

[News story: Pakistan: Terror group leader added to UN Sanctions list](#)

On 1 May 2019, the UN decided to add Masood Azhar, the leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed, to the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List of individuals and entities subject to the assets freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo set out in paragraph 1 of the Security Council resolution 2368 (2017), adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

An FCO Spokesperson said:

On 1 May, Masood Azhar, leader and founder of terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), was listed by the United Nations (UN). The UK strongly supports this UN listing and has worked closely with international partners to achieve this result. JeM was proscribed in the UK in 2001 and we have consistently called for this international listing. We welcome the unity of the decision taken by the UN, which sends a strong message about the importance of collective action to uphold global peace and stability.

The UK Government believes the listing is a positive development for the security and stability of the South Asia region. We welcome the commitment by the Government of Pakistan to tackle terrorist groups and the extremism that sustains them. The UK continues to encourage robust and sustained action against these groups, and will work tirelessly to address the ongoing threat they pose to the UK and the international community.

[News story: EU Settlement Scheme: Call for evidence](#)

My [first report on the EU Settlement Scheme](#) was published on 2 May 2019. This covered the development of the Scheme up to the conclusion of the second Private Beta phase in January 2019.

On 30 March 2019, the Scheme was opened to everyone who is eligible and I am about to begin a further inspection to examine how it is working. To that end, I am inviting anyone with knowledge and experience of the Scheme to write to me by 31 May 2019 with their evidence.

If you are intending to submit evidence, you may find it helpful to refer to the '[ICIBI's Expectations](#)', since these will inform (but not limit) my approach. In particular, I am keen to receive evidence relating to whether:

- Information is easy to find, understand and use
- Processes are simple to follow and transparent
- Home Office staff appear knowledgeable and competent
- Decisions and actions are 'right first time'
- Errors are identified, acknowledged and promptly 'put right'

Please note that I am not empowered to investigate individual applications or to intervene with the Home Office on behalf of applicants. However, I am interested in individual cases to the extent that they illustrate or point to systemic problems.

News story: British Embassy Vientiane, Laos – Call for bids 2019/20

The British Embassy Programme Fund (BEPF) is issuing a call for bids for projects in line with the UK government's foreign policy objectives in Lao PDR during financial year 2019/20.

The BEPF project bids will be shortlisted and approved by the British Embassy Vientiane's Post Programme Board. To apply for funding, interested organisations must submit a project proposal and activity budget plan to the British Embassy. This will provide the basic information required to enable the Post Programme Board to make an assessment on whether or not the bidder will be invited to submit a full project proposal.

All projects submitted must directly support at least one of the following priority objectives for the British Embassy Programme Fund: 1. Promoting Education. Preference will be given to projects related to:

1. Promoting a safe and enabling environment for good governance, rule of law and human rights. Preference will be given to projects related to:
1. Promoting a safe and enabling environment for operating business in Lao PDR by raising awareness and enhancing capacity of both private and non – private sectors. Preference will be given to projects related to:

- Tourism and Hospitality
- Anti-money laundering

1. Environment and Conservation. Preference will be given to projects related to:

- Illegal Wildlife trade (IWT)

1. Promoting culture and sports, including the development of media, social media, film and other creative arts. Preference will be given to projects related to:

The BEPF will fund projects from £5,000 upwards. It is strongly recommended that projects supporting these priority objectives must under £10,000.

All British Embassy Vientiane Programme Fund projects must clearly demonstrate how they will:

- support at least one of the above priorities
- deliver value for money (VfM)
- meet OECD criteria for Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding and
- demonstrate that they are able to complete 90% spend by December 7, 2019

The assessment criteria will be based on the following:

Managerial and Financial Aspects

- any organisation can apply for funding. We do not accept project bids submitted by individuals.
- please note that we cannot make pre-payments; the successful bidders should make the payment and then ask us to reimburse these expenses. The implementer must have an active bank account in the name of the organisation to which we can electronically transfer reimbursements.
- organisations must prove that they are able to manage the project sum in a satisfactory manner; the Embassy may request reports by auditors.

Exemptions We regret that we are unable to fund:

- academic courses
- charitable activities

- commercial activities
- infrastructure or construction projects, or
- humanitarian aid co-financing

Evaluation of project bids

- the aim of the project should be concise, feasible and sustainable
- the expected outcomes should be measurable and
- the target group should be clearly defined and involved in project implementation

Approval and reporting We will invite the implementer to submit a full Project Proposal and Activity Based Budget Plan and the full conditions of grants will be outlined once final decisions have been made by the Post Programme Board. The Embassy will require monthly financial reports/meetings and quarterly project progress reports from implementers. The first payment will be made upon the receipt of a monthly financial report. When the project has been completed the implementer shall prepare and send a final report to the Embassy within the period specified in the contract. Implementation time frame

Process: Please complete the following documents attached:

Successful applicants will implement their projects under the condition below:

- Duration of the Project: June 10, 2019 – February 15, 2020.
- All payment requests and reporting should be finalised by March 15, 2020, with 90% of funding spent by December 7, 2019.
- Budget must be 100% spent by February 15 2020.

Contact Completed concept notes should be sent by email to anongly.phimmasone@fco.gov.uk by 27 May 2019.

[Press release: Parole Board Chief Executive's Blog – 7th edition – April 2019](#)

International paroling authorities' conference

I was delighted to be invited to attend a conference of international parole authorities in Baltimore, USA. This was a fantastic opportunity to hear about how parole works in New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and different US states. While each jurisdiction is different, there is a great deal of commonality.

The [Association of Paroling Authorities International's](#) conference included sessions on how victims are treated, the increasing importance of using desistance theory when reviewing risk, and hearing from prisoners who have been through parole.

At the end of the conference I was surprised and honoured that the Parole Board had been awarded [the CARE award](#) for improving victim and public understanding of the parole process through providing decision summaries and producing better public information. I do think this is an area where our hard work has yielded some real improvements.

A victim's guide to parole

[A victim's guide to parole](#)

Linking nicely to our commitment to improve the information available for victims, the Board has published "A victim's guide to parole." This video is made for victims to help show what they can expect during the different stages of the parole journey. It was made in collaboration with the Victims' Commissioner (who also provides the voice-over) and professionals who support victims during the parole process.

Priorities for the new financial year

Looking ahead to the new financial year I wanted to highlight some priorities:

BAME representation

I am really hopeful that our most recent recruitment campaign will increase BAME representation in our membership. The early signs are positive. Our outreach work ensured that we received more than double the number of applications we were expecting. 27% of those applications were from a BAME background and it is looking like a high proportion will be invited to

interview. Having a more diverse membership is important for confidence in the parole system and it is vital that we build on this promise in all future programmes.

10,000 oral hearings

The number of cases that need a parole hearing remains extremely high. I now anticipate that the Board will need to list around 10,000 oral hearings this financial year to keep up with demand. This is essential to ensure hearings are held in a timely fashion.

Decision making framework

To be more transparent about how the Board makes parole decisions, we will be publishing a decision making framework for members that will provide a clear, structured document to assist them when they are reviewing parole cases.

More cases completed

We will be rolling out a project to our membership in a determined effort to reduce unnecessary deferrals. In its pilot phase, 'Project Compass' showed a dramatic reduction in the number of deferrals that happen on the day of a hearing, from over 20% to around 6%.

Deferrals on the day of a hearing cause anxiety and frustration for prisoners and victims, and are also the most wasteful for the Board. I am happy to see the introduction of Project Compass and am confident this will have a positive effect on the 'on the day' deferral rate and deferrals in general.

I am also hopeful that more can be done within the system to drive up earlier case completion.

Performance

A new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed and will be published in the Parole Board's Business Plan (2019/20). These KPIs will seek to ensure that the right outcomes are measured and incentivised.

Our indicators are focused on: timeliness of hearings and decisions, ensuring hearings go ahead and are effective, and continuing to improve confidence and transparency in the parole process.

Guidance for members on consideration of allegations

Earlier this month [we published guidance](#) for our members on the consideration of allegations made against a prisoner.

This guidance was a key part of [our strategic commitment](#) to equip our members with further guidance and support to fairly handle cases where there are allegations of offending that someone has not been convicted for. We worked

with judges and lawyers to get the right balance so that we continue to have fair hearings, while acting on recommendations made for the Board to improve certain aspects of its work.

It is worth saying that we do listen and have consistently made improvements over the past year, including: the introduction of decision summaries, refresher training to all of our members and vastly improving the information available to victims.

That said, we are not sitting still. The work to deliver a more effective and transparent system continues.

For example, we are preparing to implement a reconsideration mechanism – where victims and prisoners will be able to make a request for parole decisions to be reviewed – [following recommendations made by the MoJ review](#)

Press release: Brits urged to read travel advice ahead of Bank Holiday trips

British people planning to use the upcoming Bank Holidays to go abroad are being urged to plan for their trips by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The FCO is using an improved design on its travel advice [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) channels to remind people to prepare themselves before they leave the UK.

The FCO travel social media accounts display key updates to the FCO's travel advice. They are being updated with new graphics that include FCO and Travel Aware branding, and are colour-coded by region.

Travel Aware is the FCO's ongoing flagship consular prevention campaign. It provides advice to British people on how to stay safe when travelling overseas, information on local laws and customs, visa and passport requirements, and country-specific guidance on health.

Travel Aware is supported by a network of over 400 partners from across the travel industry.

The FCO provides travel advice for 225 countries and territories across the world. The FCO's travel advice pages were visited 45 million times last year, with the most popular pages being Turkey, USA and Egypt.

An FCO spokesperson said:

British people make around 50 million trips abroad every single year. Most of these are trouble-free, but staff at our Embassies across the world help tens of thousands of people every year who find themselves in difficulty.

Reading our travel advice before you go away can save you time and stress, meaning you can focus on enjoying your holiday. We hope this update to [@FC0travel](#) will encourage even more people to read our advice before they go abroad.

Notes to editors:

- The FC0 has been providing [travel advice](#) since 1990.
- Its purpose is to provide trustworthy, objective information and advice to help British nationals make their own informed decisions about foreign travel and plan for a safe and trouble-free trip.
- Our 225 travel advice country pages include information and advice on a range of topics, including safety and security, the threat from terrorism, entry requirements, local laws and customs, health and natural disasters.
- We also have a range of other publications to help British nationals prepare effectively for foreign travel. Our foreign travel checklist sets out a list of things people can do before and during their trip to prepare for a safe and trouble-free trip.
- We also publish travel tips for specific traveller or trip types, including women travellers, LGBT travellers, gap year travellers, travellers with mental health needs, disabled people, people travelling during Ramadan, people visiting family and abroad, and people attending festivals abroad

Further information