

## [News story: UK statement on the Golan Heights](#)

Following US President Donald Trump's comments on Thursday 21 March, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesperson said:

The UK views the Golan Heights as territory occupied by Israel. Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law, including the UN Charter.

We did not recognise Israel's annexation in 1981 and have no plans to change our position.

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## [Press release: Yorkshire moorland rapist has sentence increased](#)

A 55 year old man who kidnapped, assaulted and raped a woman has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it to the Court of Appeal.

Malcolm Lockwood followed his victim from her home to some nearby woods where he physically assaulted and threatened to kill her. He then forced her to enter his car and they drove for several hours, with Lockwood posting unpleasant and sexually explicit messages on the victim's social media accounts. Lockwood then parked the car in an isolated area where he raped the victim and filmed it.

The ordeal ended when the victim was found in the early hours of the morning by police after a search. When speaking to police the victim stated she believed she would have died had the police not found her. She has also moved house and changed her car for fear of being found by Lockwood.

Lockwood was originally sentenced in January to 14 and a half years in prison with an extension period of 8 years at Leeds Crown Court. Today, the Court of Appeal has increased his sentence to 18 years in prison with an extension period of 8 years.

Commenting on this decision the Solicitor General said:

"Lockwood submitted his victim to a horrific and prolonged ordeal that has had a significant impact on the victim's way of life. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has today decided to increase his sentence, and hope that

this can bring some comfort to the victim.”

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## **Press release: Minister for Europe statement on the resignation of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan**

On 19 March 2019, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan announced his resignation after almost 30 years leading the country since its independence. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has been appointed as interim Head of State until Presidential elections take place, scheduled for December 2020.

The Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, said:

My best wishes to Nursultan Nazarbayev as he steps down from his position as President of Kazakhstan. As the first President of the country he has shown an enduring commitment to developing a strong and dynamic relationship with the United Kingdom. Mr Nazarbayev created the modern state of Kazakhstan, steering a course of economic modernisation, regional cooperation and international engagement that has brought prosperity to Kazakhstan and the wider region of Central Asia. Under his leadership, Kazakhstan became the first country in Central Asia to be elected to the United Nations Security Council – a notable achievement.

Over the last 30 years, the UK and Kazakhstan have become close partners. Our commercial and trade ties are long established and thriving, and I am proud of the role that the UK has played in helping Kazakhstan establish the region’s first International Finance Centre.

Our two countries share a vision of a peaceful and prosperous region underpinned by commitment to reform and modernisation. We will continue to work closely together with Kazakhstan on the basis of these principles. I look forward to working in partnership with President Tokayev to realise our shared ambitions for Kazakhstan’s future development.

**Further information**

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## [News story: ESFA introduces new arrangements for related party transactions](#)

From Monday 1 April 2019, we introduce a new policy where academy trusts must declare a related party transaction before they agree it with their supplier. They must also seek approval from ESFA before they agree any related party transactions over £20,000.

New online reporting arrangements aim to give ESFA, Parliament, the tax payer and other interested parties, assurance about the use of public funds.

Eileen Milner, ESFA Chief Executive said:

“Related party transactions offer a legitimate way for academy trusts to work when used following the principles set out in the [Academies Financial Handbook](#). On occasion, they may even help save time and money. But we cannot allow a mis-use of public funds where academy trusts agree to inappropriate related party transactions. It is this behaviour that we need to stamp out through increased transparency and accountability.

“I know this has caused concern for many academy trusts. I want to provide clarity that we are not trying to change the definition or expand the reach of related party transactions in any way. Nor do we want to constrain academy trusts’ ability to make good business decisions. All we seek is extra assurance by introducing a system where academy trusts declare a related party transaction in advance, while continuing to include the transactions in their financial returns.

“In designing the system, we have tried to maintain a balance between scrutiny and autonomy that minimises any additional burden on academy trusts. I’d like to thank all the academy trusts and representative groups for their feedback throughout the policy and design process and with testing the new system.

“From April to September 2019 we will continue to develop the system as we find out more about how related party transactions are used. We will capture the evidence and trends and consider whether our approach is the right one or if it needs to change.

“This is the beginning of a process, not the end. I am grateful to everyone for all the help we’ve had in making sure our funds are spent where they should be – on ensuring our children get the best education they deserve.”

ESFA has published [academy trust related party transactions guidance](#). This has information about what academy trusts need to do before completing the online form.

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## [Press release: Welsh Secretary celebrates 40 years of leading Welsh 'green' business](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns uses ROCKWOOL UK'S 40th anniversary to highlight the business' history, growth and success during his keynote speech. From a humble beginning in a factory near Bridgend in 1979, ROCKWOOL UK has gone on to produce and export sustainable volcanic rock insulation products to countries across the UK and the world.

Addressing an audience at the company's birthday event, Mr Cairns noted its commitment to clean growth. Using only natural and sustainable volcanic rock for their products, the thriving south Wales business is tackling one of the biggest challenges facing society as set out in the UK Government's modern Industrial Strategy. Discussing the issue of climate change, the Secretary of State welcomed ROCKWOOL UK'S commitment to developing more efficient buildings, reducing household energy bills and boosting economic growth.

Since its inception ROCKWOOL UK has experienced significant growth and now employs nearly 500 staff across the UK, the majority of whom are based in Bridgend. This growth and success has not only created a strong supply chain across south Wales and the south east of England but has also led to the development of a new logistics hub at the Pencoed site, securing an additional 115 jobs within the past year.

### **At the reception Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:**

As we face one of the biggest universal challenges in climate change, ROCKWOOL UK is seizing the opportunity to lead the way in finding the solutions to these questions.

Using only natural and sustainable volcanic rock for their products, they are 97% recyclable and deliver energy savings within five months of installation. They are a shining example to businesses across Wales and the Union.

Addressing ROCKWOOL UK employees, supply chain members and key stakeholders, Alun Cairns reminded the audience that the UK Government is working hard to create the right conditions for economic growth through the modern Industrial Strategy which prioritises investment in skills, industries and infrastructure. He highlighted the UK Government's recent £9 million funding for new electric buses in south Wales, which demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to backing clean growth initiatives.

**Darryl Matthews, Managing Director of ROCKWOOL UK said:**

We are proud to be celebrating our 40th anniversary in the UK. Now more than ever, homes and businesses are looking to address energy efficiency, fire safety, and noise in the built environment with our recyclable volcanic rock insulation. We are growing as a result, with 115 new staff over the last year alone.

We are delighted that the Secretary of State for Wales has been able to join us as we celebrate this occasion in our history and the fantastic social and economic contribution made by businesses all across South Wales.