

Statement to Parliament: Home

Secretary statement on the incident in

Salisbury

With permission, Mr Speaker, I shall make a statement on the incident in Salisbury that has been unfolding over the past four days.

Let me first pay tribute to the continued professionalism, dedication and courage of the emergency services. They have handled the incident with their customary attentiveness, alacrity, and sense of public duty. First responders put themselves in dangerous situations on a day-to-day basis, and this incident has underlined that fact – to which, sadly, I shall return later in my statement.

I shall now update the House as far as is possible on the basis of the current facts of the case. At approximately 4.15pm on Sunday afternoon, Wiltshire police received a call from a member of the public who was concerned for the welfare of two people in a park in Salisbury. Emergency services were called, and the two were admitted to the A&E department of Salisbury District Hospital. They were a man in his 60s and a woman in her 30s, with no visible signs of injury. They are understood to be Sergei and Yulia Skripal. Both remain unconscious, and in a critical but stable condition.

I regret to inform the House that a police officer has also fallen seriously ill. The officer was one of the first responders on Sunday, acting selflessly to help others. The latest update from the hospital is that the officer's condition remains serious but stable, and that he is conscious, talking and engaging. Officers from Wiltshire police are providing support for the officer's family and colleagues. Our thoughts are with all three victims, and their families and friends, at what will be an incredibly difficult time for them.

Wiltshire police began an investigation on Sunday to determine how the individuals had fallen ill, and whether a crime had been committed. They declared a major incident on Monday. On Tuesday the Metropolitan police decided that, given the unusual circumstances, responsibility for the investigation should be transferred to the National Counter Terrorism Policing Network. Samples from the victims have been tested by experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down, who are world-renowned experts in the field. As Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley announced yesterday, that forensic analysis has revealed the presence of a nerve agent, and the incident is therefore being treated as attempted murder. I can confirm that it is highly likely the police officer has been exposed to the same nerve agent.

I spoke only this morning with Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, and he confirmed that we remain in the midst of a fast-paced, criminal

investigation. As such, I will not comment further on the nature of the nerve agent. We must give the police the space they need to conduct a thorough investigation. All members will recognise that an investigation such as this will be complex and may take some time.

Public safety continues to be the No.1 priority for this government. Professor Sally Davies, the chief medical officer, stated yesterday that, based on the evidence we have, there is a low risk to the public. The UK has a world-leading emergency response. It is regularly tested and exercised to ensure we can deliver an effective response to a wide range of chemical, biological and radiological incidents. The three emergency services are well supplied with state-of-the-art equipment to respond to such threats.

The frontline response is supported by world-class scientific research and advice. This ensures that decision making on the ground, by all agencies involved, is firmly based on the available evidence. This will also support the decontamination activity needed to return the location to normality.

The police are working closely with Public Health England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the DSTL. They have cordoned all known sites in Salisbury that were visited by the two initial victims before they became unwell, and are taking the necessary measures to protect public safety.

I want now to turn to the speculation – of which there has been much – around who was responsible for this most outrageous crime. The use of a nerve agent on UK soil is a brazen and reckless act. This was attempted murder in the most cruel and public way. People are right to want to know who to hold to account. But, if we are to be rigorous in this investigation, we must avoid speculation and allow the police to carry on their investigation.

As the assistant commissioner said yesterday, the investigation now involves hundreds of officers, following every possible lead to find those responsible. Some of those leads have come from members of the public. I would like to thank the people of Salisbury for their help and for the calm they have shown over the last four days. I encourage anyone who visited Salisbury town centre and surrounding areas on Sunday afternoon, who has not yet spoken to the police, to get in touch.

We are committed to doing all we can to bring the perpetrators to justice – whoever they are, and wherever they may be. The investigation is moving at pace, and this government will act without hesitation as the facts become clearer. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear on Tuesday, we will respond in a robust and appropriate manner once we ascertain who was responsible.

I would like to close where I began, by expressing my sincere thanks to the emergency services and hospital staff for their tireless efforts over the last four days. They have acted with utter professionalism both to minimise the risk to the wider public and to care for the victims of the attack, for which I know we are all very grateful. Our thoughts will be with the victims and their families over the coming days.

Finally, I thank members for their understanding that there will clearly be limits on what we can say as this investigation continues. As and when information can be made public, it will be. I commend the statement to the House.

[News story: Government confirms commitment to Crewe Hub vision](#)

- plans for HS2 Phase 2a will be modified to support Crewe Hub
- these changes allow an HS2 service to Stoke-on-Trent
- more people to have access to high speed, long-distance train services from Crewe

A high-speed rail service to Stoke-on-Trent, platform extensions and a re-designed junction at Crewe to give more people to access to HS2 are amongst plans being backed by government, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has confirmed today (9 March 2018).

The government's support for the Crewe Hub vision means plans for HS2 Phase 2a from the West Midlands to Crewe will be modified to include:

- extension of Platform 5 at Crewe to 400 metres, to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services, which also opens opportunities to serve Stoke-on-Trent with HS2
- a more efficient design for the proposed platform on the Manchester independent lines, incorporating a transfer deck to the main station
- a change to the design of the southern connection from HS2, so that HS2 joins, and takes over, the central 2 lines on the existing network

The Secretary of State also intends to ask the franchise operator, West Coast Partnership, to include a high speed service to Stoke-on-Trent in its market development and service plans.

[Video of Nusrat Ghani on HS2 at Crewe Station](#)

Secretary of State Chris Grayling said:

We have listened to people's views on the Crewe Hub consultation, ensuring that the town's proud history as an epicentre of rail journeys is set to continue, as it plays a vital role in delivering Britain's future railway.

HS2 will be the backbone of our national rail network, increasing capacity on our congested rail network with thousands more seats on commuter services, improving vital connections between some of our

country's biggest cities and generating jobs, skills and economic growth.

It also builds on our earlier decision to bring the benefits of HS2 to Crewe from 2027 – 6 years earlier than originally planned – as well as allowing the benefits of a high-speed service to extend to Stoke-on-Trent.

Extending HS2 to Crewe is a vital step in achieving the government's ambition to build a country that works for everyone. By committing to the Crewe consultation, significant benefits brought to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent by HS2 are unlocked, allowing more people to access high speed, long distance services.

Combined with a HS2 junction north of Crewe (which will be considered as part of Phase 2b), this could allow 5 to 7 HS2 trains per hour to call at Crewe and improve connectivity on the lines from Crewe to Shrewsbury, Chester and Stoke-on-Trent (subject in some cases to further investment beyond Crewe itself).

The [full response to the Crewe Hub consultation](#) is on GOV.UK.

[Press release: UKEF supports export of Bombardier aircraft made in Belfast](#)

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, said:

The UK is at the forefront of the civil aerospace industry and I am delighted that the Department for International Trade is backing this landmark contract, which will support the global success of Bombardier's C Series programme and its operations in Northern Ireland.

This represents a double-first; it is the first time that UKEF has supported a C Series aircraft sale from Bombardier, who are a major investor and employer in Northern Ireland, and it is the first sale of the C Series to an Asian airline.

This contract clearly shows the value of support from UK Export Finance to those investing into the UK as they grow their international businesses.

The announcement comes at a historic moment for the UK and Asia, with two weeks to go until the UK Government hosts the GREAT Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong, designed to boost trade between the UK and Asia.

UKEF has worked in partnership with Canadian export credit agency, Export Development Canada (EDC), to provide Korean Airlines with financing to support the sale to date of two C Series aircraft, whose wings and parts of the fuselage – a significant proportion of the complete aircraft – are made at Bombardier's site in Belfast. UKEF has provided reinsurance support to EDC for the UK elements of the aircraft.

Michael Ryan, President, Bombardier Aerostructures and Engineering Services, said:

The C Series aircraft is the market leader in the 100- to 150-seat segment and subject to significant global demand. This aircraft has advanced carbon fibre wings and advanced technology fuselage sections manufactured in Belfast. We are very proud to have secured our first C Series aircraft sale to an Asian airline and with the backing of UK Export Finance and Export Development Canada look forward to building on this success.

UKEF, Bombardier and EDC are planning to extend the programme, with further support likely to follow for future C Series deliveries to Korean Airlines scheduled for 2018.

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: aerospace, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a regional network of 24 [export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. Find UKEF's latest [country cover positions](#).
6. The [GREAT Festival of Innovation](#), taking place from 21-24 March in Hong Kong, is underpinned by a shared desire to build on the success of

longstanding trading relationships between Asia and the UK and to stimulate further growth. It is an exchange of ideas intended to fuel debate and discussion to drive collaboration and partnerships between business, higher education and government, with a programme designed to address the role of innovation in driving prosperity.

7. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Speech: Home Secretary's speech to the Community Security Trust

Thank you for your introduction Lloyd [Dorfman].

As Home Secretary, there's a certain expectation that I speak up. That I speak at dinners, speak at Cabinet, speak on Andrew Marr's sofa.

But occasionally, I get invited just to listen.

As part of Holocaust Memorial Week in January, I was invited to hear Hannah Lewis, a Holocaust survivor, tell her story. I'm sure many of you will know it, but for those of you who don't, Hannah's life was turned upside down by the Nazis.

In 1942, the Germans began rounding up the Jews where she lived and Hannah's family were sent to a labour camp in the Polish village of Adampol.

Her father managed to escape to join the Partisans, leaving Hannah and her mother at the camp.

Now, one of the things the Partisans did in the area was to warn the Jews in the labour camps of imminent raids by the German killing squads.

In the last winter of the occupation, Hannah's father managed to reach Adampol to warn Hannah and her mother of a raid the next day.

But Hannah was sick. So sick in fact that her mother knew that if they

escaped the camp and went into the cold then Hannah would surely die. So Hannah's mother decided they would stay put.

The next morning, the German police arrived.

Hannah's mother was lined up against the village wall and shot dead while Hannah watched from a hiding place.

Hannah now travels around the country telling her story so that we will not forget what happened to six million Jews. So that we will not forget that nearly seven out of ten Jews in Europe were killed. But also so that we will spot the warning signs. Because as we all know, the Nazi genocide didn't start as genocide. It started as anti-Semitism.

The Community Security Trust has recorded anti-Semitic incidents on behalf of the Jewish community since 1984 and helps to protect Jews from anti-Semitism and related threats.

CST now has 90 staff and thousands of volunteers, some of whom you will have met as you came in this evening.

It's been great to hear from Danielle Schaffer about why she volunteers for CST.

The Home Office and CST work closely together. The CST manages government funding for security at Jewish buildings across the country and shares expertise about extremism and radicalisation. CST also helps protect other faith communities too.

The size of the audience here this evening shows us quite how valued the Community Security Trust's work is.

Thank you to Gerald Ronson, David Delew and everyone else who has made tonight possible.

I'm lucky enough to be a returning guest.

When I spoke at this dinner last year, I told you about the terror threat to the UK.

I explained that Britain faced a level of terror not seen since the IRA bombings of the 1970s.

I told you that since 2011, the number of terrorist attacks had increased globally and that the most significant threat to the UK and our interests came from Daesh.

What of course I didn't know was that just a few weeks after this very dinner, a terrorist attack would take place at Westminster, striking at the heart of our democracy.

I didn't know that there would be four further terrorist attacks in London and Manchester or that there would be a total of 36 fatalities.

Last year was the most challenging year for the police and security services for decades. As well as the five attacks, police and MI5 intervened to disrupt an unprecedented number of suspected plots.

Plots which came from the far right and Islamist extremists.

As the outgoing Met Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley explained last week, four extreme-right terror plots were disrupted last year.

And as Home Secretary, it's my job to keep people safe.

That's why £144m is being provided for a national uplift in UK armed policing capability to respond more quickly and effectively to an attack.

That's why my officials are out providing guidance to the owners and operators of public venues about what measures they need to take to protect the public.

And that's why I've been doing a lot of work in America, encouraging the big internet companies like Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Twitter to work with us and remove more terrorist content more quickly from their platforms.

I also did not hesitate to proscribe the neo-Nazi group, National Action, when the evidence was enough, and I will not hesitate to take further action. More recently I've proscribed National Action's known aliases Scottish Dawn and NS131 as well.

But I know that there are Jewish schools practising lockdown drills so they're prepared should the worst happen. Even nursery age children are rehearsing what they would need to do in the event of an attack. Some of these children are so small that the drill needs to be dressed up as a game of sleeping lions to get them to cooperate.

Surely this can't be right?

But we know that Daesh and Al-Qaida continue to highlight Jews among lists of targets in their propaganda, as well as the public at large, our police and military, and events like Christmas markets.

That's why this Conservative government has provided over £38.5 million since 2015 to provide for protective security measures at Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries and other locations.

And this year, I'm pleased to announce a further £13.4 million to ensure the security of Jewish faith schools, synagogues and communal buildings following concerns raised by the Jewish community.

It is absolutely essential that we all feel safe where we live, where we work, where we worship and where we meet our friends.

But let me be frank.

I hope that one day there will be no need for CST – sorry Lloyd and Gerald!

But until that day comes, CST is an important partner in ensuring that Jewish life continues unfettered in our country.

Of course, CST isn't just concerned about terrorists. As you know, they also commit significant resources to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism.

And across the globe it seems that history's oldest hatred is on the march. From far-right demonstrators in Virginia chanting 'Jews will not replace us', to arson attacks on kosher restaurants in France, to attacks on Swedish synagogues, anti-Semitism has shown that it is depressingly adaptable.

CST recorded 1,382 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK last year, the highest total they ever recorded for a calendar year.

I welcome their findings that the rise in reported incidents partly reflects the improving response to these horrendous attacks as well as better information sharing between the CST and police. And although CST has found no obvious single cause behind the trend, one of the contributing reasons flagged was publicity surrounding alleged anti-Semitism in the Labour party.

John Mann has spoken out about the anti-Semitic abuse he's received, even though he isn't Jewish! By his own admission, the vast majority of these attacks have come from self-identified "left-wing" activists or Labour party supporters.

My plea to all political parties represented here this evening, is to take this problem extremely seriously as it must not be left unchallenged.

Because one anti-Semitic incident is one too many.

And that's why this government is taking action:

- our Cross-Government Working Group on anti-Semitism ensures we are alive to any issues and concerns of the Jewish community and can respond quickly
- we were also the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Memorial Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism, which is an effective tool in identifying what constitutes anti-Semitism in the 21st century
- and the hate crime victim's guide which includes advice to victims of anti-Semitic hate crime has recently been published

We're also in the process of refreshing our 2016 Hate Crime Action Plan.

And I know that Anti-Semitism on university campuses remains a concern. That's why the Holocaust Education Trust lessons from Auschwitz project in collaboration with the Union of Jewish students is being expanded.

But I can't talk about anti-Semitism without also talking about the internet.

Social media is changing where and how hate happens.

18 percent of all anti-Semitic incidents recorded by CST last year involved social media and CST say this figure understates the scale of the problem.

We made progress when we worked with the EU Commission and agreed with internet service providers including Google, Facebook and Twitter that they would remove illegal content within 24 hours of it being posted, meaning people are better protected online.

I've also announced funding for a new national hub to tackle the threat of online hate crime which started work in January.

But I know that there is more work to be done and I will not tolerate this sort of terrible abuse.

What is illegal offline is illegal online, and those who commit these cowardly crimes should be met with the full force of the law.

I recently heard an interesting argument that the anti-Semitism we are seeing across the world is an ancient and deeply embedded hostility towards the Jews that is re-emerging as the barbarous events of World War II recede from our collective memory.

If that's the case, then we should take every opportunity to be reminded of the horrors of the 1930s and 40s.

With this in mind, I'm pleased that the new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will be a stone's throw away from Parliament. A reminder of where prejudice and intolerance can lead.

Gerald – you helped turn this idea into a reality and your continued support as a member of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation is appreciated.

Now, I'm aware that the CST run a tight ship when it comes to events, so let me bring what I have to say to a close.

I want to end on a more positive note.

You would be forgiven for thinking that a speech about the Holocaust, terrorism and anti-Semitism paints a rather negative picture.

But actually the message I want to leave you all with tonight is that I DO think that this is a good time to be a British Jew.

This year it's the 70th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. And can I just say how wonderful it is that the Duke of Cambridge will be visiting Israel – the first official visit by a member of the royal family. It's also the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which Rene Cassin, a French Jew, helped to draft. This year was also a good one for Jewish talent at the Oscars, with several contenders in some of the

big categories.

And Great Britain simply would not be Great Britain without our Jewish community.

It's nice how Jewish traditions incorporate British elements. For instance, every Shabbat morning prayer, a prayer is said for the royal family and the Queen.

Britain is so much richer for its diversity and if you're Jewish you should be able to go about your daily life and express your religion without fear of hatred or anti-Semitism.

And let me promise you this.

If you feel victimised, I will be there for you. And if you need my support, I will give it to you.

Thank you.

Press release: New charity investigation: Kenya Community Support Network

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into the Kenya Community Support Network (1104003). The investigation was opened on 22 January 2018.

The charity's objects include relieving poverty, sickness and distress among Kenyans and promoting research into the conditions of life of Kenyans. The charity's stated activities include providing advice and guidance on issues such as immigration, health, welfare benefit, housing, further education, training and basic counselling.

The Commission engaged with the charity in October 2017 after receiving a complaint. This complaint raised concerns about the charity's expenditure and whether it was in furtherance of the charity's objects. The Commission met with representatives from the charity to explore the charity's internal governance, management and administration and inspected the charity's records. The Commission is concerned that there are strong indicators that show that the charity is being used for significant private benefit, that there is mismanagement and misconduct in the administration of the charity, and that the charity is not carrying out activities in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit.

In order to address these concerns, the investigation will look at:

- whether the trustees have acted in compliance with their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity
- the financial management of the charity, in particular with regard to its expenditure
- whether there has been any private benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have operated the charity in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit
- whether there has been misconduct and/ or mismanagement by the trustees

In light of the Commission's concerns, it has taken action to protect the charity's assets by restricting the transactions from the charity's bank account. As a result, the charity cannot make payments or part with any of the charity's assets without the Commission's prior written approval.

The Commission stresses that opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrongdoing. The purpose of an inquiry is to examine issues in detail, investigate and establish the facts so that the regulator can ascertain whether there has been mismanagement and/or misconduct; establish the extent of any risk to the charity's property, beneficiaries or work and decide what action needs to be taken to resolve the serious concerns, if necessary using its investigative, protective and remedial powers to do so.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
4. The Commission's [decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry](#) is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.