

# Prosecution of journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation: UK statement

World news story

Delivered by Nicola Murray, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the OSCE Permanent Council on 2 July 2020.



The UK shares the concern expressed by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media regarding the ongoing prosecution of Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation. Ms Prokopyeva faces a charge of “publicly justifying terrorism” which can carry a prison sentence of up to seven years.

Ms Prokopyeva, a journalist with Radio Ekho Moskv, had been commenting on a terrorist attack in October 2018. As the RFOM said in his statement of 17 March this year, Ms Prokopyeva’s comments, however critical, had nothing to do with the promotion or support of terrorism, and we echo his call for the charges to be dropped.

We note this prosecution takes place in the context of ongoing pressure on the few remaining domestic independent media outlets in Russia and continued impunity for those who have committed violent crimes against journalists. We remind the Russian delegation of our many commitments on the right to freedom of expression, including, as set out in Moscow 1991 “the right of the media to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions”.

As States agreed, any restriction in the exercise of this right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards. We reiterate that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government, and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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# Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee UK-US Data Access Agreement

News story

Independent Investigatory Powers Commissioner will provide oversight of the UK's use of the UK-US Data Access Agreement.



The Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC), Sir Brian Leveson, will be responsible for providing independent oversight of the UK's use of the new UK-US Data Access Agreement when it comes into use later this year, the government announced today.

The agreement, a world-first, will allow certain UK public authorities, including law enforcement, to request electronic data directly from US telecommunications operators through a court-approved order or a warrant, speeding up investigations and the prosecution of serious criminals.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

My priority is to give law enforcement the powers they need to go after criminals and better protect victims. This landmark Agreement will dramatically speed up the investigation and prosecution of the most serious offenders.

I am grateful to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner for providing this essential independent oversight of the UK's use of the Agreement.

As part of the agreement, both the UK and the US are required to ensure that the agencies which use the agreement maintain high standards of data protection and privacy safeguards.

The UK government has therefore set out in law that the IPC shall keep the

compliance of UK agencies with the Agreement under review, providing independent oversight to help ensure that it is being used in accordance with its terms.

The IPC provides independent oversight and authorisation of the use of investigatory powers by intelligence agencies, police forces and other public authorities, reflecting the UK's international reputation for transparency and the protection of human rights.

The UK/US Data Access Agreement completed its ratification in Parliament earlier this year. This month, the agreement will also complete its scrutiny process in the US Congress – another significant milestone in bringing the agreement into use.

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## **UK statement to the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees High Level Meeting**

High Commissioner, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by welcoming the Support Platforms launched at the Global Refugee Forum, including the regional platforms for Afghan Refugees. We are interested in the Core Group of States, and wish to hear further about the role they will play and the proposed timeline. We are willing to offer our political and facilitation support.

We note that the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees will support the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees, which must be done in conditions of dignity and safety. It is essential that any process outlines the favourable conditions for returns, including economic opportunity, security, and access to health and education, and assesses that these have been met. The challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for Afghan refugees and host communities alike.

The UK is committed to supporting the voluntary, safe and dignified return of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan. We welcome the work that UNHCR is doing in those countries to support host governments and continue to provide substantial support through IOM, to offer registration and assistance for the most vulnerable portion of those returning from Iran and Pakistan. The UK is one of the only countries providing resettlement opportunities to Afghan migrants from Iran this year, hoping to resettle up to 100 refugees.

We welcome the essential work that UNHCR and international non-governmental

organisations, including Relief International and the Norwegian Refugee Council, are doing with the Iranian authorities to ensure the resilience of vulnerable Afghan communities. We appreciate the support that the Government of Iran provides to its Afghan community, and are open to exploring opportunities for assistance.

We recognise the willingness of the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to co-operate on the orderly, voluntary and principled return of Afghan refugees for whom repatriation to Afghanistan is a viable option. In line with the aims of the regional platform, UK assistance to Pakistan is helping deliver education to host and refugee children alike.

The UK has invested in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, working with host and migrant populations to ensure that all children can be immunised. We harmonised this with our polio programme in Afghanistan to ensure that all children in both countries, and those moving between them, are immunised. We also sought to establish vaccination sites in areas that migrant Afghans are known to travel through. Our polio campaigns have been paused due to COVID-19, but we hope they will be resumed shortly.

The UK remains strongly committed to Afghanistan, providing £210 million in humanitarian assistance over a five year period to 2024. In the long-term, this will help to establish conducive conditions for returns by supporting resilience for returnees and displaced people at the community level, as well as targeting those areas of the country with the greatest potential for high numbers of returns from Iran and Pakistan.

Thank you.

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## [ACMD public evidence request on cognition enhancers](#)

News story

ACMD public request for written evidence on cognition enhancers (also known as 'nootropics' or 'study drugs').



Getty Images

The ACMD are inviting relevant stakeholders to provide submissions of written evidence to support its workstream on cognition enhancers (also known as 'nootropics', or study drugs).

The workstream aims to explore the prevalence, patterns and motivations for the use of cognition enhancers in the UK. The workstream will focus on, but not be limited to, the drugs modafinil, methylphenidate and dexamfetamine, and the harms to those who use these drugs outside of prescribed medical use.

If you would like to submit written evidence please get in touch with the ACMD Secretariat at [acmd@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:acmd@homeoffice.gov.uk) by Friday 31 July.

You should include a brief description of the organisation you represent, and the type of information you can provide.

The ACMD are particularly interested in hearing about prevalence of use and health and social harms relating to non-medical use of modafinil, methylphenidate and dexamfetamine in the following:

- school and university student populations
- competitive sporting environments
- workplace environments

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## [New member announced for Ofqual Board](#)

News story

The independent regulator announces new appointment to its Board.



Ofqual has announced that Dr Catherine McClellan has joined its Board, with effect from 1 June 2020.

Dr McClellan is Director of Assessment & Psychometric Research at the Australian Council for Educational Research, a not-for-profit research organisation that aims to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the lifespan.

She has also worked internationally in various research and development roles including the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey.

Roger Taylor, Chair of Ofqual, said:

“I am delighted to welcome Catherine to the board. Ofqual undertakes incredibly technical, research-driven work so it is vital that we have access to the very best expertise from home and abroad.”

“Catherine brings an international perspective which, combined with her considerable knowledge and experience, will contribute greatly to Ofqual’s work, not least at a time when we are working at speed to develop new approaches to assessment.”

In addition, Hywel Jones and Frances Wadsworth have been re-appointed to the Ofqual Board for a further 2 years (to March 2022), and Dame Christine Ryan for a further 3 years (to March 2023).

Appointments to the Ofqual board are made by the Secretary of State for Education, and board members sit for a term of 3 years. [Information about the work of the board and its membership can be found here.](#)

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