

Press release: Minister for Asia concerned about arrest of Kem Sokha in Cambodia

I am greatly concerned by the recent series of actions by the Cambodian authorities which culminated in the arrest of the opposition leader Kem Sokha early yesterday morning.

Together with harsh restrictions on independent broadcasters, the enforced closure of the National Democratic Institute and, from today, of the Cambodia Daily newspaper, these measures imperil multi-party democracy and free debate.

I urge the Cambodian government to take immediate steps to restore prospects for a free and fair national election in 2018 and to build on the encouraging progress we saw at Cambodia's nationwide commune elections just three months ago.

News story: Update on the Culture Secretary's consideration of the proposed merger between 21st Century Fox Inc. and Sky Plc.

Following the advice received from Ofcom on 25 August 2017, the Secretary of State sought clarification from Ofcom on some aspects of the advice. We have, today, received Ofcom's response and the Secretary of State will now carefully consider the advice before making her decision on referral on the basis of all the evidence before her, as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Secretary of State's requests to Ofcom will be published in due course, and Ofcom intends to publish its advice at the same time.

News story: Defence Minister announces

successful first firings of Sea Ceptor missiles to protect new aircraft carriers

The Minister visited defence company MBDA's site in Filton, near Bristol, meeting with local graduates, apprentices and other employees working on the Sea Ceptor system.

The new air missile defence system can intercept and destroy enemy missiles travelling at supersonic speeds and will form part of the protection for the nation's new aircraft carriers. The first firings were conducted from Type 23 frigate HMS Argyll whilst off the coast of Scotland.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

Sea Ceptor will protect our interests against threats both known and unknown. It will launch from the Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigates as they keep our nuclear deterrent submarines and the UK's two new aircraft carriers safe on operations around the globe.

Sea Ceptor supports 600 UK jobs and is yet another example of how our rising defence budget is being spent on cutting-edge kit to help our Armed Forces meet future threats.

The Royal Navy Type 23 frigate HMS Argyll, which fired the Sea Ceptor missiles earlier this Summer.

Sea Ceptor, which uses MBDA's next-generation Common Anti-air Modular Missile (CAMM), is being fitted to replace the Sea Wolf weapon system on the Type 23 frigates. The air defence system will also be used on the new Type 26 frigates and Land Ceptor, which will replace Rapier for the British Army.

Using innovations in radar and datalink technology that will guide these potent missiles with pinpoint accuracy, Sea Ceptor will provide the Royal Navy with an improved shield against airborne threats such as the new generation of supersonic anti-ship missiles, fast jets, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Commander Toby Shaughnessy, the Commanding Officer of HMS Argyll, said:

This is an exciting upgrade in capability and a great opportunity for HMS Argyll to demonstrate what the missile system can do to protect our ships from future threats.

Sea Ceptor is an impressive and innovative system, demonstrating

that the Royal Navy is at the cutting edge of technology and working hard to keep Britain safe. I am immensely proud of my ship's company and the work they put in to make this test firing possible.

HMS Argyll will conduct further firing trials of the Sea Ceptor system before she deploys to Japan next year. Alongside providing robust self-defence, importantly Sea Ceptor defends escort vessels within a maritime task group, such as for the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

One of the Sea Ceptor missiles fired by HMS Argyll earlier this Summer. MBDA Copyright.

The system uses a new UK-developed missile capable of reaching speeds of up to Mach 3 and will have the ability to deal with multiple targets simultaneously, protecting an area of around 500 square miles (1,300 square kilometres) over land or sea.

As part of MBDA's CAMM programme, Sea Ceptor supports around 600 MBDA jobs and its supply chain in key locations across the UK such as Stevenage, Filton and Bolton.

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer for the MOD's procurement organisation Defence Equipment and Support, which is based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol, said:

The firings are an important step forward in proving the significant improvements over previous air defence systems and further evidence of our commitment to provide the very best equipment to our armed forces.

The Defence Minister also visited Airbus' plant in Filton, near Bristol, which is the heart of the design and manufacture of some of the world's most technologically advanced aircraft. The Minister met with some of Airbus' 6000 local employees, including engineers working on research and technology for future aircraft projects.

The news comes after the Defence Minister confirmed a [£100m contract to fit the Sea Ceptor system to the Type 26 frigates](#) last year. Earlier this year Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon also announced a [£539 million investment in new missile systems](#).

Press release: Charity Commission launches updated guidance for independent examiners

The Charity Commission has today published updated guidance setting out how to carry out an independent examination of charity accounts. [Independent examination of charity accounts: Directions and guidance for examiners \(CC32\)](#) updates the Commission's previous publication published in June 2015, and takes into account comments from a public consultation on the draft guidance which ran from 3 June 2016 to 30 September 2016. [Feedback from the consultation](#) has also been published today. For further information about the independent examination of charity accounts please see the notes to editors.

As proposed in the consultation, the new guidance includes 3 new Directions that must be followed by examiners:

- Direction 2 sets out requirements for examiner independence; examiners must check for any conflicts of interest that may prevent them from carrying out the independent examination
- Direction 7 requires examiners to check that related party transactions in 'SORP accounts' are properly disclosed
- Direction 9 requires examiners to check whether the trustees have considered the charity's financial circumstances when preparing the accounts, and for 'SORP accounts' whether the trustees have made an assessment of the charity's position as a going concern

To support examiners, detailed and clear guidance is given about how to meet each of the Directions. Having taken into account consultation responses from a number of professional accountancy bodies, umbrella charities and a working party on independent examination, the Commission has made a number of improvements to the final guidance. This includes publishing a brand new checklist alongside the guidance to help independent examiners meet all the necessary requirements when undertaking an examination. The guidance also includes a framework for the independent examination of small charity group accounts for the first time, as well as an expanded range of example examiner's reports, advice on fund accounting, and guidance for examiners about helping charities with accounts preparation and record keeping.

The guidance also reflects the revised guidance published in April 2017 by the UK charity regulators for auditors and examiners about [reporting matters of material significance](#) to the charity regulators.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission said:

These new requirements and the more robust examination process will ensure that charities' accounts are sufficiently scrutinised and

that any regulatory concerns are identified as early as possible. It will also provide reassurance to trustees and the public that there is adequate oversight over charities' finances.

We're grateful to everyone that provided feedback to us during the consultation process and the working party members who assisted us. The improvements that we've made to the guidance as a result, such as creating a new checklist for examiners, will ensure that examiners are well equipped to meet the new requirements and that there is an appropriate balance between the duties of charities and examiners, and the need for a robust independent examination process alongside high-quality, transparent charity reporting.

The new Directions and guidance are mandatory for independent examiner reports signed and dated on or after 1 December 2017. This is to allow time for examiners to familiarise themselves with the guidance. However, early adoption is encouraged.

Ends

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Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
 3. Charity law requires those charities with a gross income threshold of more than £25,000 to have some form of external scrutiny of their accounts. The trustees may opt for an independent examination if their charity's income is not more than £1m, or where gross income exceeds £250,000, its gross assets are not more than £3.26 million, and provided an audit is not required by charity law or due to some other reason. More information is available in [Charity reporting and accounting: the essentials November 2016 \(CC15d\)](#).
 4. Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 provides the power for the Commission to issue Directions and guidance to independent examiners setting out how they must go about performing an independent examination. The Charities (Reports and Accounts) Regulations 2008, Regulation 31, requires that examiners confirm that they have carried out their examination in accordance with the Directions and guidance.
 5. Charity accounts prepared on an accruals basis must follow the methods and principles of the applicable SORP- these are referred to as 'SORP accounts' in this press release.
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Press release: Home Office funds new video enabled justice programme

- the £11 million Video Enabled Justice (VEJ) initiative will be piloted across London and the South East
- Sussex Police figures show a police officer can spend over 5 hours away from work for each court appearance
- As well as saving valuable police time waiting for court proceedings the pilot will create facilities for vulnerable victims to give evidence away from court and assist key witnesses who are unable to travel

The VEJ project, led by Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne, will use a network of high-tech video links in police stations and other buildings so officers can give evidence direct to courts, without the need to travel.

Further work will also be done on using the network for vulnerable victims to give evidence remotely or for key witnesses, unable to travel to court, to participate.

The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, will today (Monday) announce the funding in a speech to the Police Superintendents Association Conference, as part of a £60 million package for police reform and digitisation projects from the Police Transformation Fund (PTF).

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, said:

We must embrace digital policing, push forward with vital reforms and transform forces so that we can take on the challenges of policing in the years to come.

Crimes traditionally measured by the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales are down by more than a third since 2010, but we know that crime is changing.

That means we must be ambitious in our improvements and Police Transformation projects, such as Video Enabled Justice, are exactly the type of endeavour that will maximise frontline police time and mean police can better respond to the evolving challenges of public safety

The £11m awarded for VEJ builds on an earlier project trialled in Sussex, funded through the PTF's predecessor, the Police Innovation Fund. If successful, the scheme, which will be piloted across London and the South East, could be rolled out nationally in the future.

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and Chair of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board, Katy Bourne, said:

I welcome this ground breaking investment from the Home Office.

The Criminal Justice Partners I have worked with on this bid all want to provide the best possible experience for victims and witnesses to give evidence.

This funding will allow us to embed Video Enabled Justice across the system and will deliver greater flexibility and access to court time, saving police officers and witnesses up to 5 hours waiting for court slots, and not requiring police to drive some defendants across the county for a 5 minute hearing.

I want to improve access to justice for everyone. We know giving evidence by video works, so now we have to scale it up as part of the policing and criminal justice transformation agenda.

As well as the £11 million funding for Video Enabled Justice, awards made by the Home Office from the Police Transformation Fund include:

- £6 million to Cheshire, Essex, Hampshire, Gloucestershire and Merseyside forces, over the next three years, for the reform of digital policing
- £23 million has been granted over the next three years for a suite of measures which will provide the NCA, Regional Organised Crime Units, and police forces with new capabilities to detect, monitor and disrupt organised crime groups
- £12 million allocated over the next three years to North Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Wiltshire, Northumbria and the Metropolitan police forces for their proposals in local policing. This will provide an innovative approach to engaging with the community, using sport to reduce youth offending and transforming volunteering in the police to ensure that the community has a greater say in how their areas are kept safe
- £600,000, over the next two years, to Avon and Somerset and Essex to drive greater collaboration between police and fire, whether that is through greater collaboration or a transfer of fire governance

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service have also worked closely with the Sussex Criminal Justice Board on this initiative, and will continue to work closely with them in the development and delivery

From 2015 under a rolling programme, HMCTS has installed and upgraded video links across England and Wales. In 2016 to 2017, we enabled 137,495 cases to be heard via video link, a 10% increase from 2015 to 2016, and there are now 215 witness links in Magistrates Courts and 285 witness links in the Crown Courts. These are all able to connect to any courtroom with a video link in England and Wales.

We have also added 20 remote witness links located away from court buildings across the HMCTS regions (with at least one in each region) ensuring our most vulnerable witnesses have access to this special measure.

The Police Transformation Fund (PTF) has already awarded more than £132 million to police-led projects including bids commissioned by the Police

Reform and Transformation Board. These include important work tackling modern slavery, investing in digitisation and expanding the graduate recruitment scheme, Police Now. In July, the Home Secretary awarded £7.5million over three years to pilot and, if it is successful, fund a dedicated National Police Welfare Service to help provide enhanced welfare support for police officers and staff.

Set up as part of the spending review in 2015, the fund, which is police-led through the Police Reform and Transformation Board, allocates extra investment to continue the job of reform and shape policing for the future. Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constable representatives sit on the Board alongside senior leaders in policing, with the final decisions on bids made by the Home Secretary.

A full list of projects awarded funding in the latest round of Police Transformation Funding will be published on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.