

[FCDO Minister statement on the security situation in eastern DRC](#)

Press release

FCDO Minister for State (Development and Africa), Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, commented following a conversation with Rwanda Foreign Minister, Dr Vincent Biruta.



Statement by Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Minister of State (Development and Africa):

This morning I spoke to Foreign Minister of Rwanda, Dr Vincent Biruta. We had a constructive conversation about the deteriorating security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) given the advances of M23, and the steps needed to end the conflict. I expressed my concerns about the worrying humanitarian situation and the impact on civilians is unacceptable.

The UK calls on all countries in the region to do all they can, including through the African-led peace processes, to stop the fighting and bring all parties back to the negotiating table.

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Published 17 November 2022

Convicted killer who committed assault while serving time will spend longer inside after referral to the Court of Appeal

News story

The offender will now serve his sentence concurrently



A man serving time for murder has had his term increased for assaulting two prison officers while serving in a young offender institution.

Kyle Buckley, 18, serving a life sentence for a murder he committed at age 16, was involved in a fight with a self-made weapon (a screw attached to a fabric handle) in the visiting area of Wetherby Young Offender Institution on 22 July 2021.

The next month, on 30 August 2021, Buckley threw a kettle filled with boiled water over a prison officer, causing burns to his back. Buckley was restrained and spat in the eye of another prison officer when being escorted away.

On 12 September 2022 at Leeds Crown Court, Buckley was sentenced to 18 months' detention in a young offender institution, concurrent to the sentence being served for murder.

Following the sentencing, it was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme for being too low.

On 17 November 2022, the Court quashed the sentence handed down on 12 September. Buckley was instead ordered to serve the 18 months' sentence consecutively to his current sentence for murder.

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

Increasing Buckley's sentence both better reflects the crimes committed and sends a clear message that offences committed by serving prisoners will not be tolerated and will be met with punishment.

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Published 17 November 2022

[Lancaster skip hire company has waste permit withdrawn](#)

Press release

A1 Supa Skips Ltd required to clear the site of all waste



The Environment Agency has withdrawn the waste permit for A1 Supa Skips Ltd at their site at Unit 37, Lune industrial Estate, Lancaster LA1 5QP, to protect the environment from harm.

Waste operators are required to operate in line with a set of rules that protect the environment and human health. Where the Environment Agency has concerns that these rules are not complied with, it can use enforcement powers to seek to withdraw a site's permit.

The withdrawal of the site permit means that A1 Supa Skips Ltd are no longer able to conduct any form of waste operations, including accepting or processing waste. Any form of further waste deposit or processing on the site is a criminal offence. As part of the withdrawal of the licence the operator is also required to clear the site of all waste.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

We take our responsibility to protect the environment and legitimate businesses very seriously and will take tough action where operators fail to meet our high standards. Members of the public and businesses in the area need to be aware that it is now a criminal offence to use Al Supa Skip Ltd to remove and dispose of waste.

Anyone who has a skip from the company on their premises or on the roadside should contact the company in the first instance to see if alternative removal arrangements can be made.

Effective regulation is vital to protect our air, land, and water from harm and to provide the level playing field legitimate businesses need to prevent being undercut by irresponsible or illegal operators. In return, we expect businesses to take responsibility for their operations and protect the environment.

Anyone who spots waste crime in their area should report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or call our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

There is currently a criminal investigation being conducted by the Environment Agency on this site and therefore we are limited to what information we can share at this time.

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Published 17 November 2022

[Two offenders receive increased prison sentences for supplying class A drugs](#)

News story

Both offenders will serve longer prison sentences after their sentences were referred under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme



Two men who were involved in a conspiracy to supply class A drugs have both received increased sentences after their case was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

Between June 2020 and March 2022, Mario Sala, 33, and Ewyn Denecker, 33, supplied heroin and cocaine in their local area using a drug supply line known as "Gypsy". During this period Sala would direct Denecker to deliver drugs to postcode areas, while the drug line sent out 26,000 messages to potential customers.

On 26 August 2022 at Portsmouth Crown Court, Sala was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months' imprisonment, while Denecker was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment. Both offenders were sentenced for conspiracy to supply the class A drugs crack cocaine and diamorphine.

Following the sentencing, the offenders' sentences were referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme for being too low.

On 17 November 2022, the Court found the original sentences for both Sala and Denecker to be unduly lenient. Sala was ordered to serve a new sentence of 8 years' imprisonment, while Denecker received a new sentence of 6 years.

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

The illegal drugs supplied by Sala and Denecker are dangerous and ruin lives. Supplying class A drugs at this scale is a serious offence, so I welcome the decision of the Court of Appeal to hand down longer sentences to both offenders today.

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Published 17 November 2022

Business rates revaluation 2023

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has updated the rateable values of all business, and other non-domestic, property in England and Wales.

These future rateable values will take effect from 1 April 2023.

What does this mean?

The information released today gives the future rateable values for non-domestic properties in England and Wales.

You can check the factual information used for your valuation and tell the VOA if anything is wrong.

The rateable value for your property is not what you pay in business rates or rent. Your local council uses the rateable value to calculate your business rates bill.

How your business rates bill is calculated

A rise in your rateable value does not necessarily mean your business rates bill will go up by a similar amount.

Your local council will calculate your bill by multiplying your rateable value by the multiplier set by the government. It will then apply any rate reliefs you are eligible for. Small business rates relief means that some businesses will not pay any business rates at all.

Charitable relief means that registered charities will only pay 20% of their business rates bill. Many charities will not pay any business rates at all.

The government has announced [a package of rates relief for businesses](#) as part of the Autumn Statement 2022.

The government also confirmed its commitment to reform of the business rates system by delivering more frequent business rate revaluations.

If your property is in England

Get an estimate of what your business rates bill may be from 1 April 2023 through our Find a Business Rates Valuation Service on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-business-rates>

You can also:

- check the factual details we hold for your property
- compare your property's rateable value with similar properties in the area
- check how your valuation was calculated.

You will need to sign into, or set up, a Business Rates Valuation Account to tell the VOA about changes to your property details. These changes can include things like floor area sizes and parking.

From 1 April 2023, you will be able to use your account to let us know if you think your new rateable value is too high.

If your property is in Wales

You can now see the future rateable value for your property and get an estimate of what your business rates bill may be from 1 April 2023 through our Find a Business Rates Valuation Service on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-business-rates>

This estimate is based on Wales' 2022-23 multiplier and small business rates relief. The multiplier will be updated for 2023-24 before business rates bills are sent out by your local council and may result in a change to the estimate shown.

The future rateable value will be used to calculate your business rates bill from 1 April 2023.

Why we do revaluations

A revaluation makes sure rateable values reflect changes in the property market. This revaluation will reflect the changes in value that have occurred since the last revaluation six years ago. This includes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Revaluations maintain fairness in the system. They help to redistribute the total amount payable in business rates. They are not carried out to generate extra revenue.

Find out more about Revaluation 2023

The [official statistics for Revaluation 2023](#) are also available.