

Rapper Alieu Koroma to spend longer in prison for drug offences

News story

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Between October 2021 and January 2022, drill artist, Alieu Koroma, 22, was in control of a county drugs line operation. Koroma, whose music has been played on BBC Radio 1, sent bulk marketing messages to drug users and directed a vulnerable 14-year-old to deliver drugs and collect cash. The drug line Koroma was in charge of was used over 7,500 times and had nearly 800 customers.

On 1 July 2022, Koroma was sentenced to 3 years 10 months' imprisonment for offences including being knowingly concerned in the supply of class A drugs and possession of a bladed article. The sentencing took place at Wood Green Crown Court.

Koroma's sentence was then referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme for being too low.

On 11 October 2022, the Court found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and imposed a new sentence of five years and three months' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, HM Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP said:

The class A drugs sold by Alieu Koroma are dangerous and ruin lives. Supplying them at this scale is a serious offence, so I am glad that the Court has handed down a longer sentence that is a better reflection of the crimes that have taken place.

[New pollution prevention advice for fishing communities](#)

A new leaflet outlines how to protect the natural environment by preventing pollution incidents and minimising waste at boatyards, harbours and marinas.

Storage and disposal information is a key part of the leaflet. There is a specific focus on fishing nets, pots, oils and anti-foul products, including hazardous waste type storage advice pages.

There is also a poster inviting members of the fishing community to pledge their support by carrying out a series of actions to protect the ocean. This includes avoiding single-use plastics in galleys, keeping on-board equipment to collect lost gear, and using available waste facilities.

The materials have been funded by the [Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution](#) project – a partnership of 18 organisations in England and France. The partnership aims to reduce the impact of plastic pollution in river and marine environments. This includes embedding behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implementing effective solutions and alternatives.

Project lead Imogen Douglas, from the Environment Agency's plastic and sustainability team, said:

Oil is a highly visible form of pollution and the most frequently reported type of water pollution incident. Without proper shoreside waste management, it harms plants and animals, damages water and land, and destroys natural habitats.

Similarly, abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear can impact on fish stocks and navigation. It can cause marine life to become tangled in plastic pollution, demonstrating the importance of proper disposal for end of life equipment.

We hope this new leaflet and pledge poster will help facilitate good waste practice at ports and change behaviours to help our planet thrive. This is a significant step forward for the Environment Agency as we continue to meet the goals and commitments outlined in our 5 year plan to create better places for people, wildlife and the environment, and the government's 25 year environment plan.

The leaflet and poster will be issued to ports and harbours across England,

and circulated to relevant stakeholders. This includes the Marine Management Organisation, the British Ports Association and trawler firms. It can also be found on the [Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution website](#).

As a regulator, the Environment Agency prevents waste plastic entering the environment by cracking down on waste crime and poor waste management. As an influencer, its ambition is to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste.

Background

Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution: Working in partnership with 18 organisations from across France and England, Preventing Plastic Pollution (PPP) seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the river and marine environments. By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives.

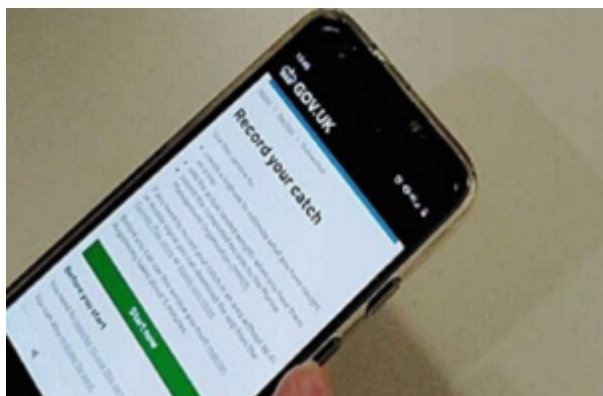
PPP is a €14million funded EU INTERREG VA France (Channel) England Programme project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund which works mainly across seven pilot sites: Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez, Bay of Veys, Poole Harbour, and the Medway, Tamar, and Great Ouse estuaries.

Partners are the Environment Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Queen Mary University of London, LABOCEA Conseil, Expertise et Analyses, Syndicat mixte établissement public de gestion et d'aménagement de la baie de Douarnenez, Office Français De La Biodiversité, Parc naturel marin d'Iroise, Brest Métropole, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Conseil départemental de la Manche, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, The Rivers Trust, Syndicat de bassin de l'Elorn, ACTIMAR, Brest'aim, Westcountry Rivers Trust, South East Rivers Trust, and Plymouth City Council.

Catch recording service: Routine website maintenance 13 October

News story

The catch recording website for under 10m vessels will be unavailable on Thursday 13 October, 08:00-13:00 due to routine maintenance.



This also means that advisors will not be able to log records by phone. However, catches can still be recorded 24/7 using the 'Record Your Catch' app or by calling the automated helpline.

We recommend you download the app in advance to familiarise yourself with the system. All records completed using the app will be saved to your device and uploaded to the system as soon as the website maintenance has been completed.

The app, which you can download for [Android](#) or [Apple](#), allows you to record your catch in an area without a mobile signal – watch our useful video 'how to' guide below.

[YouTube](#).

Alternatively, register your catch through our automated phone service: 0300 0203 788.

For more information about recording catches for under 10m vessels, visit gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-your-catch>

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[Fostering collaboration to overcome innovation challenges](#)

- Plextek has secured funding through a variety of DASA Themed Competitions, developing software and engineering solutions in areas such as aviation security, unmanned air system payloads, and countering hostile drones
- A long-term engager with DASA, Plextek is a key enabler of collaborations, providing other innovators bespoke design and technology support with DASA competitions to help them complete innovative projects
- Support and encouragement from DASA has encouraged a diversity of thought in defence and security innovation, enabling companies of all

types and size to work together and collaborate to solve defence and security challenges

Introducing Plextek

With the growth of technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones and robotics, the UK faces many defence and security capability requirements and challenges. Ambitious capability requirements call for equally ambitious innovators working together to embrace new ways of finding solutions to prevailing defence and security challenges.

The Defence and Security Accelerator [DASA](#) relies on diversity of thought in order to find and fund the very best innovations for defence and security, and we encourage collaboration in all of our services. One company that has helped other innovators and contributed to an array of DASA competitions is [Plextek](#), an electronic engineering design, development and supply organisation based near Cambridge.

Plextek specializes in offering solutions based support to organizations to help them reach their potential and bring their innovations to market, offering technical expertise in product design and technology development.

The key is in collaboration

Plextek has a long history of collaborating with other innovators, small and large, to be a key enabler of creating powerful solutions for DASA Themed Competitions. They offer bespoke solutions and provide an additional layer of support for innovators to complete projects.

By working and developing alongside the wider defence supply chain over time through DASA Themed Competitions, Plextek has grown their reputation within [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#) (Dstl) and the wider Ministry of Defence (MOD), develop new technical expertise and create solutions for many technology areas, from aviation security, to unmanned air system (UAS) payloads, and countering hostile drones.

Plextek's focus on providing avenues for flexible collaboration in a defence industry that is fast-changing has allowed them, and many other innovators, to pivot and respond to different DASA challenge competitions, in a way that would have been difficult without collaboration.

The advantage of alliances

For innovative organisations of all types and size, the ability to share ideas with like-minded organisations can be a huge multiplier for overcoming technical challenges. This can come in the form of knowledge exchange, technology sharing, hands-on work and cost. No matter the method, collaboration enables organisations to learn rapidly and innovate, through combined perspectives and strengths.

Plextek has been at the forefront of many collaborations to help innovators

in DASA Themed Competitions. Some examples include:

Autonomous Last Mile Resupply: Phase 1 & 2 / Autonomy in Challenging Environments: Phase 1

[Autonomous Last Mile Resupply](#): Phase 2 sought to develop and demonstrate the use of autonomous systems to deliver mission-critical supplies, whereas [Autonomy in Challenging Environments](#): Phase 1 sought to demonstrate novel sensors to aid autonomous systems. During these themed competitions, Plextek supported other innovators such as Barnard Microsystems, Griff Aviation, Fleetonomy.ai and Createc to demonstrate a 60 GHz mm wave radar, which can be mounted on a UAS in order to provide day/night, all-weather sensor capabilities to avoid hazards and safely deliver supplies.

From providing radar and transponder demonstrators to investigating the application of machine learning to radar, Plextek enabled these funded projects through flexible support.

Many Drones Make Light Work: Phase 1, 2 and 3

[Many Drones Make Light Work](#) explored novel approaches to develop the military capability of a swarm of low-cost, small UAS operating cooperatively. In this competition, Plextek worked with Blue Bear Systems Research and IQHQ. Plextek designed, developed and supported integration and experimentation of the approach to repurpose IQHQ's nano-Software Defined Radio (SDR) onto a small, fixed-wing Blue Bear Systems Research UAS platform, including optimised conformal antennas, to enable demonstration of fractionated electronic support measures.

Future of Aviation Security: Phase 1 & 2

[Future of Aviation Security](#) explored innovations that enable better screening and detection of contraband items concealed in vehicles, while minimising the burden on aviation staff and passengers. In this competition, Plextek was a key contributor to finding novel ideas for future aviation and border security and helped link multiple projects together for the wider programme, through providing communications and radar system expertise.

Countering Hostile Drones: Phase 1 & 2

[Countering Hostile Drones](#) sought to find innovative solutions to address the increasing UAS threat, from detecting a drone, to identifying it and deploying measures to counter it.

In Phase 1, Plextek collaborated with Blighter Surveillance and Blue Bear Systems Research to help combine their technologies to demonstrate a Hunter-Killer drone concept equipped with a low Size, Weight, and Power (SWaP) Electronic Warfare (EW) package, to detect an adversary drone and disable it. Plextek also successfully demonstrated a proof of concept for a low SWaP ubiquitous radar, designed to be the intercept radar for the UAS. In Phase 2, Plextek matured and miniaturised the ubiquitous radar, successfully demonstrating its utility as a networked, ground to air CUAS sensor in urban environments, funded via the Home Office (HO) and Department

for Transport (DfT).

Creating the right solution together: Ideas Marketplace

DASA provides the ability for multiple organisations to link multiple projects together for a wider programme, centred on strong engagement and long-term relationship support. The relationships Plextek has developed with the likes of Blue Bear Systems Research, IQHQ and Griff Aviation and more, were enabled through DASA.

Through building relationships and collaboration, each innovator can utilise their strengths and direct them towards shared defence and security challenges, and in Plextek's case, foster relationships that span multiple funded projects.

DASA is excited to be a key enabler for organisations to build relationships to solve defence and security challenges, and we want to make it even easier. Therefore, DASA was pleased to launch the Defence Technology Exploitation Programme [DTEP](#), a £16 million programme to boost small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) defence innovation. And also the [Ideas Marketplace](#), an online platform where innovators can collaborate, share ideas and get innovations in front of stakeholders.

[Welcome to the Ideas Marketplace](#)

[Scottish Secretary comments on October Labour Market Statistics](#)

News story

As new ONS figures show a strong labour market, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack says the UK Government's focus on economic growth will benefit people across the UK.



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

With the unemployment rate at a historic low, and many more people on the payroll than this time last year, today's figures show that Scotland's labour market remains strong.

The UK Government's overarching priority is economic growth, for the benefit of people in Scotland and across the whole of the UK. One of the best ways to achieve this is getting even more people into highly skilled, well paid jobs, to help them and their families thrive.

We've also put an extensive support package in place to help those worried about the cost of living in the short term. This includes protecting millions of the most vulnerable families with at least £1,200 of direct payments and saving households an average of £1,000 a year through our new Energy Price Guarantee.

Background

Figures from the ONS show unemployment at 3.3 per cent in Scotland, down 1.1 p.p. since the same time last year. Scotland's employment rate is at 75.8 per cent, an increase of 1.5 p.p. over the last year.

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