

14-year minimum jail terms for most dangerous terror offenders

- serious terror offenders to spend longer in prison
- no prospect of automatic early release
- up to 25 years monitoring after leaving prison

The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill marks the largest overhaul of terrorist sentencing and monitoring in decades.

It will end early release for terror offenders who receive Extended Determinate Sentences, where the maximum penalty was life, and force them to serve their whole term in jail.

It will also see the most dangerous offenders – those found guilty of serious terror offences such as the worst examples of preparing acts of terrorism – handed a minimum 14-year prison term and up to 25 years on licence.

Justice Secretary & Lord Chancellor, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

Terrorists and their hateful ideologies have no place on our streets. They can now expect to go to prison for longer and face tougher controls on release.

From introducing a 14-year minimum for the most dangerous offenders, to putting in place stricter monitoring measures, this government is pursuing every option available to tackle this threat and keep communities safe.

The Bill will also allow the courts to consider if any serious offence is terror-related, for example an offence involving firearms where there is a proven terrorist connection, and allow tougher sentences to be imposed.

This would rule out any possibility of a serious terror offender being released automatically before the end of their sentence.

Key measures of the Bill include:

- a new 'Serious Terrorism Sentence' for dangerous offenders with a 14-year minimum jail term and up to 25 years spent on licence
- ending early release for the most serious offenders who receive Extended Determinate Sentences – instead the whole time will be served in custody
- increasing the maximum penalty from 10 to 14 years for a number of terror offences, including membership of a proscribed organisation
- ensuring a minimum period of 12 months on licence for all terror offenders as well as requiring adult offenders to take polygraph tests
- widening the list of offences that can be classed as terror-related to ensure they carry tougher sentences

- boosting the monitoring and disruption tools available to the security services and counter-terrorism police, by strengthening Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures and supporting the use of Serious Crime Prevention Orders in terrorism cases

Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The shocking attacks at Fishmongers' Hall and Streatham revealed serious flaws in the way terrorist offenders are dealt with. We promised to act and today we are delivering on that promise.

Those who senselessly seek to damage and destroy lives need to know we will do whatever it takes to stop them.

The Bill follows emergency legislation passed in February which retrospectively ended automatic early release for terrorist offenders serving standard determinate sentences. This forced them to spend a minimum two-thirds of their term behind bars before being considered for release by the Parole Board.

It builds on recent government action to bolster the country's response to terrorism and ensure we have some of the strongest measures in the world to tackle the threat. This includes:

In addition a nationwide network of counter-terrorism specialists is now embedded throughout the prison and probation service and supported by the 29,000 staff who are trained to spot the signs of extremism.

Notes to editors

- The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill was introduced to Parliament today (20 May 2020). Further clauses in the Bill will:
 - Mean terrorist offenders who do not receive an Extended Determinate Sentence will no longer be eligible for a Standard Determinate Sentence and will instead be sentenced to a Sentence for Offenders of Particular Concern – meaning they will be subject to a minimum licence period of 12 months after being released from custody, even if they spend the full custodial term in custody.
 - The maximum penalty for the following offences will increase from 10 to 14 years
 - Membership of a proscribed organisation
 - Supporting a proscribed organisation
 - Attending a place used for terrorist training
 - Changes to the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM) Act 2011 through this Counter Terrorism Bill will:
 - Lower the standard of proof standard for imposing a TPIM notice
 - Specify new measures that can be applied to TPIM subjects
 - Remove the maximum length for which a TPIM can last (currently set at 2 years) so they can be renewed indefinitely – subject to review, including consideration that they remain necessary

- Allow a TPIM's relocation measure to be varied to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources
 - Expand the Registered Terrorist Offender (RTO) notification requirements by adding to the list of offences which require individuals aged 16 or over to provide certain information about changes in their circumstances to the police following their release from prison
 - Amend the Serious Crime Act 2007 to allow CT Policing to make a direct application to the High Court for a Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO) in relation to individuals over the age of 18 involved in terrorism, supporting their use in terrorism-related cases.
 - Amend the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 so that a court can find any offence with a maximum penalty of more than two years to have a terrorist connection
 - Remove the current statutory deadline for an independent review of the Prevent programme, while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it, to ensure that the new Reviewer has sufficient time to complete the Review. The aim will be to do so by August 2021.
- Only a handful of minor offences – where there is a maximum penalty of 2 years or below – will be excluded from provisions in the Bill. E.g. relating to 'tipping off' in relation to investigation in the regulated sector, wearing a uniform or displaying an article of a proscribed organisation or parking in contravention of a prohibition, and as such are low level offences. Data indicates that prosecution and conviction for these are rare – there is little to no risk that these low-level offences are charged where there is insufficient evidence to charge for a more serious offence.
- The most serious terror offences already attract what are known as Extended Determinate Sentences, which require an offender to be referred to the Parole Board at the two-third stage of their sentence where they can be considered for release. The Bill removes this early release point for those whose offence carries a maximum penalty of life, meaning offenders serve their full time in prison and are then subject up to 10 years on licence. Longer and more restrictive monitoring can be applied if they are deemed a greater risk.
- It means that anyone found guilty of a terror offence where the maximum penalty is two years or more will either be given:
 - A life sentence – where the offender spends minimum period or "tariff" before considered for release by the Parole Board. Offender may therefore never be released. If released offenders spend rest of life on licence and can be recalled to custody.
 - Serious Terrorist Sentence for the worst offenders where there was a likelihood of multiple deaths which carries a minimum 14-year sentence with an extended licence period of 7-25 years
 - An Extended Determinate Sentence (EDS) which, for the most serious offenders (where the maximum penalty was life) will be forced to spend their entire sentence behind bars with an extended licence period of up to 10 years. Other serious offenders will still be in line for an EDS with the possibility of release from the two-thirds point if the Parole Board determines they are safe to release

- before the end of their sentence.
- Or a Sentence for Offenders of Particular Concern (SOPC) for adult or youth offenders which would see a terror offender spend two-thirds of their sentence in custody before being able to apply to Parole Board for release and following release they will have a mandatory licence period of 12 months.
 - Funding for counter-terrorism policing will grow to £906 million in 2020 to 2021, a £90 million year-on-year increase. The money will support and maintain the record high number of ongoing counter-terrorism policing investigations and ensure a swift and effective response to terrorist incidents across the country, no matter where they take place.
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Addressing the pressing humanitarian need in Syria

Thank you very much, Mr President.

Let me just start, if I might, Mr President, by saying that I think it's really important that we try to keep the politics out of our humanitarian discussions. That's one reason why we separate out into political, chemical weapons and humanitarian sessions each month on Syria is to enable us to focus on the evidence and the facts as we grapple with how we keep people alive, which is surely the most vital responsibility that this Council faces. So I have to say I listened with sadness today to one delegate whose intervention was an attack on those providing aid across Syria and those paying for it. And I want to remind everybody that the biggest donors to the Syria appeal are the US, the UK, Germany and the EU, including those areas under Assad's rule.

So, Mr President, what does an evidence-based approach tell us? Well, the UK is deeply concerned about the potentially catastrophic impact of COVID-19 in Syria, as highlighted by the World Health Organization. There are 48 confirmed cases in areas controlled by the Syrian authorities, as well as confirmed cases in the north-east and reported cases in the north-west. There are probably already many more. We cannot know because of the lack of testing capacity. And as the United Nations scales up prevention and protection against COVID-19 in areas controlled by the Syrian authorities and in the north-west, it follows that it must be allowed to do the same in the north-east. So it is gravely concerning the gaps in medical supplies in the north-east have in fact widened at a time when facilities should be urgently scaling up to prepare for the virus.

The UN has confirmed that in terms of coverage or reach, cross-line access in the north-east has not improved since 2019, when the Yaroubiya crossing was still operational. It's for this reason that in his latest report, the Secretary-General said, "The pressing need to prepare for a COVID-19 outbreak

in the north-east has further and starkly highlighted the gap left by the removal of the Yaroubiya authorisation.”

Colleagues, this could not be clearer. There is a clear problem in the north-east and the United Nations and humanitarian organisations have told us what the answer is. We must not play politics with this virus when it’s in our gift to enable aid to get through and save lives. We believe the mandate for the Yaroubiya crossing should be re-authorised as a matter of great urgency for as long as COVID-19 remains a threat to Syria.

Now, Mr President, let me turn to the north-west. If our objective is to save life, then it is absolutely necessary that this Council renews UNSCR 2504 in a timely manner. Monthly truck crossings in March and April of this year have been more than double what they were at the same time last year. This increase in aid is in response to the increased humanitarian need within the region. So the renewal of Resolution 2504 remains essential. There is no alternative. And I’d just like to emphasise that if Resolution 2504 were not to be renewed, then no one should have any illusions that the United Kingdom’s considerable humanitarian funding for the north-west would automatically transfer to delivery via Damascus – particularly, while such serious questions remain about assistance getting from Damascus to those most in need.

A number of colleagues have talked about sanctions. Goods and medical supplies used for humanitarian purposes are not subject to EU sanctions, which are now part of the United Kingdom’s national legislation, and additional exemptions from sanctions are available for humanitarian activities in Syria.

In conclusion, Mr President, the evidence is clearly set out in the Secretary-General’s report. There remains a pressing humanitarian need across Syria. We must remember the millions of lives at stake. COVID-19 has changed the world we all live in. It has changed the situation on the ground in Syria. And I believe that it means we must be ready to change our approach. We must put aside our political differences and act on the basis of humanitarian needs to authorise temporary cross-border access through Yaroubiya. And we must, of course, renew Resolution 2504. There is no other responsible course of action any of us could take.

Thank you, Mr President.

PM call with Bill and Melinda Gates: 19 May 2020

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Bill and Melinda Gates today via video call.



The Prime Minister spoke to Bill and Melinda Gates today via video call. He was joined by Kate Bingham, Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce.

They discussed the UK's contribution to helping countries around the world tackle coronavirus and the important work of the Gates Foundation in this area.

Both parties expressed their hope that a viable vaccine will be found as soon as possible.

They also shared their commitment to the vital work of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and looked forward to the upcoming UK-hosted Global Vaccine Summit on June 4th.

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[Supporting the financial health of the United Nations](#)

Thank you Mr Chair,

I would like to thank Under Secretary-General Catherine Pollard for her presentation last week on the current financial situation of the United Nations.

The United Kingdom shares your concern about the severe liquidity problems that the United Nations continues to face for both its regular budget and peacekeeping operations. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of the United Nations having the right resources and tools needed to deliver effectively its mandates and programmes, in particular in support of the 2030 Agenda.

This Committee spends a lot of time every year carefully evaluating and agreeing the United Nations' budgets. It is therefore incumbent on us all to follow through with that commitment and meet our financial obligations to the United Nations. We owe it to the Organisation and the people it serves. We call on all member states to pay their assessed contributions in full and in good time. Those member states with arrears, we encourage you to take steps to address these.

The financial situation this year looks comparatively better than this time last year. Although a modest improvement, this is nonetheless welcome. We hope to see this improve further.

The United Kingdom commends the Controller and the rest of the Organisation for their efforts to prioritise how the United Nations uses its resources to keep mandate and programme delivery on track. We would welcome an evaluation of the impact of these measures on mandate and programme delivery.

We welcome the Secretariat's pledge to use the funds entrusted to it in a cost-effective manner. In this regard, we encourage the Secretariat to continue to prioritise and use its resources effectively, and where necessary agilely in response to new and emerging challenges and priorities.

We were pleased to hear that the measures that this Committee agreed in July last year for peacekeeping budgets have improved the overall liquidity of active peacekeeping operations and reduced the need for the Secretariat to resort to drawing on the money sitting in closed peacekeeping missions accounts. We are pleased also that these measures have enabled you to reimburse more promptly troop- and police contributing countries their contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We regret that it was not possible last year to agree any measures to help address the issues faced with the regular budget. We encourage the Secretary-General to come back to us in the near future with new and innovative proposals for measures that could help alleviate the liquidity challenges faced by the Secretariat and address their underlying causes.

Finally Mr Chair,

Let me reassure you that the United Kingdom remains committed to supporting the financial health of the United Nations.

Secretary of State Co-Chairs Joint Ministerial Covid-19 Conference Call

News story

A Joint statement following a COVID-19 virtual meeting chaired by Secretary of State and Tanaiste.



Today the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Brandon Lewis, and the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney, jointly chaired a fourth conference call, with the First Minister, the Rt Hon Arlene Foster, deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, Health Minister Robin Swann and Minister for Health Simon Harris to discuss the ongoing response to COVID-19.

They reviewed the latest developments in the collective effort to combat COVID-19 and the ongoing cooperation between the Ministers of Health and Chief Medical Officers through the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding.

They discussed respective plans for the gradual and controlled easing of restrictions given the importance of implementing consistent approaches wherever possible and strong collaborative arrangements.

They welcomed the shared commitment to a phased approach to easing restrictions and roadmaps – recognising that these measures will need to be implemented with flexibility based on the constant monitoring of the transmission rate of the virus in communities and strong data-sharing arrangements North/South.

It was agreed that our approaches will be aimed at avoiding a second wave of the virus and that the cooperation of the public everywhere will be crucial to this in the long-term in implementing social distancing, carrying out good hand hygiene, and following self-isolation guidance for those experiencing symptoms.

They agreed to continue to meet regularly in this format, in addition to the ongoing regular engagement between Health Ministers, Chief Medical Officers and between relevant Ministers on specific issues.

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