

# Press release: Attempted coup in Montenegro in 2016: Foreign Secretary's statement

The judicial authorities of Montenegro have today (9 May) announced that 2 Russian intelligence officers have been found guilty of plotting an attempted coup in Montenegro, which took place in 2016.

GRU agents Eduard Shishmakov and Vladimir Popov were tried in absentia for creating a criminal organisation and attempted terrorism. Shishmakov was also tried for inciting acts against the constitution and safety of Montenegro.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The failed coup attempt against Montenegro in 2016 was one of the most outrageous examples of Russia's attempts to undermine European democracy. The GRU's brazen attempt to interfere with Montenegro's national elections and undermine Montenegro's application to join NATO is yet another example of destabilising and aggressive Russian behaviour over the last decade.

The guilty verdicts announced today against the 2 Russian intelligence officers responsible for plotting this coup were the conclusion of Montenegrin legal proceedings of unprecedented transparency. In the face of such overwhelming evidence, Russia's claims that the 2 men were researching an article about the Russian military in the region during the First World War were proven to be absurd.

Russia is a great country and central to European civilisation. Moscow must desist from any attacks that undermine the territorial integrity and democratic processes of its neighbours or other sovereign states. The UK calls on Russia to choose a different path – to uphold the security of Europe, respect the rules based international system that keeps our societies safe, and to work together with us to fulfil our common responsibilities as permanent members of the UN Security Council.