

Speech: Resolving cases of missing persons

Thank you, Mr President. And I'd like to welcome you formally to the council today and congratulate you on presiding over it and your team of course for the great work they have been doing this month already.

Every year, thousands of people go missing amidst violence and armed conflict. Every one of those missing persons is an individual. A mother. A father. A son. A daughter. A sister. A brother. Their absence is directly felt by their loved ones for a lifetime. Uncertainty about the fate of family members, whether they are dead or alive, can continue for many years after the fighting ends. The trauma this causes can undermine relationships among communities and makes peacebuilding and reconciliation harder.

The circumstances in which disappearances occur can vary greatly. As armed conflicts create significant mass displacement, many migrants, refugees or internally displaced people go missing because they are afraid or unable to contact their families. Combatants and civilians may go missing as a result of abductions, mass atrocities and forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and, of course, extrajudicial killing. Women and children may be particularly at risk of being abducted for sexual exploitation or enslavement. And the actions of non-state armed groups pose a particular challenge; in northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram has abducted hundreds if not thousands of women and children, including 274 girls kidnapped from their secondary school in Chibok in 2014. Five years on, more than 112 of those girls are still missing. In Iraq, between five and seven thousand Yazidi women and girls were abducted and subjected to sexual slavery by Daesh in 2014. Today, more than 3,000 Yazidi women and children remain unaccounted for. Given the scale of a phenomenon of missing persons globally, the resolution we adopted this morning provides an important opportunity to review and strengthen international cooperation on this issue.

Mr President, the United Kingdom welcomes Kuwait's leadership on this important and complex issue and we are pleased to vote in favour of the resolution that you presented. This resolution underlines the existing international legal obligations in this area and builds on the work of existing mechanisms. It also underscores that states bear the primary responsibility to protect their civilians and uphold the human rights of all individuals within their territory.

But we need international cooperation in addressing the issue of missing persons, both during and after conflicts. After conflicts, international support to resolve this is frequently an important factor in promoting post-conflict peace, security, and reconciliation. And I'd like here to commend the work of the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent and the International Commission on Missing Persons and providing long-term institutional capacity and technical expertise to governments in the location, recovery and identification of missing persons.

Mr President, as we have heard today, the issue of missing persons is a complex and prevalent problem in Iraq and Kuwait but also in many conflict situations around the world. In Kosovo, we welcome the efforts of UNMIK and the Government of Kosovo to address legacy issues, including investigating cases of missing persons. According to the ICRC, more than 17,000 people are still registered as missing from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia that broke out in the 1990s.

Justice for all victims and their families is a crucial part of future stability. The United Kingdom calls on both Pristina and Belgrade to support all necessary action, which must include supporting existing domestic war crimes courts to ensure that outstanding war crimes cases are heard. We urge political leaders to focus on these efforts rather than the divisive political rhetoric which only perpetuates antagonism.

The resolution we have adopted today highlights the actions Member States can take to prevent persons going missing in armed conflict. But sadly there are too many examples of states deliberately acting to target civilians in armed conflict, including through arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in 2012 that enforced disappearances were used by the ruling regime in Syria to eliminate opposition groups and instill a climate of fear. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic estimates that at least 60,000 people have gone missing in Syria since the beginning of the Civil War. Seventeen thousand more are believed to have gone missing as a result of government repression before the beginning of the conflict.

The United Kingdom underlines the importance of the work that the international impartial and independent mechanism is undertaken on accountability and takes note of its plans to develop a system to categorise and classify material which might be relevant to the location of missing persons.

Mr President, long after conflict ends, families and communities are deeply affected by those who remain missing. Since the beginning of my diplomatic career in Cyprus, I have met many families in this position from a range of conflicts. They suffer every day and those of us who have met them cannot fail to be moved by their suffering. They relive conflicts as others are able to move on. Whatever positions Member States around this table take on individual conflict, let us all agree collectively that resolving cases of missing persons should be a humanitarian priority and let us try to remove this issue from the political arena.

Thank you, Mr President.

[News story: Government Chemist and IGFS review key quantitative techniques](#)

The methods of standard additions and of internal standards are regularly used and regarded as self-evident to modern analytical chemists. We seldom, if ever, wonder how they arose.

Prompted by this lacuna, Professor Duncan Thorburn Burns of the Institute for Global Food Security, Queens University Belfast and [Dr Michael Walker](#) collaborated to study the origins and history of these concepts.

The two methods are related by the addition of analytes to the sample prior to their quantitative determination but they are quite different. The method of standard additions measures the analytical responses to a series of known additions of the same analyte from which the amount of the endogenous compound can be calculated.

The method of internal standards adds a known amount of an analogue of the compound of interest that is essentially absent from the sample. Its determination alongside the analyte of interest allows the results to be corrected for inevitable losses of analyte in the measurement process.

The origin of both procedures is missing from current texts on instrumental methods of analysis. They stem from the original work of several chemists whose priority should be properly acknowledged but has been inadvertently misattributed.

In a recent open access feature article in the prestigious journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry* Burns and Walker set the record straight on priority and review the recorded applications. These range from flame spectroscopy in 1877 and polarography in 1937 through to current use in NMR and in hyphenated techniques.

Burns, D.T. and Walker, M.J., 2019. Origins of the method of standard additions and of the use of an internal standard in quantitative instrumental chemical analyses. *Analytical and bioanalytical chemistry*, 411, 2749 – 2753, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00216-019-01754-w>

[Press release: Regulation rulebook](#)

rewritten to ensure UK leads tech revolution and empowers consumers

- government rewrites regulation rulebook to embrace technological change as part of its modern Industrial Strategy
- more support for businesses to launch new, transformative products to UK markets faster
- Smart Data Review to offer consumers greater control over their data to get better deals
- Vulnerable Consumer Challenge to ensure the most vulnerable and least digitally engaged customers are still able to enjoy the best deals

New measures announced today (11 June 2019) will free up businesses and innovators to test their ideas, make use of the latest technologies and get their products to market quicker – keeping the UK at the forefront of innovation.

Regulation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Speaking at [London Tech Week](#), Business Secretary Greg Clark will say the proposed reforms will ensure an agile and flexible approach to regulation in the UK, a key part of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#).

This will allow entrepreneurs and business to embrace innovation, seize the opportunities of cutting-edge technology and bring transformative products to market – such as personalised medicine or pioneering new modes of transport – to benefit consumers and other businesses. These measures include:

- a new Regulatory Horizons Council to advise government on rules and regulations that may need to evolve and adapt to keep pace with technology
- a Regulation Navigator – a new digital interface to help businesses ease their way through the regulatory landscape and bring their ideas to market quickly
- a partnership with the World Economic Forum to share best practice on getting innovative products and services to market
- a review of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund, which backs projects that are testing new technology in partnership with the regulators in a safe but innovative environment

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Almost every sector and industry is facing disruption from technological change – with the pace of change only accelerating – disrupting markets, companies and the way we work and live our lives.

Our plans will ensure the UK's regulatory system maintains its

pioneering reputation, keeping pace with cutting-edge technology – from personalised AI medicine to smart ships that can navigate the seas autonomously.

Our modern Industrial Strategy and innovative regulatory landscape will ensure the UK remains the destination of choice for those developing and bringing transformative products and services to market rapidly and safely.

Smart Data

Empowering consumers to benefit from their own data and get fair deals

Today, the government also announced the outcome of its Smart Data Review with proposed measures to ensure consumers' data is handled with the security that they would rightly expect when agreeing to share it with third parties for offers of better deals.

Plans include the establishment of a new cross-sectoral Smart Data Function to oversee the use of smart data in different markets. This could allow firms to develop apps that can help consumers manage their household bills in one place and prompt them when a better deal becomes available.

The review recognises the changing pace of technology, and increased availability of data of how people use services, such as energy consumption or mobile phone usage – but that customers can often have to wait to gain access to their own information, and cannot use it effectively enough to shop around for the best deals.

Under proposals published today, this data would instead be easily and instantly accessible to consumers and, if consented to, safely and securely transferred to third party services. This could include price comparison websites, who would then use this data to find fairer deals – whether for energy services, new mobile phone contracts or broadband.

Business Secretary Greg Clark added:

As markets and services change, the volume of data only grows, providing evermore innovative applications of consumer data. We want consumers to benefit from that innovation but in a way that ensures their information is safe.

Our proposals will do just that, protecting consumers whilst allowing them to secure the best deals available on the market.

Protecting vulnerable consumers

The proposals from the Smart Data Review also include measures to protect

vulnerable customers: for example, a new Vulnerable Consumer Challenge will encourage innovators, charities and regulators to ensure their most vulnerable and least digitally engaged customers are able to enjoy the best deals.

Notes to editors

The white paper on 'Regulation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution' reflects the government's Industrial Strategy ambition to make the UK the world's most innovative economy. It matches the government's record increase in R&D investment by making it easier for new products and services to come to market.

It builds on the UK's world-leading business environment:

The [Regulators' Pioneer Fund](#), launched in 2018, is currently investing in 15 unique projects to unlock opportunities identified in the government's modern Industrial Strategy.

The fund builds on the Financial Conduct Authority's pioneering initiative to support the UK's fledgling FinTech industry by establishing the world's first '[regulatory sandbox](#)': a safe space where firms can work with the regulator to trial innovative products, services and business models with consumers. The concept has since been copied by more than 20 countries worldwide.

Awards include:

- up to £1 million to the Civil Aviation Authority to support a project that includes a 'regulatory lab' to unblock legislative and regulatory barriers to innovations, such as flying taxis
- nearly £700,000 awarded to the Solicitors Regulation Authority to support innovations that use artificial intelligence (AI) to transform the legal services market for small businesses and consumers
- almost £700,000 to Ofcom for a project that uses blockchain technology to improve UK telephone number management

Related news

[News story: Civil news: face-to-face and telephone advice service tenders](#)

Tenders open on 11 June 2019 which give organisations the opportunity to bid for work under two procurement processes:

- specialist legal advice delivered in education, discrimination and

housing and debt

- face-to-face advice in education and discrimination

Timescales

The deadline for submitting tenders is 9am on Wednesday 10 July 2019.

You can find out details of how to bid and see a full timetable on our tender pages.

You can also view a breakdown of the contract start dates from September 2019.

Why is this happening now?

We need to award contracts to prepare for the removal of the CLA mandatory telephone gateway for civil legal services in education, discrimination and debt.

This is happening in the spring of 2020. We are ensuring continuity of service through a mixture of new specialist telephone advice and face-to-face contracts.

What does this mean for clients?

Starting in September 2019 prospective clients will still need to contact the CLA operator service or use the digital CLA service.

However, potentially eligible clients seeking help in education or discrimination will have greater freedom to access face to face advice. This will mean discussing suitable options with a CLA specialist telephone advice provider.

Once the mandatory telephone gateway has been removed from legislation in 2020 all clients will be able to contact face-to-face providers directly.

Where can I find out more?

Detailed information is available in the 'Information for Applicants' document on our tender pages.

Further information

[Civil legal aid services from September 2019](#)

[Legal aid guidance](#) – to download 'Civil Legal Advice – September 2019 changes'

[Standard Civil Contract 2018](#)

[Civil Legal Advice Contract 2018 and the 2018 Civil Legal Advice](#)

Press release: Paedophile jailed by Court of Appeal

A man who met a 12 year old girl online before having sex with her has been sent to jail following a ruling by the Court of Appeal.

Adam Quelch, 22, made contact with his victim through an instant messenger app. Four days after initiating contact he picked her up in his car, walked her to a nearby wood and raped her. The offender then moved to Australia, continuing to communicate with the girl over other social media platforms. He was arrested at an airport when he returned to the UK in January 2019 and charged with the rape of a child under 13.

Quelch was sentenced to a Community Order which was referred to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient. Today he has been given an immediate custodial sentence of 2 years 6 months' imprisonment with licence extension of a year.

After the hearing, the Solicitor General, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

“Quelch’s actions had a severe impact on the victim and her family. Thankfully, he was brought to justice when he returned to the UK. Due to the severity of his crime he will remain imprisoned for the immediate future.”