

# Two Dates With Effects Which Are Poles Apart

## *From Celebration to Silence*

### Executive Summary

There are occasions in constitutional history where the importance of two dates lies not merely in what occurred upon them, but in the relationship between them.

This report examines two such dates.

#### **The first is 30 June 2022**

On that date, senior policing figures, partner agencies and officials attended the Operation Talla Awards Ceremony in London - an event celebrating what was presented as the success of the United Kingdom's national policing response to Covid-19.

Operation Talla was publicly framed as a model of operational coordination, resilience and national unity.

#### **The second date is 20 March 2025**

On that date, Police Scotland disclosed, through a formal Freedom of Information response, the existence and provenance of the directive issued by Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs on 25 January 2022.

That disclosure confirmed that officers and staff had been instructed to reject or redirect Covid 19-related reports from members of the public and further confirmed that the directive had been issued upon the advice of the National Police Chiefs' Council and UK Gold Command operating under Operation Talla.

The constitutional significance of these two dates lies not merely in their existence, but in the transition between them.

From celebration to silence - From institutional confidence to institutional reluctance - From public commendation to apparent resistance toward meaningful scrutiny.

Once the evidential material entered the public domain in 2025, an obvious constitutional question emerged:

***What precisely had been celebrated in June 2022?***

That question matters profoundly - not because awards ceremonies are inherently improper, but because public institutional celebration occurred before the public possessed visibility of operational practices which fundamentally alter understanding of the operation itself.

The issue is therefore no longer historical.

It concerns transparency, evidential integrity, public accountability and the constitutional relationship between emergency governance and policing power.

## Part I - Celebration

The Operation Talla Awards Ceremony projected institutional certainty.

By June 2022, the policing establishment was sufficiently confident in Operation Talla to celebrate it publicly.

The event communicated:

- legitimacy;
- operational success;
- effective coordination;
- and institutional pride.

At that stage, however, the public remained unaware of the Speirs Directive and the operational instruction to reject or redirect Covid-related criminal allegations.

No public scrutiny existed concerning:

- evidential filtering;
- crime-recording diversion;
- or nationally coordinated operational handling pathways.

Celebration therefore occurred in the absence of meaningful public visibility.

That fact is constitutionally important.

## Part II - Silence

The FOI disclosure of 20 March 2025 fundamentally altered the evidential landscape.

For the first time, documentary evidence entered the public domain connecting:

- Operation Talla;
- NPCC advice;
- UK Gold Command;
- and operational instructions affecting the handling of Covid-related allegations.

From that point onward, the institutional atmosphere appeared materially different.

The tone shifted.

Police celebrations gave way to institutional silence.

Requests for scrutiny encountered resistance.

Questions frequently remained unanswered.

Engagement diminished.

Increasingly, the issue appeared to transition from one of public institutional confidence to one of institutional containment.

That transition matters, because silence, once evidence is formally before institutions, is not constitutionally neutral.

Particularly where the underlying issues concern:

- policing;
- crime recording;
- evidential visibility;
- and nationally coordinated operational structures.

## Conclusion

30 June 2022 and 20 March 2025 now stand as two dates pointing in opposite constitutional directions.

One celebrated Operation Talla publicly.

The other introduced evidence capable of fundamentally reframing public understanding of what Operation Talla actually involved, operationally.

Between those two dates lies a transition - from celebration to silence and once that transition is viewed alongside the emerging evidential chronology, the constitutional implications become impossible responsibly to ignore.

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