

Response to the findings of the Independent Review into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil case

On 9 February 2022, the Attorney General, Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, commissioned an [independent review](#) of the Serious Fraud Office to look at what went wrong in the Unaoil case and what changes were needed to ensure that the failings identified in the judgment do not happen again.

Sir David Calvert-Smith, a former Director of Public Prosecutions and High Court judge led the review.

Commenting on the Review, the Attorney General said:

"I wish to thank Sir David and the team for carrying out the Review. I have considered the findings carefully and discussed these with the Director of the SFO. We both accept the recommendations made by Sir David. I commissioned this Review to ensure that lessons are learned so that the failings we saw in the Unaoil case do not happen again. This remains a priority for the Director and me.

"Building on work already undertaken by the SFO a clear plan of action to respond to the Review recommendations has been developed. I will be closely monitoring the SFO's progress and delivery of that plan and will provide an update to Parliament in November 2022 and February 2023.

"I am aware that the SFO has received recommendations made by Brian Altman QC, following the Independent Review he conducted for the SFO following the 'R v Woods and Marshall' judgment and the SFO will be publishing further details on this."

Commenting on the Review, the Director of the Serious Fraud Office said:

"Implementing the recommendations put forward by Brian Altman QC and Sir David Calvert Smith is our pressing priority.

"The reviews are a sobering read for anyone who believes in the mission and purpose of the SFO, but from the outset we wanted to establish what happened in these two cases and use the findings to improve our performance.

"The SFO of today is already not the same organisation I inherited. While the expertise and determination of our committed staff remains steadfast, a new senior leadership team has prioritised investment in technology, introduced a stringent case prioritisation system and we have embedded a change programme to overhaul the SFO's working practices and culture.

"The SFO has a crucially important mission, fighting the most serious and

complex financial crime, securing justice for victims and protecting the UK's economy from criminals who commit fraud, bribery and corruption. I am determined to ensure these reviews help us to move forward with clarity and confidence.”

Notes

1. Junior officials' names have been redacted from the published [review](#) in line with standard government practice. The SFO has waived legal privilege in relation to legal advice referred to in the review only for the purposes of this review.
2. Sir David was named a 'changemaker within the criminal justice system' by the National Black Crown Prosecution Association in 2019 for his work to tackle racism.
3. Sir David Calvert-Smith led the investigation for the Commission for Racial Equality into racism within the Police Service of England and Wales which reported in 2005.