

# Presidential elections and referendum in the Kyrgyz Republic: UK statement

World news story

Delivered by Nicola Murray, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the OSCE Permanent Council on 21 January 2021.



Madam Chairperson,

I would like to thank Ambassador Dzhusupov for raising the issue of the Presidential elections held in his country on 10 January, and thank ODIHR for its thorough account of the process, again demonstrating the institution's importance to promoting democracy and the rule of law.

The United Kingdom's support for the Kyrgyz Republic's ambition to strengthen its democratic processes and rule of law is central to our bilateral collaboration. The Kyrgyz Republic stands out in Central Asia for its approach to democratic elections, its active civil society, and freedom of the media.

We congratulate President Japarov on his election and look forward to strengthening the relationship between the UK and Kyrgyzstan during his Presidency. We commend the electoral authorities in Kyrgyzstan for presiding over an orderly and well-administered poll despite the short time frames and the additional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, we are concerned by the OSCE observer mission's report that highlighted a range of violations that threaten the democratic process in Kyrgyzstan, including the use of administrative resources during campaigning, unbalanced access to state media, and constraints on private media.

We call on the Government of Kyrgyzstan again, to address the longstanding recommendations made by ODIHR. These include completing voter lists, so more Kyrgyz citizens are able to vote, and ending the misuse of administrative resources in electoral campaigning. The Kyrgyz Government must also do more to protect journalists, so that they may provide investigative, analytical

and critical reporting to the benefit of voters and democracy.

The United Kingdom stands ready to do what it can to support the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan, including through supporting the recommendations of this ODIHR report.

Thank you.

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## [£1 million to cut drug crime in Swansea Bay](#)

The UK Government has announced that £1 million will be invested in the Swansea Bay area to reduce drug crime.

The money will be invested into piloting Project ADDER – a new intensive approach to tackling drug misuse, which combines targeted and tougher policing with enhanced treatment and recovery services.

Project ADDER (which stands for Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) will bring together partners in the local area including the police, councils and health services and run for three financial years.

It will bolster local police force activity and police investigations, targeted at drug supply disruption.

Work will also take place to establish programmes to use the criminal justice system to divert people who use drugs away from offending through programmes such as Drug Testing on Arrest and out of court disposals.

There will also be increased drug outreach, harm reduction, treatment and recovery support services.

### **Welsh Secretary, Simon Hart said:**

The supply and misuse of drugs causes terrible harm to many of our communities across Wales. It is vital that the agencies who are combatting this appalling trade get all the support they need.

The investment in services in Swansea Bay will help police and other partners tackle this problem in the heart of the communities where an intensive approach is most needed.

**Crime and Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse, said:**

The drugs trade is a poison in our society, devastating lives and destroying communities.

We are delivering on the priorities of the people of Swansea Bay, who do not want drugs blighting their communities. The work delivered through Project ADDER will help in the concerted and coordinated effort to tackle the problem at its root, from disrupting supply right through to rehabilitating people struggling with drug dependence.

We are determined to confront the issue of drugs across the UK and deliver for the public by making our streets safer and protecting those most vulnerable

Swansea Bay is one of the five pilot areas for Project ADDER, which is underpinned by £28 million in funding, and will run across three financial years.

According to the most recent statistics, in 2017-19, Swansea had the highest rate of drug deaths per 100,000 in Wales at 17.6. The rate of drug-related deaths in Swansea is 1.8 times higher than it was a decade ago.

Neath Port Talbot has the third highest rate of drug deaths at 12.7 per 100,000 and has been one of the five highest locations of drug deaths in England and Wales between 2014 and 2017.

Today's funding is part of a £148 million, comprehensive drive by the UK Government to build back safer by helping people break free from the scourge of drug use and cutting drug-fuelled crime and violence.

Some £40 million has been allocated to police forces to take down county lines gangs and tackle drugs supply while £80 million has gone towards drug treatment services to stop reoffending – the largest increase in drug treatment funding for 15 years.

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## **End of year stats show milestones reached in making homes safer**

- 100% of high-rise social sector buildings have unsafe ACM replaced or work underway
- Around 95% of all high-rise ACM buildings fully remediated or have work on site
- More buildings on site with safety works last year than ever before,

despite pandemic

- Ministers renew calls for safety work to be completed as quickly as possible

All high-rise buildings in the social sector and student buildings are now fully remediated or have work underway to remove unsafe ACM cladding, according to stats released today (21 January 2021).

Around 95% of the highest risk buildings with unsafe cladding similar to that found on Grenfell Tower have been made safe or have work underway compared to a year ago; with 159 buildings starting work last year compared to 90 in 2019 – representing more buildings on site with remediation work in 2020 than at any point previously.

However, ministers continue to press building owners to take urgent action to make homes safer.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Today's stats show that – despite the pandemic – significant progress has continued to have been made with remediation work either complete or on site on around 95% of buildings, rising to 100% in all social or student high rise buildings.

This is a big step forwards. While there is still more to do, we are helping make the highest risk buildings with dangerous cladding safer, more quickly.

Building Safety Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

Building owners are responsible for making sure that their buildings, and the people who live in them, are safe. However, some need to do more and it's unacceptable a minority are yet to start work.

We are in contact with the remaining buildings where remediation has not started and we are clear if work does not take place urgently we will take further enforcement action.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the government launched a large-scale programme to identify all high-rise buildings in England with unsafe cladding similar to that found on Grenfell to ensure those homes were prioritised for remediation work to make them safe.

Separately, the government's £1 billion Building Safety Fund is enabling faster remediation of high-rise buildings with other unsafe cladding and as at 15 January had allocated just under £100 million to projects (£95.9 million).

The official statistics published today show data, as of 31 December 2020, updating on progress in remediation of high-rise buildings in England with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems unlikely to meet building regulations.

View the [latest data on remediation](#)

The end of the year saw 31 buildings completed between November and December 2020, the highest monthly increase last year.

Of the 45 buildings yet to start, 13 were identified last year; 7 are vacant and do not represent a risk to resident safety.

The department has confirmed that remediation work should continue during the pandemic, where it is safe to do so.

See [guidance relating to construction work and Covid-19](#)

A protection board has been set up with the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs' Council to provide further reassurance to residents of high-risk residential blocks that any risks are identified and acted upon.

The Communities Secretary has made up to £10 million a year of funding available to support the board who will provide expert, tailored building checks and inspections, if necessary, on all high-risk residential buildings in England by 2021.

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## [UK joint statement on progress made by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum](#)

News story

The Governments of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States respond to recent progress made by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.



A joint statement from the UK, with France, Germany, Italy and the US, in response to recent progress made by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum:

The Governments of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States welcome the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum's (LPDF) vote in favor of the selection mechanism for a new interim executive authority, which will guide Libya toward national elections on December 24, 2021. This is an important step towards Libyan unity. The LPDF's decision affirms the clear demands of the Libyan people that it is time for a change of the status quo. We encourage all Libyan parties to act urgently and in good faith to finalize the adoption through the LPDF of a unified and inclusive government. As participants in the Berlin Conference process and international partners of Libya, we will lend our full support to the LPDF's efforts.

We also welcome the UN Secretary-General's appointment of Ján Kubiš as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Libya, and the appointments of Raisedon Zenenga as the UNSMIL Coordinator and Georgette Gagnon as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, and we will fully support them in their important roles. We express our ongoing gratitude to the Acting UN Special Representative, Stephanie Williams, for her continuing steadfast leadership of UN mediation until Mr. Kubiš takes up his position.

One year after the Berlin Conference, we underscore the critical role of the international community in support of a political solution in Libya as well as our continued partnership with the Berlin Process members. We remind the Berlin Process members of the solemn commitments we all made at the Summit one year ago, reinforced by UNSCR 2510. In particular, we must continue to support a ceasefire, restore full respect for the UN arms embargo, and end the toxic foreign interference that undermines the aspirations of all Libyans to reestablish their sovereignty and choose their future peacefully through national elections. It is crucial that all Libyan and international actors support steps toward full implementation of the Libyan ceasefire agreement signed on October 23 of last year, including the immediate opening of the coastal road and removal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries.

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# **2/2021: Council Tax information letter** **– 21 January 2021**

This letter sets out the impact on the design of Local Council Tax Support schemes of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

This letter also highlights the guidance for creditors recently published by the Insolvency Service ahead of the commencement of the Breathing Space scheme on 4 May 2021.