did not represent the "common sense policing" sought by Londoners and demanded convincing evidence that the action was "necessary and proportionate".

The news of Mr Green's arrest, for "aiding and abetting misconduct in public office", followed a series of leaks to the Conservatives about Government policy, including a sensitive memorandum from the Home Office's most senior official on crime figures earlier this month.

David Cameron, the Conservative leader, is said to be "extremely angry" about the arrest and has privately accused the Government of "Stalinesque" behaviour.

Mr Johnson, the chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority, was equally incandescent.

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A statement issued by Mr Johnson's office said: "The Mayor of London has expressed grave concern over the arrest of Conservative frontbencher Damian Green.

"The mayor finds it hard to believe that on the day when terrorists have gone on the rampage in India that anti-terror police in Britain have apparently targeted an elected representative of Parliament for no greater crime than allegedly receiving leaked documents."

Mr Green's actions in leaking documents that embarrassed the Government were also supported by Conservative MPs.

Richard Bacon, MP for South Norfolk, said while he had not yet spoken to his embattled colleague, he saw it as "grotesque" that Mr Green appeared to have been targeted for "simply doing his job".

"It is no less shocking that they should search an MP's office looking for material which may have been given to that MP by civil servants," he said.

"If there are illegal immigrants working in this country in any capacity, it is perfectly proper for the shadow immigration minister to draw attention to this.

"What were the police possibly thinking? They should stop being so stupid and exercise some judgement. We don't do political arrests in this country.

"If they came looking for information in my office I would tell them to take a running jump."

Conservative justice spokesman Edward Garnier told BBC2's Newsnight: "If it's politically embarrassing for the Home Office, I'm afraid that's one thing, but it will be interesting to hear from the Government and the police what it is he is alleged to have done of a criminal nature. At the moment, we are puzzled.

"This is wreathed in mystery and the sooner the Government and the police come clean about what is going on, the sooner it is that the democratic process can be put back on an even keel."

Paul Clokie, leader of the Tory-controlled Ashford Council said local party members backed Mr Green.

He said: "Damian is a very honest person. You could talk to anyone in the constituency, whatever party, and they would tell you the same, he is a totally upright person. There is no way he would go against the law of the land."

The Metropolitan Police later released another statement denying any ministerial involvement in the decision to arrest Mr Green.

The statement said: "The investigation into the alleged leak of confidential government material followed the receipt by the MPS (Metropolitan Police Service) of a complaint from the Cabinet Office. The decision to make today's arrest was taken solely by the MPS without any ministerial knowledge or approval."