

Press release: Soft sentence' correction scheme extended to terror offences

People found guilty of encouraging terrorism, sharing terrorist propaganda and other terror related offences could see their sentences increased if victims or the public think the punishment is too soft.

Under plans confirmed by ministers today, the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme – which allows victims of crime and the public to query the sentences handed out by the courts – will now include an increased range of terror-related offences.

The scheme gives anyone the power to ask the Attorney General to review a sentence and, where appropriate, the Attorney General can refer it to the Court of Appeal for reconsideration.

The most serious terror offences, and crimes such as murder and rape, are already covered, but under these changes the sentences for 19 offences including supporting extremist organisations, encouraging acts of terror or failing to disclose information about a terrorist attack will also be eligible for review.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

We want the most robust sentences for any terrorist crimes and for victims to have every opportunity to see justice delivered.

Our action will reinforce our focus on deterring people who help radicalise terrorists, and punishing those who wilfully turn a blind eye to terrorist activity.

As the Home Secretary announced last year, the government has been committed to extending the scope of the scheme so a broader range of terror sentences can be challenged – recognising the devastating impact terrorism has on victims and communities.

The move also fulfils a Manifesto pledge to act in this area, helping to protect the public and make sure victims see justice done.

In 2015, the Attorney General referred 136 cases to the Court of Appeal, with the Court increasing the sentences of 102 offenders. While it is right the public and victims have the right to request a review this represents a small proportion of the 80,000 Crown Court cases heard each year, and shows that the judiciary get the vast majority of decisions right.

Today's announcement builds on the tough action already taken by the

government to confront extremism, promote integration and identify new policies to tackle extremism. Keeping families, communities and our country safe is this Government's priority, and as the Prime Minister said following the appalling terrorist attacks in Manchester and London we will review our counter-terrorism strategy to tackle the changing threat.

Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP said:

The ULS scheme allows victims of crime, their families and the public to request a sentence review if they feel it's too low.

Widening the scheme to include terrorism offences will allow us to challenge more sentences and is a welcome first step to extending it even further.

Crimes of this nature will not be tolerated in our society and those convicted of terrorism will receive the sentence they deserve.

Notes to editors

- The ULS allows the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to review sentences given by the Crown Court in England and Wales if they're asked to.
- A request must be sent to the AGO within 28 days of the sentencing. After which the AGO has 28 days to review a sentence and make a decision. Once they've reviewed the case, they may send it to the Court of Appeal. The court then decides whether the sentence should stay the same or it is unreasonably low and increase it. The court can also refuse to hear a case.
- The scheme will be extended to a raft of offences in the Terror Act 2000, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, and the Terrorism Act 2006. These offences cover a wide range of behaviour including: membership of banned organisations, fundraising terror, weapons training and publishing or communicating information about our armed forces.

Table of new offences in scope:

Offence	Description	Max Penalty (yrs)
Terrorism Act 2000 s11	Membership of proscribed organisation	10
Terrorism Act 2000 s12	Support for a proscribed organisation	10
Terrorism Act 2000 s15	Fundraising	14
Terrorism Act 2000 s16	Use and possession of funds	14
Terrorism Act 2000 s17	Funding arrangements	14
Terrorism Act 2000 s18	Money laundering	14
Terrorism Act 2000 s38B	Failing to disclose information about an act of terrorism	5

Offence	Description	Max Penalty (yrs)
Terrorism Act 2000 s54	Weapons training	Life
Terrorism Act 2000 s57	Possessing article for terrorist purpose	15
Terrorism Act 2000 s58	Collecting information	10
Terrorism Act 2000 s58A	Information about member of armed forces	10
Terrorism Act 2000 ss63B, 63C, 63D	This extends jurisdiction to certain offences committed outside the UK!!!The offences are inflicting bodily harm and criminal damage	5-10 years, depending on offence
Terrorism Act 2006 s1	Encouragement of terrorism	7
Terrorism Act 2006 s2	Dissemination of terrorist publications	7
Terrorism Act 2006 s6	Training for terrorism	Life
Terrorism Act 2006 s8	Attending terrorist training camp	10
Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 s113	Use of noxious substances or things	14

- A pooled-clip of Minister Raab is available through SKY News.