

# Statement to Parliament: PM statement on the Salisbury investigation: 5 September 2018

## **Prime Minister Theresa May:**

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the investigation into the attempted murder of Sergey and Yulia Skripal – and the subsequent poisoning of Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley earlier this year.

This was a sickening and despicable act in which a devastatingly toxic nerve agent – known as Novichok – was used to attack our country. It left four people fighting for their lives and one innocent woman dead. And I know the thoughts of the whole House will be with the family of Dawn Sturgess in particular, following their tragic loss.

In March I set out for the House why the government concluded that the Russian State was culpable for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his daughter.

I also said that – while we all share a sense of impatience to bring those responsible to justice – as a nation that believes in the rule of law we would give the police the space and time to carry out their investigation properly.

Since then around 250 detectives have trawled through more than 11,000 hours of CCTV and taken more than 1,400 statements.

Working around the clock they have carried out painstaking and methodical work to ascertain exactly which individuals were responsible and the methods they used to carry out this attack.

Mr Speaker, this forensic investigation has now produced sufficient evidence for the independent Director of Public Prosecutions to bring charges against two Russian nationals for:

- the conspiracy to murder Sergei Skripal;
- the attempted murder of Sergei and Yulia Skripal and Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey;
- the use and possession of Novichok; and
- causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey.

This morning, the police have set out how the two Russian nationals travelled under the names of Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov – names the police believe to be aliases.

They arrived at Gatwick Airport at 3pm on Friday 2nd March, having flown from Moscow on flight SU2588.

They travelled by train to London Victoria, then on to Waterloo before going to the City Stay Hotel in Bow Road East London.

They stayed there on both Friday and Saturday evenings – and traces of Novichok were found in their hotel room.

On Saturday 3rd March they visited Salisbury, arriving at approximately 2.25pm and leaving less than two hours later, at 4.10pm. The police are confident this was for reconnaissance of the Salisbury area.

On Sunday 4th March they made the same journey, travelling by underground from Bow to Waterloo station at approximately 8.05am, before continuing by train to Salisbury.

The police have today released CCTV footage of the two men which clearly places them in the immediate vicinity of the Skripals' house at 11.58am, which the police say was moments before the attack.

They left Salisbury and returned to Waterloo arriving at approximately 4.45pm and boarded the underground at approximately 6.30pm to Heathrow – from where they returned to Moscow on flight SU2585, departing at 10.30pm.

Mr Speaker, this hard evidence has enabled the independent Crown Prosecution Service to conclude they have a sufficient basis on which to bring charges against these two men for the attack in Salisbury.

The same two men are now also the prime suspects in the case of Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley too.

There is no other line of inquiry beyond this.

And the police have today formally linked the attack on the Skripals and the events in Amesbury – such that it now forms one investigation.

There are good reasons for doing so.

Our own analysis, together with yesterday's report from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, has confirmed that the exact same chemical nerve agent was used in both cases.

There is no evidence to suggest that Dawn and Charlie may have been deliberately targeted, but rather were victims of the reckless disposal of this agent.

The police have today released further details of the small glass counterfeit perfume bottle and box discovered in Charlie Rowley's house which was found to contain this nerve agent.

And the manner in which the bottle was modified leaves no doubt it was a cover for smuggling the weapon into the country, and for the delivery method for the attack against the Skripals' front door.

Mr Speaker, the police investigation into the poisoning of Dawn and Charlie

is ongoing and the police are today appealing for further information. But were these two suspects within our jurisdiction there would be a clear basis in law for their arrest for murder.

Mr Speaker, we repeatedly asked Russia to account for what happened in Salisbury in March, and they have replied with obfuscation and lies.

This has included trying to pass the blame for this attack onto terrorists, onto our international partners, and even onto the future mother-in-law of Yulia Skripal.

They even claimed that I, myself, invented Novichok.

Their attempts to hide the truth by pushing out a deluge of disinformation simply reinforces their culpability.

As we made clear in March, only Russia had the technical means, operational experience and motive to carry out the attack.

Novichok nerve agents were developed by the Soviet Union in the 1980s under a programme codenamed FOLIANT.

Within the past decade Russia has produced and stockpiled small quantities of these agents, long after it signed the Chemical Weapons Convention.

And during the 2000s, Russia commenced a programme to test means of delivering nerve agents including by application to door handles.

We were right to say in March that the Russian State was responsible.

And now we have identified the individuals involved, we can go even further.

Mr Speaker, just as the police investigation has enabled the CPS to bring charges against the two suspects, so the Security and Intelligence Agencies have carried out their own investigations into the organisation behind this attack.

Based on this work, I can today tell the House that, based on a body of intelligence, the Government has concluded that the two individuals named by the police and CPS are officers from the Russian military intelligence service, also known as the GRU.

The GRU is a highly disciplined organisation with a well-established chain of command.

So this was not a rogue operation. It was almost certainly also approved outside the GRU at a senior level of the Russian state.

Mr Speaker, the House will appreciate that I cannot go into details about the work of our security and intelligence agencies. But we will be briefing Opposition leaders and others on Privy Council terms and also giving further detail to the Intelligence and Security Committee.

Let me turn to our response to this appalling attack and the further knowledge we now have about those responsible.

First, with respect to the two individuals, as the Crown Prosecution Service and Police announced earlier today, we have obtained a European Arrest Warrant and will shortly issue an Interpol red notice.

Of course, Russia has repeatedly refused to allow its nationals to stand trial overseas, citing a bar on extradition in its constitution.

So, as we found following the murder of Alexander Litvinenko, any formal extradition request in this case would be futile.

But should either of these individuals ever again travel outside Russia, we will take every possible step to detain them, to extradite them and to bring them to face justice here in the United Kingdom.

Mr Speaker, this chemical weapons attack on our soil was part of a wider pattern of Russian behaviour that persistently seeks to undermine our security and that of our allies around the world.

They have fomented conflict in the Donbas, illegally annexed Crimea, repeatedly violated the national airspace of several European countries and mounted a sustained campaign of cyber espionage and election interference.

They were behind a violent attempted coup in Montenegro. And a Russian-made missile, launched from territory held by Russian-backed separatists, brought down MH17.

We must step up our collective effort to protect ourselves in response to this threat – and that is exactly what we have done since the attack in March, both domestically and collectively with our allies.

We have introduced a new power to detain people at the UK border to determine whether they are engaged in hostile state activity.

We have introduced the Magnitsky amendment to the Sanctions and Money Laundering Act in response to the violation of human rights. And we have radically stepped up our activity against illicit finance entering our country.

We also expelled 23 Russian diplomats who had been identified as undeclared Russian intelligence officers, fundamentally degrading Russian intelligence capability in the UK for years to come.

And in collective solidarity – and in recognition of the shared threat posed to our allies – 28 other countries as well as NATO joined us in expelling a total of over 150 Russian intelligence officers: the largest collective expulsion ever.

Since then, the EU agreed a comprehensive package to tackle hybrid threats.

The G7 agreed a Rapid Response Mechanism to share intelligence on hostile

state activity.

NATO has substantially strengthened its collective deterrence, including through a new Cyber Operations Centre.

And the US has announced additional sanctions against Russia for the Salisbury attack.

Mr Speaker, our allies acted in good faith – and the painstaking work of our police and intelligence agencies over the last six months further reinforces that they were right to do so.

Together, we will continue to show that those who attempt to undermine the international rules based system cannot act with impunity.

We will continue to press for all of the measures agreed so far to be fully implemented, including the creation of a new EU Chemical Weapons sanctions regime.

But we will not stop there.

We will also push for new EU sanctions regimes against those responsible for cyber-attacks and gross human rights violations – and for new listings under the existing regime against Russia.

And we will work with our partners to empower the OPCW to attribute chemical weapons attacks to other states beyond Syria.

Most significantly, Mr Speaker, what we have learnt from today's announcement is the specific nature of the threat from the Russian GRU.

We know that the GRU has played a key part in malign Russian activity in recent years.

And today we have exposed their role behind the despicable chemical weapons attack on the streets of Salisbury.

The actions of the GRU are a threat to all our allies and to all our citizens.

And on the basis of what we have learnt in the Salisbury investigation – and what we know about this organisation more broadly – we must now step up our collective efforts, specifically against the GRU.

We are increasing our understanding of what the GRU is doing in our countries, shining a light on their activities, exposing their methods and sharing them with our allies, just as we have done with Salisbury.

And, Mr Speaker, while the House will appreciate that I cannot go into details, together with our allies we will deploy the full range of tools from across our National Security apparatus in order to counter the threat posed by the GRU.

I have said before, and I say again now, that the UK has no quarrel with the Russian people.

And we continue to hold out hope that we will one day once again enjoy a strong partnership with the Government of this great nation.

As a fellow Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, we will continue to engage Russia on topics of international peace and security.

But we will also use these channels of communication to make clear there can be no place in any civilised international order for the kind of barbaric activity which we saw in Salisbury in March.

Finally, Mr Speaker let me pay tribute to the fortitude of the people of Salisbury, Amesbury and the surrounding areas, who have faced such disruption to their daily lives over the past six months.

Let me once again thank the outstanding efforts of the emergency services and National Health Service in responding to these incidents.

And let me thank all those involved in the police and intelligence community for their tireless and painstaking work which has led to today's announcement.

Mr Speaker, back in March, Russia sought to sow doubt and uncertainty about the evidence we presented to this House – and some were minded to believe them.

Today's announcement shows that we were right.

We were right to act against the Russian State in the way we did. And we are right now to step up our efforts against the GRU.

We will not tolerate such barbaric acts against our country.

And – together with our allies – this government will continue to do whatever is necessary to keep our people safe.

And I commend this statement to the house.

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## **[Press release: Northern Ireland legacy consultation deadline extended](#)**

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, has announced that the deadline for responses to the consultation on addressing the legacy of the Troubles will be extended by three weeks to Friday 5 October.

The move comes after stakeholders said they needed more time to respond.

The Secretary of State said:

“The legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland is an enormously sensitive and emotive issue, and I want to make sure everyone’s voice is heard as we move forward. I have listened to those who want to take a little bit more time to consider their responses – particularly those individuals who have been most affected by the Troubles, including victims and survivors and former police officers and veterans – and I am happy to extend the deadline so that they can have their say.”

The UK Government launched the consultation, Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland’s Past, on 11 May to find the best way to meet the needs of victims and survivors and to help people address the impact of the Troubles. in the areas of information, justice and acknowledgement and help Northern Ireland transition to long term-term peace and stability.

The original deadline for responses was 10 September, extended today to 5 October. Anyone who wishes to give their views can find more information [here](#).

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## **[Press release: Helping communities be flood resilient](#)**

A team of flood engagement officers have worked with more than 60 schools and 700 business during their first year in post to help communities be more resilient to flooding in the North East.

The Environment Agency appointed the new team to increase awareness of flood risk and help people be prepared for flooding.

The £280,000 a year project, which started last summer, includes four new engagement officers spread across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Darlington, and Cleveland.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

In their first year they have worked closely with communities at risk of flooding to help them recruit Flood Wardens and develop Community Flood Plans, and have focused on ensuring businesses are resilient to protect the impact of floods on the economy.

## **Area updates**

In Northumberland Colin Hall has been working with many Northumberland communities. In Ponteland in particular he has been working hard to increase their flood resilience including completing a Flood Week in Ponteland Primary School, campaigning for new Flood Wardens, progressing a community flood plan and establishing a Flood Warden Group.

In Tyne & Wear Taryn Al-mashgari has working in schools in Sunderland, South Tyneside and Newcastle delivering Flood Weeks and careers events. She's also focused on businesses in Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Her plans for the coming year include working with key communities such as Wingrove to raise awareness of surface water flooding.

In Cleveland, Sarah Duffy has been working with communities from across the area, working with schools in Middlesbrough, Stockton, and Redcar and Cleveland to complete a series of Flood Weeks. She's also been working with businesses in Yarm to increase resilience, including meeting businesses on the High Street, and running a Business Breakfast morning to bring businesses together. Sarah has formed strong links with Skinningrove Flood Warden Group and hopes to expand the Flood Warden network in Cleveland next year.

In Durham and Darlington Anna Caygill has been focusing on schools and communities such as Stanhope and Chester-le-Street, including promoting the Flood Warning Service and recruiting Flood Wardens. Anna has also been working closely with Durham Housing Group to identify where their properties at risk of flooding are and to come up with a strategy to warn and inform tenants to be more prepared for a flood event. In Darlington she has been working with groups in Cockerton and Haughton-le-Skerne to increase the area's resilience.

The Community Engagement Officers are working on behalf of the Environment Agency and local authority partners.

As well as supporting residents and businesses, working alongside schools has played a key role in helping future generations understand their risk.

The team hosted a region-wide Flood Warden logo competition which led to a new blue jacket uniform for flood wardens across the North East so they were recognisable to emergency services and the community during an incident.

## **Really successful first year**

Phil Taylor, Environment Agency Flood Resilience Team Leader in the North East, said:

It's been a really successful first year for the Flood Engagement Officers and they are now well known within their communities. This is a foundation they will build on going forward.

A key part of their activity has been working with schools as



future generations have a key role to play in ensuring our communities are flood resilient – the team has worked with around 5,500 school pupils this past year alone.

We all know just how devastating flooding can be for communities and there are actions people can take now will make all the difference to reducing the impact a flood can have.

We're still working hard to help communities understand their flood risk and sign up to receive free flood warnings, as well as helping residents develop community flood plans that detail the action each community or business can take to reduce the impact of flooding, and help them return to normal life as soon as possible should a flood happen.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service [online](#)

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## [News story: Reducing pine weevil damage in forests: apply for contracts](#)

[Forest Enterprise Scotland](#) has up to £150,000 for projects that look at ways of reducing death among young forest trees due to pine weevil damage.

The best projects could then go on to receive a further £200,000 each to field test their ideas.

### **Address a significant pest to newly-planted trees**

Large pine weevils predominately breed in the stumps and roots of felled conifers. The species is the most serious pest of young trees that are newly planted on sites where conifers previously provided the majority of tree cover.

Adult weevils lay their eggs on stumps, with the young emerging to feed on seedlings. They can damage and kill Scots pine, all conifers and many native broadleaved species. The financial impact to land managers is estimated to cost around £40 million a year.

There is also a growing challenge in controlling pine weevils due to the warming climate and changes in insecticide regulations.

This competition is supported by the [CAN DO Innovation Challenge Fund](#) and is funded under the SBRI programme (Small Business Research Initiative).

### **Help for young forests to establish**

We are looking for innovative and cost-effective ways to establish young trees in Scotland by reducing death caused by pine weevil damage.

Projects could look at:

- predicting the severity of weevil damage in advance
- protecting young planted trees
- rapidly reducing the damage being caused by high populations of weevil
- suppressing the population of weevil in the longer term and wider landscape

These must comply with the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

The first phase of the competition is to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an idea and its potential to improve the establishment of forests through pine weevil reduction. The second phase will allow successful projects to prototype and field test their ideas.

## **Competition information**

- the competition opens on 10 September 2018, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 31 October 2018
- any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea can apply
- we expect phase 1 contracts to be worth up to £30,000 and to last up to 5 months, and phase 2 contracts to be worth up to £200,000 and last up to 22 months
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- you can register for a [briefing event](#) on 15 October 2018 to find out more about the competition and how to make a quality application