

[Press release: Trustees disqualified following joint agency investigation and Commission inquiry](#)

Two former trustees have been disqualified following a joint agency investigation and a [Charity Commission inquiry](#) which found serious misconduct and mismanagement in the charities they were running.

Families for Survival and Save the Age Ltd were respectively set up to provide support to disabled people and orphaned children, and relieve the elderly of poverty, sickness and social inclusion. However the Commission's inquiry found limited evidence of charitable activity being carried out by either organisation.

The Commission had been monitoring Families for Survival since February 2014 after concerns were raised about the charity's fundraising practices. Further probes established that it was linked to Save the Age through shared founding trustees and a shared correspondence address.

The Commission supported investigations by the Metropolitan Police Service, Redbridge Council and the Department for Work and Pensions into suspected housing benefit and social security benefit fraud involving the charities. The founding trustees were both arrested in May 2015.

The Commission had further concerns about misuse of the charities, potential unauthorised trustee payments, lack of evidence of charitable expenditure, and dubious fundraising activities, so it opened [inquiries into both charities](#) and issued a protective order to freeze the bank account of Save the Age.

The joint agency investigation identified that a number of the names listed as trustees of the charities, apart from the two founding trustees, had been "hijacked" from individuals who did not have any connection with the charities. Prior to the opening of the inquiry one of the founding trustees had resigned and was working as an employee of Families for Survival.

In January 2016 the inquiry issued an order to suspend the sole remaining founding trustee of Families for Survival. Both founding trustees were convicted of charges brought against them by Redbridge Council in March 2016 which disqualifies them from serving as trustees of any charity.

Further investigations by the Commission found that the trustees were self-dealing by instructing their own accountancy firms to review the charities' accounts. The trustees benefitted financially from this arrangement, meaning there was serious unmanaged conflict of interest.

The inquiry also found up to £14,000 in unauthorised private benefit was paid to the trustees, and annual accounts were submitted containing false

information. Both sets of accounts were reviewed by the same accounting company. However one of the independent examiners signing off accounts was untraceable and the other was in fact an alias for one of the founding trustees.

Despite assertions that they were carrying out charitable activity at local nursing homes and campaigning in support of the elderly, scrutiny of accounts and a review of records held by Redbridge Council brought up no corroborating evidence. The trustees were therefore failing to further their charitable objects or operate for the public benefit.

The Commission concluded that there had been serious misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of both charities. As well as using the charities to facilitate unlawful activity, the individuals failed in their fundamental duties and responsibilities as charity trustees.

Following dissolution, the charities have now both been removed from the Register of Charities.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

This case highlights a cynical abuse of trusteeship by two individuals who used the good name of charity to further unlawful personal motives. They have proven themselves wholly unfit to serve as trustees.

Close cooperation between different agencies has been critical to the outcome of this case. Our intervention has upheld key principles of charity law and helped criminal proceedings in bringing these individuals to justice.

The full report of the inquiry is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to editors

1. The Commission's remit was not to investigate or make any determination as to whether the trustees had committed a criminal offence under UK law. The joint agency investigation was dealing with this. The Commission's role where criminality involving a charity is identified is to support the criminal investigation and consider the implications for the way in which the charity is being run.
2. As the individuals' offences involved dishonesty, the trustees were automatically disqualified by law from being trustees of any charity under section 178 of the Act. From 1 August 2018 people who are disqualified from acting as a trustee will also be disqualified from holding certain senior manager positions in charities.
3. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and

Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
4. Search for charities on our [online register](#).

News story: Wight Sky report published

The MAIB report on the catastrophic failure of one of the main propulsion engines on board Wight Sky, which resulted in a fire and the vessel's engineer sustaining serious injuries, on 12 September 2017, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

Press enquiries

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

Speech: African Union is a crucial partner for the United Nations

Thank you Madam President.

Let me begin by thanking Commissioner Chergui for his briefing and for the African Union's work to bring peace and security to Africa. I would also like to welcome SRSG Zewde to her new role, to thank her for her briefing and for the SG's reports and her efforts and the efforts of her office to the African Union. Thank you very much.

I would also like to join other speakers, Bolivia, Sweden and others who have taken this opportunity to pay tribute to the remarkable efforts of Ethiopia and Eritrea in recent weeks in advancing peace and stability between those two countries. This is really positive news for the region, for the African Union and for this Council.

Madam President, the United Kingdom believes the African Union is a crucial partner for the United Nations across many different strands of work, including peace and security. The AU's deep understanding of the issues that the continent is facing makes it uniquely placed to lead efforts in this area. The United Kingdom strongly welcomes the intention for the African

Union and United Nations to coordinate more on peace and security, including on conflict prevention and peacekeeping matters. Combining the knowledge and skills from both organisations will mean resources can be deployed more effectively and efficiently.

As set out in the Secretary General's report, Regional Economic Communities such as ECOWAS and IGAD have positively contributed to peace and security in the region and as such must be considered as part of the AU's reform process. To ensure resources are coordinated effectively, we agree that the AU must retain oversight over these Regional Economic Communities.

Madam President, the UK believes that the AU's Peace Support Operations can play a crucial role in achieving long-term peace, and therefore it is important that the long-term financial sustainability and predictability of current and future missions are considered so that they can keep doing their good work. As Commissioner Chergui has already highlighted today, Security Council resolutions 2320 and 2378 outline the principles of UN-assessed funding for AU-led Peace Support Operations. Resolution 2320 agreed that cooperation between the AU and the UN on Peace Support Operations is key to delivering and maintaining peace in Africa. As set out in the resolution, we look forward to progress towards a UN-AU decision-making process that respects Security Council primacy on mandating and deploying missions.

We support the AU's efforts to ensure robust standards, which are comparable to the UN's and are adhered to across the organisation. In this regard, we welcome the close work between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission on compliance frameworks and that a Conduct and Discipline Policy and a Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy have been agreed. We eagerly await completion of the accountability and oversight frameworks, so that we can move forward in considering the use of UN-assessed contributions to part-fund AU-led Peace Support Operations on a case-by-case basis. In that regard, we warmly welcome the AU's commitment to fund 25% of Peace Support Operations costs by 2020, and I also welcome the detail set out by Commissioner Chergui earlier in this meeting.

In particular, on AMISOM, we note the report of the Secretary-General's Special Envoys on AU financing, on future financing and the recommendation for the AU to lead on funding and for non-traditional donors to contribute. As the report concluded, UN Assessed Contributions are not an option in the short term. Therefore, we need to see the international community step up and provide vital contributions to AMISOM in the short to medium term.

Madam President, the United Kingdom warmly welcomes the cooperation between the African Union and the UN, as demonstrated by the joint field visits between the UN Secretary-General, Chairperson Faki and others. We encourage more joint UN-AU field visits, as well as increased coordination between UN SRSGs and AU Special Envoys – particularly ahead of decision points on mandates or sanctions regimes and ahead of the issuing of reports. The African Union's knowledge of the region is invaluable. With this in mind, we encourage more interaction between this Council and the AU's Peace and Security Council, including on reporting, so we can consider the views of the African Union.

Madam President, the challenges Africa faces remain significant. Only last year, 15,000 people were displaced every day, 75% due to conflict. We must work together to ensure our efforts are complementary so we maximise the impact they can have to give us the best chance to address the enormous challenge of achieving peace and security in Africa and in silencing the guns.

[Speech: Marking 20 years since the adoption of the ICC Rome Statute](#)

Today the United Kingdom is pleased to be participating in this occasion marking twenty years since the adoption of the Rome Statute, the historical founding treaty of the International Criminal Court.

The UK has supported the Court since its inception. We have done so because we recognise the value of an independent and impartial international body empowered to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern in circumstances where States are unwilling or genuinely unable to do so.

Today, as we have heard, also marks the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in accordance with the decision of the Assembly of States Parties in December 2017. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is for the Security Council to determine when an act of aggression has occurred, as provided for in the UN Charter.

Nevertheless, we recognise that, following the ASP's decision, it is for each State to choose whether to ratify the aggression amendments to the Rome Statute, and thereby accept the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in relation to acts committed by its nationals and on its territory.

The UK continues to believe that the ICC plays an important role in holding to account the perpetrators of atrocities. That is why we continue to provide significant financial, political and logistical support to the Court to help it fulfil its mandate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The ICC has achieved some notable successes in the 20 years since the adoption of the Rome Statute. As we look to the next 20 years, we encourage both the Court and States Parties to draw on the lessons of the past to inform a bright future for this unique institution.

Press release: UK deployment in Mali reaches the next stage

Three Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters from RAF Odiham, supported by around 90 British troops, are now on the ground and ready to begin providing logistical and troop movement support to our allies.

Armed Forces minister Mark Lancaster said:

“The UK and France have a unique security and defence relationship that has lasted for more than a century and this deployment demonstrates our shared commitment to tackling terrorism, instability and reducing threats to European security”

The Chinooks will provide niche logistical support and will also help improve safety by moving troops by air, rather than ground where they are more vulnerable to attack.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of UN and EU military operations in Mali and has worked with international partners to prevent extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as counter the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

This is in addition to existing wider support to Africa including doubling our UN peacekeeping contribution with additional deployments to South Sudan and Somalia.