

# Royal visit to DRC shows urgent need to tackle sexual violence in conflict

- Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex, accompanied by FCD0 Minister of State, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the UK Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI), visits a ground-breaking foundation for survivors run by Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege.
- This is the first visit by a member of the Royal family to DRC.
- The visit comes ahead of a major global conference on PSVI being hosted in London in November by the UK Government, which Her Royal Highness will attend.

The Countess of Wessex is visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), accompanied by Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Minister of State Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, to raise awareness of the urgent need to tackle sexual violence in conflict in the DRC and around the world.

For Her Royal Highness, the visit is part of a long-standing commitment to championing this issue.

Lord Ahmad as the UK Prime Minister's Special Representative for PSVI, joined her on the visit to gain a deeper and practical insight into DRC's experiences of tackling conflict-related sexual violence, and identify lessons learned to share at a global PSVI Conference in the UK next month.

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Dr Denis Mukwege welcomed them to his groundbreaking foundation in Bukavu. The Panzi Foundation has transformed the lives of thousands of women who have suffered sexual violence in the armed conflict and violence in DRC. The Foundation provides medical care, legal assistance, psychological support and economic programmes to offer a holistic model of care for survivors of these horrific crimes.

The Countess of Wessex and Lord Ahmad saw first-hand the difference the Panzi Foundation has made to women's lives during the first ever visit by a member of the Royal family to DRC.

The UK will host a major international conference in London in November, marking 10 years since the launch of PSVI, an initiative which Lord Ahmad now leads. The conference will bring together the UK and its partners around the world to review progress made in the last decade, identify shared challenges and agree further action.

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Sexual violence in conflict continues to shatter lives and scar communities around the world. Tackling it is a top priority for the UK and we will continue to work with our partners to provide better support for survivors, bring perpetrators to justice and encourage

partners to share new ideas and experiences of tackling sexual violence in conflict at the conference in November.

Since 2012, we have committed over £50 million to support projects around the world that help prevent conflict-related sexual violence, including in the DRC. This includes providing £2.7 million to the Global Survivors Fund, whose projects in the DRC have supported over 1000 survivors.

Dr Mukwege, Founder of the Panzi Hospital and Foundation, and President of the Global Survivors Fund, said:

My staff and I are grateful for the visit of Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex and Lord Tariq Ahmad. Too often, the world turns a blind eye towards the suffering of survivors, especially here in DRC. Their visit will highlight the ongoing critical work to end conflict-related sexual violence, both in this country and around the globe.

During the visit to eastern DRC, The Countess of Wessex and Lord Ahmad met with survivors of sexual violence, and civil society organisations in Bukavu to gain an understanding of the challenges they face.

In Kinshasa, Her Royal Highness and Lord Ahmad will also meet President Felix Tshisekedi and First Lady Denise Tshisekedi, the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Christophe Lutundula, and other Ministers, for discussions on sexual violence in conflict, the UK's international conference, and other important issues such as climate change.

Notes to editors

- Photography of the visit will be available from the Press Association.
- Since its launch in 2019, the UK has provided £2.7m to the Global Survivors Fund (GSF). Its projects in DRC have supported over 1000 survivors to access health and psychological care, education, or support for economic enterprises.
- Last year the UK provided \$140,000 to help the Panzi Foundation to increase access to legal advice and mediation for survivors.
- In recent years, UK support to TRIAL International in DRC has provided free legal advice to survivors, strengthened capacity in the country to investigate, document and litigate effectively against crimes, and helped to tackle the culture of impunity.
- Between 2021-2022, the UK provided over £500,000 to the UN Team of Experts on conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) to increase the capacity of the DRC investigative and judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute CRSV crimes; and ensure judicial decisions on reparations are enforced. For instance, this funding supported training for police, special protection units, civil and military prosecutors and judges on the investigation and prosecution of CRSV cases, and on ensuring protection measures for victims and witnesses are in place. UK

funding to World Vision supported community discussions in DRC led by religious leaders on the principles of the Declaration of Humanity, which challenge the stigma that survivors of sexual violence face.

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## [Andrew Ballheimer, Kalpana Desai and Mahnaz Safa join the Board of UK Government Investments as Non-Executive Directors](#)

UK Government Investments Ltd (UKGI), the government's centre of excellence in corporate governance and corporate finance, announces the appointments of Andrew Ballheimer, Kalpana Desai and Mahnaz Safa to the UKGI Board, for three-year terms until 21 September 2025.

### **Andrew Ballheimer**

From 2016 until the end of his term in April 2020, Andrew Ballheimer was the Global Managing Partner of Allen & Overy LLP where he shaped and delivered strategy whilst driving forward the performance of the business, including on diversity and inclusion initiatives. Andrew has more than 35 years of legal experience advising multinational corporations and global financial institutions, including in other senior leadership positions at Allen & Overy, as Global Co-Head of Corporate and UK Managing Partner of Corporate. Following his retirement from A&O (at the end of 2020), Andrew joined the board of Factor Law Inc. and the M&A Global Advisory Board at AON PLC. He has been a trustee of Moorfields Eye Charity since 2011, as well as a member of the U.K. Trade and Business Commission, and he is also a Senior Advisor at Teneo Strategy Limited.

### **Kalpana Desai**

Kalpana Desai is currently a Non-Executive Director of Janus Henderson plc, in addition to being a Founding Trustee of the Future is Bright Charitable Trust. Previously, Kalpana was a member of the Takeovers and Mergers Panel of the Securities and Futures Commission in Hong Kong from 2007 to 2014, and was a Non-Executive Director at Canaccord Genuity Group Inc. from 2015-2019. Kalpana has over 30 years of international advisory and investment banking experience. Until 2013, she was Chief Executive of Macquarie Capital Asia, the investment banking division of Macquarie Group Limited. Prior to this, she was Head of the Asia-Pacific Mergers & Acquisitions Group and a Managing Director from 2001 in the Investment Banking Division of Bank of America Merrill Lynch based in Hong Kong. Kalpana qualified as a Chartered Accountant with PricewaterhouseCoopers in London in 1991, and graduated with a BSc Economics from the London School of Economics.

## **Mahnaz Safa**

Mahnaz Safa has extensive commercial and regulatory experience from across the private and public sectors. With 30 years in finance, Mahnaz has advised boards on restructuring, capital raising, financing, strategy, board succession and crisis management; in sectors including retail, energy, infrastructure, technology and asset management. Mahnaz has been a senior executive at UBS, Citi and ANZ. As an executive Mahnaz has led and transformed large scale complex financial businesses and whilst at UBS and Citi, she co-chaired their respective women's leadership executive committees. Mahnaz currently serves on the board of Jefferies International Limited as a Non-Executive Director and is member of the Council at Imperial College where she is the Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. She has previously served as a senior independent director on the board of Alternative Credit Investments FTSE 250. Mahnaz holds a PhD in computer aided technology from Imperial College.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Griffith said:

I am delighted to welcome Andrew Ballheimer, Kalpana Desai and Mahnaz Safa as new non-executive directors of UK Government Investments.

Their extensive background and experience will be an invaluable asset to the UKGI board as it supports the government in delivering more growth, jobs, and investment across the UK.

I look forward to working with them and the rest of the UKGI board in the months ahead.

Vindi Banga, UKGI Chairman, said

I am delighted that three such high-calibre appointees will be joining the UKGI Board. Each have a variety of skills and experience in different sectors which will prove invaluable for the Board in ensuring UKGI delivers against its strategy and its objectives.

I very much look forward to working closely with each of them over the coming years.

These appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public appointments (OCPA) and are made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments published by the Cabinet Office. These appointments are made on merit and political activity played no part in the decision process. In accordance with the code, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Andrew Ballheimer, Kalpana Desai and Mahnaz Safa did not declare any political activity.

## Further information

UKGI is the government's centre of excellence in corporate governance and corporate finance. It provides expert advice and leading solutions that inform and translate government's decisions into effective outcomes in the national interest.

UKGI acts as shareholder for, and leads the establishment of, UK government arm's length bodies; it advises on all major UK government corporate finance matters, including financial interventions into corporate structures and corporate finance negotiations; it analyses and advises on the UK government's contingent liabilities; and it acquires, manages and executes the sale of all significant UK government corporate assets.

UKGI is owned by HM Treasury and independently managed with a Board comprised predominantly of independent non-executive directors. UKGI works closely with both the private and public sectors, advising and interacting with ministers, Parliament and Whitehall departments.

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## Suspended sentence for bankrupt who acted as company director

Daniel Ross Patchett, 34, from Kingsthorpe in Lincolnshire, pleaded guilty at Lincoln Crown Court of acting in the management of a company whilst an undischarged bankrupt.

Bankrupts must adhere to a number of bankruptcy restrictions, including not creating, managing or promoting a company, or acting as a director of a company, unless they request and receive specific permission from the court. Breaching these restrictions is a criminal offence.

People who are made bankrupt also have a duty to declare their assets, which will be used to pay off their debts.

Daniel Patchett had resigned as a director of his business, DRP Distribution Ltd in February 2018, following his bankruptcy, at which point his wife became sole director. DRP Distribution operated from 2016 to 2019 as an order fulfilment company, providing warehousing, packing and distribution of parcels for third-parties who sold products online through Amazon and other services.

Despite his bankruptcy, Daniel Patchett continued to act in the management of the company in 2018, and he deliberately concealed his activity and income to avoid making payments to his creditors.

In particular, the Insolvency Service investigation found that Patchett was

corresponding with Royal Mail regarding outstanding invoices and payments made, and the company's accountants also confirmed that most of the communication came from him during this period.

A number of suppliers to the company also confirmed to the Insolvency Service that they understood Daniel Patchett was the director of the company.

He was due to be making monthly payments of around £400 to his creditors, but just a month into his bankruptcy he informed the Official Receiver that he no longer worked at DRP Distribution and therefore could pay only "a token gesture amount" toward his debts. He even provided a P45 form as evidence.

In reality, he continued to manage DRP Distribution and received over £30,000 from the company during his bankruptcy, additional hidden income of nearly £40,000 which the company paid to his wife, and a further £28,000 which he withdrew from the business in cash.

All of this money should have been paid to his creditors. Patchett told the court that he had been suffering from gambling addiction.

He was sentenced on 28 September 2022 at Lincoln Crown Court by Her Honour Judge Sjölin Knight.

Julie Barnes, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Daniel Patchett was fully aware both of his responsibility not to act as a director of a limited company given he was bankrupt, and also of his duty to disclose all assets and details of his income to the Official Receiver.

He chose to flagrantly disregard these obligations for his own personal gain, leaving creditors out of pocket. We will always prosecute such cases to protect the business community and the public from financial harm.

## **Notes to editors**

Daniel Ross Patchett is of Market Raisin and his date of birth is October 1988.

Patchett was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. This included eight months for offences under section 11 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act, and 12 months for offences under section 356 of the Insolvency Act.

Company DRP Distribution Ltd (Company Reg no 10496605).

Bankruptcy restrictions are wide ranging. The effects are the same whether you are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or to an undertaking. Guidance on the main statutory consequences flowing from a [bankruptcy restrictions order or undertaking](#).

[Information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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## **UN Human Rights Council 51: Statement for Item 9 General Debate on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance**

World news story

The UK delivered a statement on the Item 9 General Debate on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance – outlining our Inclusive Britain strategy.



# UK Government

Thank you, Mr President.

Let me be clear – racism is abhorrent and has no place in our societies. We

can only effectively combat it by working together. Everyone must be able to live their lives free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

In my country we are aiming to do this through our landmark Inclusive Britain strategy, which sets out steps towards tackling racial and ethnic disparities that persist.

This includes taking forward the right legislation, regulation, and putting education in place to ensure fair treatment for all, and by clamping down on racist abuse online through our Online Safety Bill.

We have specific programmes to tackle hate crime, including the Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks programme, a free programme that assists victims of anti-Muslim hatred through legal signposting, advocacy and counselling services.

We are also supporting our Community Security Trust, a charity working to protect British Jews from racism and antisemitism by offering free courses on personal safety to university students, youth workers and religious leaders.

Internationally, we are proud to have joined many of you at the General Assembly last month to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities.

We are fully committed to continue tackling the scourge of racism that continues to affect all regions of the world.

Thank you.

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## [Prisoners start as apprentices at big name employers](#)

Prisoners in England have begun high-quality apprenticeships this week in a bid to cut crime following a change in the law.

For the first time ever, those behind bars will embark on dedicated on-the-job learning programmes that have a direct route into work with leading employers on release that will keep offenders on the straight and narrow.

Big employers have already pledged their commitment including Greene King, Timpson's and Kier, with a wide range of job roles available to offenders, including highway maintenance, hospitality and cheffing.



As announced in the [Prisons Strategy White Paper](#) last year, the Government is exploring all avenues to boost the employability of ex-offenders when they leave prison – a key contributor to cutting crime and making our streets safer.

Evidence has already shown the Government's efforts are working – in the last year, the employment rate of ex-prisoners in jobs six weeks and six months after release has increased by [35% and 24%](#), respectively.

Prisoner apprenticeships offer another avenue for offenders to boost their skills, education and training and ultimately gain employment once they leave the prison gates.

Skills Minister Andrea Jenkyns said:

This vital change to the law will not only help us to rehabilitate offenders, but it's also plugging the skills gap for the future.

Apprenticeships give employers dedicated new workers in sectors like construction and hospitality and it's great to have such high-profile companies sign up to help prisoners turn their life around through work and training.

Prisons Minister, Rob Butler MP, said:

Getting prison leavers into work is absolutely crucial – it provides them a second chance to lead a more positive life and cuts crime.

Apprenticeships are a direct route into gold-standard training in vital industries – encouraging ex-prisoners to stay on the straight and narrow while supporting businesses of all sizes and contributing to economic growth.

Most apprenticeships take place under an apprenticeship agreement which is classed as an employment contract in law. The Government has now changed the law so prisoners will be able to undertake apprenticeships without the need for such an agreement.

An apprentice starting work at Kier said:

This opportunity means a lot to me and I was over the moon when I found out I had been successful. It gives me the chance to prove to myself, my friends, family and the wider community that I am worthy and capable of being successful. I am appreciative to Kier and the team I have worked with during this process, it has been made clear to me that my convictions aren't a barrier to my success or progression.

I look forward to gaining as much experience as I can during my apprenticeship and in the future I would like to stay with Kier, work my way up and hopefully gain further qualifications.

Up to 300 prisoners, who are eligible for day release and nearing the end of their time in prison are expected to be recruited by 2025.

James Timpson, Chief Executive of the Timpson Group, said:

At the Timpson Group, we have a track record of championing ex-offenders and providing them with employment opportunities that enable them to break the cycle of reoffending, reintegrate into society and make positive contributions to the economy.

Key to this mission is ensuring that offenders have as many opportunities as possible to gain skills and training while completing their sentence. As such, we are delighted to be providing one of the first-ever work placements for the prisoner apprenticeship scheme at The Partridge pub, and are looking forward to working with Novus and Total People to ensure this opportunity can be offered to other prisoners who could benefit from an apprenticeship.

Nick Mackenzie, chief executive of Greene King, said:

We are proud to have now supported 135 prison leavers into employment through our Releasing Potential programme, but our ambition doesn't stop there. We have an important role to play in supporting social mobility and the change in law means those in prison can learn new skills to enable them to build a career once they leave prison, which is key to successful rehabilitation. We're really pleased that we'll now be able to offer our award-winning apprenticeship programme to prisoners and hope that more people will be able to join us at Greene King upon release.

Helen Redfern, chief people officer at Kier, said:

At Kier, we're committed to having a more diverse workforce, with colleagues who have skills from a range of backgrounds; reflecting the wider community. This pioneering scheme allows us to diversify our workforce further, whilst benefitting prisoners who are nearing the end of their sentence, as well as reducing the likelihood of reoffending, benefitting communities across the country.

Being one of the first employers to take part in the scheme builds on the work we have already done through Making Ground, our prison engagement and employment programme, which is designed to support

serving prisoners and prison leavers into sustainable employment in the construction industry.

Over the coming months, more and more employers covering all sectors of the economy will come on board to offer apprenticeship opportunities to prisoners, including Sheffield City Council, Co-op and Premier Foods.