

Press release: New cyber unit to tackle child sex abuse in Kenya

- New UK-Kenya security compact builds on our cooperation to tackle shared threats
- Money lost to corruption and hidden in Britain will be returned to the people of Kenya

British paedophiles who target and abuse vulnerable children in Kenya will be brought to justice thanks to a new cyber centre being built by Britain in Nairobi, the Prime Minister will announce today.

Online child sex abuse is a global problem with images created and shared across the world, including in Kenya. This new centre will help the Kenyan police stop these images being distributed online to help protect children from being abused.

The centre will also tackle a major barrier that prevents these predators being caught and prosecuted.

Currently, Kenyan authorities do not receive reporting of material of child sexual abuse from US-based global tech companies because the specific, secure channels needed to do so do not exist in the country.

With the support of British funding, the new specialist cyber centre will, for the first time, enable Kenyan authorities to access data on abuse, provided the by tech firms, ensuring perpetrators can be brought to justice.

Britain's funding of the cyber centre will mean the Kenyan police can now identify potential victims, investigate abuse and prosecute abusers. This builds on existing work by the UK's National Crime Agency to set up Kenya's Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit (AHTCPU) and train and mentor its staff.

The new cyber centre being announced today – the first of its kind in Africa – will be based within this existing unit, which is seeing an increase in cases of child abuse. The AHTCPU has over 100 live investigations underway and since March 2016 has protected around 400 children and supported the arrest of around 40 suspects.

The child protection unit has already helped secure convictions in the UK of British paedophiles who've sexually abused children in Kenya. This includes:

- Simon Harris from Shropshire who was sentenced to 14 years in prison at Birmingham Crown Court in 2015 for sexually abusing Kenyan street children
- Keith Morris from Hull who was sentenced to 18 and a half years in prison at Leeds Crown Court in 2018 for sexually abusing Kenyan children in a village near Mombasa

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Online child exploitation is an abhorrent crime and we are determined to ensure there is no place to hide for predators who use the internet to share images of abuse across borders, too often with impunity.

This builds on our ongoing work with Kenya on security and criminal justice – a partnership which has already helped to convict and imprison terrorists in the UK.

The cyber wing forms part of a new UK-Kenya security compact, signed today by Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Monica Juma, and witnessed by Prime Minister May and President Kenyatta.

Through the new security pact, the UK has also committed to:

- offer training in community security to help strengthen the police's engagement with marginalised communities, to help Kenya tackle violence against girls and women and to prevent extremism by dealing with the threat at source
- share expertise with Kenya's criminal justice system to strengthen the procedures for processing complex legal cases including terrorism and organised crime – improving the use of terrorism legislation and strengthening interagency working to help bring offenders to justice in the UK and Kenya
- provide new support for aviation security including machines to detect explosives to keep the 100,000 Brits who visit Kenya every year safe by preventing attacks in the country and on direct flights to the UK

This builds on our ongoing cooperation through the first UK-Kenya Security Compact, agreed in 2015, and sets out a new programme of work for the years ahead.

The 2015 pact has led to two terrorism convictions in the UK, the establishment of a counter-IED training centre in Nairobi for regional security forces fighting Al-Shabaab, the extradition of wanted criminals from the UK to Kenya, and better aviation security – among other results.

And in a further example of UK and Kenyan domestic law enforcement working together to tackle shared threats, Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin will sign an agreement in Nairobi today, witnessed by the Prime Minister, to return to the Kenyan people money that's been lost to crime and corruption in Kenya and concealed in banks and assets in the UK.

Stolen funds found in Britain can now be used to fund development projects in sectors such as health and education. This includes over £3.6 million in proceeds of crime seized by courts in Jersey.

Other initiatives to be announced today to tackle corruption, increase

investor confidence, encourage UK trade and investment and support economic growth in Africa include:

- a new programme to counter illicit financial flows across southern and eastern Africa to help regional law enforcement recover illegal funds and disrupt serious organised crime networks
- new practical guidance to help British companies overcome barriers to doing business in Kenya and other emerging markets, including advice on dealing with requests for bribes and human rights issues in supply chains – with tailored support to be offered to SMEs