

UK statement on irregular migration

We share the EU's perspective that this issue will only ever be effectively managed through working in partnerships. This is why, for example, we offer the Greek Government bilateral support in tackling the humanitarian crisis caused by migrants trying to reach the Greek islands from the Turkish mainland. Since 2015 the UK's Border Force has maintained at least one of its cutters in the region; and over 16,000 migrants have been rescued. We recognise the added value of continued coordination, sharing lessons learned, and being strategically coherent. We will continue working with our European partners and others, and seek stronger multilateral partnerships with third country and international delivery partners, building on the dialogues we have already established together.

We also believe that the responsibility for responding to irregular migration lies beyond our security services. Managed migration is also a civilian and law enforcement matter. The UK continues to support the 'whole of route' approach. This includes not only strengthening key European borders, but also the shared challenge and our shared interest in deterring abuse of our asylum systems, preventing secondary movement, protecting the most vulnerable, building capacity upstream, increasing sustainable returns and reintegration, and working to address the drivers of migration. For example, we support projects that address the needs of refugees in host countries as well as projects that disrupt cross-border criminal gangs.

The UK will continue to be a leader in tackling organised crime groups involved in irregular migration. Our Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce was set up to exploit every opportunity at source, in transit countries and in Europe to identify and tackle organised crime groups. This Taskforce is now working in 17 countries, with presence and relationships across source, transit and destination countries. It has successfully disrupted organised crime groups involved in immigration crime by undermining the business model of these groups and building capacity of local law enforcement agencies. We continue to invest in building and sustaining increased capability over the coming years.

Finally, I would stress that the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants must be protected. The UK will continue to play our important role in the international community by offering refuge for those who most need it, and meeting our obligations to work with our European partners on this shared issue.

UK statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

I fully agree with the statement just made by the European Union and allow me to add a few additional points. This week, as Ambassador Cevik prepares to report to our colleagues in the Permanent Council tomorrow, I would like to focus on the importance of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

The SMM are the eyes and ears of the international community – their impartial, facts-based reporting is vital in updating us on the security situation on the ground and enabling us to identify emerging trends.

For example, the UK is concerned by SMM reporting for the last few weeks which has shown increasing ceasefire violations inside the Petrivske disengagement area, and the repeated presence of members of the Russia-backed armed formations inside the area, sometimes bearing weapons.

Yet all too often, the SMM is obstructed in its vital work. To return to the example of Petrivske – from the 21st January, the Russia-backed armed formations hindered SMM ground monitoring in the area and denied SMM patrols access to the Mission's camera there for six consecutive days. SMM UAV flights over the area have been repeatedly subject to signal jamming.

This clearly illustrates the importance of asking ourselves, not just where is the SMM being hindered, but by whom and why.

The UK condemns the persistent interference with the SMM's cameras and UAVs, and the obstructions of SMM patrols – the vast majority of which are the work of the Russia-backed armed formations. The SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, in accordance with their mandate, which covers Crimea and the entire length of the Ukraine-Russia State border. We underline Russia's particular responsibility in this regard, and call on them to use their influence over the armed formations they back to end restrictions like the ones we've seen in Petrivske.

Let me reiterate the UK's resolute support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. We firmly denounce Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, including its illegal annexation of Crimea, which we do not and will not recognise and its instigation of conflict in eastern Ukraine. We call on Russia to end their illegal annexation of Crimea, and to fully implement their obligations under the Minsk agreements. The UK, together with our international partners, will continue to exert pressure on the Russian Federation to return to full respect of international law and OSCE principles and commitments, including through the use of restrictive measures.

[Rotherham man who stabbed mother in front of young son jailed for longer](#)

A man from Rotherham, South Yorkshire, who stabbed a woman in front of her 6-year-old son has had his sentence increased by the Court of Appeal following intervention by the Solicitor General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

The victim had been entertaining a family member and neighbour in the garden of her home, while her son slept inside on the sofa. Twenty-seven-year-old Jordan Taylor waited until the victim, who was known to him, was alone in her home before entering through the back door. He then threatened the victim and stabbed her in the stomach with a knife as her son looked on, resulting in the victim's bowel being perforated and requiring her to undergo life-saving surgery.

The victim managed to call an ambulance while the offender was still present. The offender then fled, taking the victim's phone with him. The victim's son managed to fetch his aunt from a neighbour's house to help.

On 20 November 2019, Taylor was sentenced at Sheffield Crown Court to 6 years and 9 months' imprisonment.

Today the Court of Appeal increased this to 9 years and 8 months' imprisonment, after the sentence was referred as being unduly lenient by the Solicitor General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

After the hearing the Solicitor General said:

"The increased sentence is appropriate in this case which involved a mother who had to undergo life-saving surgery and her brave young son who witnessed the attack."

[Deal agreed to move 200 nuclear jobs into community](#)

The move is part of the company's long-term strategy to move people off the Sellafield site and into neighbouring towns.

This clears valuable space for decommissioning projects while reducing traffic and providing an economic boost to the community.

Work will begin soon to renovate the building, with employees expected to move in later this year.

The project will help to deliver the county council's Better Places for Work programme, which is part of its modernisation programme to transform offices and increase efficiency.

The move also supports the 'One Public Estate' programme, led by the Local Government Association, which aims to bring back-office teams together to generate increased efficiency and encourage partnership working.

Having two large organisations sharing an office space helps to drive further partnership working, and the associated savings and efficiencies that come with key local partners co-locating.

Jamie Reed, head of corporate affairs at Sellafield Ltd, said:

Moving people off the Sellafield site frees up valuable space for decommissioning so that we can make Sellafield safer, sooner and reduce the number of vehicles on the roads.

Crucially, this also stimulates economic activity in our towns and makes employment opportunities more accessible for people in our local communities.

This ensures we're generating maximum the social impact for our area from the Sellafield mission.

Councillor David Southward, Cumbria County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property, said:

This is a fantastic example of working in partnership with Sellafield and will help reduce congestion at the Sellafield site, whilst also providing a fantastic new premises for the staff relocating to West Cumbria House.

It will also provide a boost to the local economy at Lillyhall and the surrounding area with the arrival of an additional 200 people.

I'd like to say thank you to everyone involved for their efforts in making this project a success and we look forward to sharing office space with Sellafield at West Cumbria House later this year.

Councillor Allan Barry, Chair of Cumbria County Council's Local Committee for Allerdale, said:

This is brilliant news for Allerdale.

The district will benefit hugely from 200 Sellafield jobs and also presents a fantastic opportunity for us to build on this partnership working, whilst maximising the use and efficiency of our office spaces.

I know a lot of hard work has gone in to this project, which is a fantastic opportunity for both Sellafield and the county council, and I'm sure that the Sellafield teams moving to West Cumbria House will receive a very warm welcome.

[Government announces support for Animal Welfare \(Sentencing\) Bill in Parliament](#)

Those who cruelly mistreat animals could face up to five years in prison under a new law backed by Government.

The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill has been published in Parliament by Chris Loder MP today (Wednesday 5 February). The new Bill will enable tougher prison sentences for the most serious perpetrators of animal cruelty, from the current maximum of six months to up to five years.

This would be one of the toughest sanctions for animal abuse in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

The Bill follows a [public consultation in 2017](#), in which more than 70% of people supported the proposals for tougher prison sentences. It means the courts will be able to take a tougher approach to cases such as dog fighting, cruelty towards domestic pets including puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals.

Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset said:

I was shocked to learn that in 2019 the RSPCA investigated more

than 130,700 complaints of cruelty against animals and secured 1,678 convictions. I believe tougher sentencing will act as a greater deterrent against the worst examples of animal cruelty.

We are renowned as a nation of animal lovers and Britain needs to lead the world on animal welfare legislation. Indeed I rescued my own dog Poppy; a Springer Spaniel, who was abandoned as a puppy at the roadside, and she is part of the inspiration for me introducing this Bill.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

There is no place in this country for animal cruelty, which is why I am delighted the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill is being introduced to Parliament to raise prison terms for the worst abusers. It is a crucial piece of legislation which will help deter criminals and will ensure robust and appropriate action is taken if they are found guilty.

I want to thank Chris Loder MP, and all those who have campaigned for this Bill, for introducing it today. The Government will continue to support it as it makes its way through Parliament.

This Bill builds on all the work this government is doing to raise the bar on animal welfare even further, including our forthcoming consultation on ending excessively long journeys for live animals and call for evidence on the welfare of primates as pets amongst others.

The RSPCA received 1,175,193 calls to their 24-hour cruelty hotline in 2018 with a call every 27 seconds.

There have also been a number of cases in the last few years in which the courts said they would have handed down longer sentences had they been available. Recent examples include a case when a man trained dogs to ruthlessly fight other animals, including trapping a fox and a terrier dog in a cage to brutally attack each other. He was jailed for 22 weeks and disqualified from keeping animals for life.

RSPCA Chief Executive Chris Sherwood said:

We are pleased a new Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill is being introduced and hope it will be "third time lucky" for this proposed legislation following a couple of false starts last year.

We see horrendous acts of cruelty perpetrated on animals and have long campaigned for the current maximum six-month jail term to be increased to five years. The Bill has come so close to being enacted in the past – let's not allow this important change to

animal cruelty sentencing to slip through our hands.

Battersea's Chief Executive, Claire Horton CBE, said:

We are greatly encouraged to see the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill back in Parliament, which was a manifesto commitment for most parties at the recent General Election, and applaud Mr Loder in choosing to bring this crucial measure back to Westminster. There is overwhelming public support to see this through and increase maximum sentences for the most shocking cases of animal abuse.

At Battersea, we see animals who have suffered unimaginable cruelty and we have been campaigning for this change for a long time – we ask MPs to deliver this legislation at last and make a difference for animals everywhere. It's time to show the world that the UK is a nation of animal lovers and we won't stand for cruelty and abuse.

PC David Wardell, handler of Finn the brave police dog who inspired the [Animal Welfare \(Service Animals\) Bill](#) which brought into law greater protections for service animals who are harmed on duty, said:

To hear the announcement today that animal abusers are set to face tougher sentences, #FinnsLawPart2, is fantastic news and will of course ensure that all animals, including our amazing service animals, will have the best protections available in law.

I thank the public, Chris Loder and the government's support for this second and vital part of our #FinnsLaw campaigns.

The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill will be introduced into the House of Commons, before moving through to the House of Lords. If passed, it will come into effect in two months after it receives Royal Assent.