

Press release: Foreign Secretary appoints Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism

The Foreign Secretary has announced the appointment of William Shawcross as his Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. This follows discussions with UK Parliamentarians about how best the UK Government can support and facilitate the efforts of victims to obtain redress from the Libyan government.

William Shawcross was previously Chair of the Charity Commission and has a broad range of experience, including in human rights and a distinguished record in journalism stretching back more than 40 years.

Former Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi supplied weapons, including Semtex explosives, to the IRA during the Troubles. The UK Government takes this issue extremely seriously and is committed to supporting the victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism. UK Ministers and diplomats in Libya continue to press the Libyan authorities to engage constructively with victims and their representatives.

More broadly the UK is actively engaged in efforts to support the UN-led political process in Libya, the objective of which is to facilitate agreement with Libyans on a more inclusive political settlement, which would be the best way of stabilising the country.

Middle East Minister Alistair Burt said:

It is excellent that William Shawcross has agreed to take on this important new role, which will help move us closer to resolving this pressing issue.

I am confident that William's appointment will bring greater focus to our efforts to support the victims of these terrible acts of terrorism.

As the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, Mr Shawcross's role will be to help inform the government's approach to this issue. The precise terms of reference are being finalised, but among the issues Mr Shawcross will advise on is the amount of compensation that should be sought.

William Shawcross said:

I am honoured to be asked to undertake this hugely important challenge. The victims of the IRA terrorism sponsored by Qadhafi deserve all support for their efforts to obtain redress from the Libyan government.