

News story: Welsh Secretary marks tenth annual Armed Forces Day in Llandudno

Hundreds of events are being held today across the country to mark the tenth annual Armed Forces Day.

Men and women from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force, both Regulars and Reserves, are being recognised alongside the wider defence family including cadets and veterans.

The National Event is taking place in Llandudno, North Wales, attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne The Princess Royal, representing the Queen and the Royal Family. Prime Minister Theresa May, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns and Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson are also attending the event, alongside the thousands of attendees who will gather to watch parades, displays and a record number of flypasts

The event comes a month on from the Secretary of State for Wales' visit to Afghanistan to see the 260 soldiers of the Welsh Guards based in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Mr Cairns sat down with soldiers to learn more about their role in providing security and mentoring help to Afghan officials as the country's Government continues its work of reconstruction. He also met senior British army commanders for an update on the troops' peace-keeping mission.

All three regular regiments are currently deployed on operations: 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh and 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards are deployed to reinforce NATO's eastern frontiers in Estonia and Poland whilst 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards serve in Afghanistan. Each is actively contributing to the security of the United Kingdom and global peace and stability.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Armed Forces Day is a unique moment in the year when we can all pause to mark the sacrifice and commitment of our serving men and women, past and present.

While Armed Forces Day of course recognises the major conflicts of the 20th century, it also brings us right up to date with the reminder that Welsh men and women are serving across the world today. And there was no prouder moment for me than when exactly one month ago, I had the honour of visiting the Welsh Guards in Afghanistan.

The sight of Llandudno promenade as the setting for a military

march featuring old soldiers and young cadets will stick long in the memories of the thousands of people here today. I am proud to be a part of it, standing side by side with members of our Armed Forces who represent the very best of what this country stands for.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Today we mark the tenth Armed Forces Day and it remains a valuable opportunity to honour our troops who work so hard to keep us safe. Our servicemen and women are on hand every hour of every day to protect us from the threats we face and today I encourage people across the UK to come together and salute them for their tireless commitment.

I commend Llandudno for an outstanding event and thank organisers across the country for their efforts to mark Armed Forces Day.

The Armed Forces have had a busy year at home, including helping those struggling in heavy snowfall providing emergency assistance in the aftermath of the Salisbury attack.

They are currently working in more than 25 countries and are ready to respond whenever they're required. This year we saw over 2,000 personnel deployed to the Caribbean in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, on operations in Iraq and Syria as part of the fight against Daesh, and continue to reassure NATO allies in Europe.

Press release: Record number of fake HMRC websites deactivated

New figures show that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) requested a record 20,750 malicious sites to be taken down in the past 12 months, an increase of 29% on the previous year.

Despite a record number of malicious sites being removed, HMRC is warning the public to stay alert as millions of taxpayers remain at risk of losing substantial amounts of money to online crooks. The warning comes as Scam Awareness month, run by Citizens Advice, draws to a close.

HMRC has brought in cutting edge technology to tackle cyber-crime and target fraudsters. However, the public needs to be aware and report phishing attempts to truly defeat the criminals. Today (30 June 2018), ministers are urging people to take action to protect themselves as well.

Genuine organisations like banks and HMRC will never contact people out of the blue to ask for their PIN, password or bank details. So people should never give out private information, download attachments, or click on links in emails and messages they weren't expecting.

Treasury Minister Mel Stride MP, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The criminals behind these scams prey on the public and abuse their trust in government. We're determined to stop them.

HMRC is cracking down harder than ever, as these latest figures show. But we need the public's help as well. By doing the right thing and reporting suspicious messages you will not only protect yourself, you will protect other potential victims.

The most common type of scam is the 'tax refund' email and SMS. HMRC does not offer tax refunds by text message or by email.

HMRC has also been trialling new technology which identifies phishing texts with 'tags' that suggest they are from HMRC, and stops them from being delivered. Since the pilot began in April 2017, there has been a 90% reduction in people reporting spoof HMRC-related texts.

This innovative approach netted the cyber security team with the Cyber Resilience Innovation of the Year Award in the [Digital Leaders \(DL100\) Awards](#).

In November 2016, the department implemented a verification system, called DMARC, which allows emails to be verified to ensure they come from a genuine source. The system has successfully stopped half a billion phishing emails reaching customers.

HMRC has also saved the public more than £2.4 million by tackling fraudsters that trick the public into using premium rate phone numbers for services that HMRC provide for free. Scammers create websites that look similar to HMRC's official site and then direct the public to call numbers with extortionate costs.

HMRC has successfully challenged the ownership of these websites, masquerading as official websites, and taken them out of the hands of cheats.

HMRC is working with the National Cyber Security Centre to further this work and extend the benefits beyond HMRC customers.

Further Information

HMRC has taken a range of action to protect the public from scams including:

- since June 2017 HMRC requested 20,750 website links to be removed, compared to 16,069 between June 2016 and May 2017

- during the financial year 2017 to 2018, responded to nearly 1 million phishing referrals
- since 2016 blocked half a billion phishing emails through DMARC
- reduced spoofed phishing texts by 90% due to new technology
- during financial year 2017 to 2018 provided up to date information and support on the GOV.UK website, which was visited 1.4 million times last year

Check [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for information on how to avoid and report scams and recognise genuine HMRC contact.

The National Cyber Security Centre's report 'Active Cyber Defence – one year on' states that HMRC is consistently the most abused government brand.

DMARC (Domain-Based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance) is the internet standard that is used to allow domain owners to have more control over who can use their email addresses as 'from' addresses.

HMRC won the [Cyber Resilience Innovation of the Year award](#) at the Digital Leaders (DL100) Awards last week – the premier list identifying individuals and teams leading Digital Transformation in the UK.

Speech: International cooperation vital in tackling scourge of landmines

Thank you Mr President and thank you to ASG Zouev for your briefing and through you I'd like to extend the UK's appreciation for all the work carried out by UN staff working on mine action, especially in UNMISS.

Mr President, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of Resolution 2365. The United Kingdom reiterates its support for this resolution in which, for the first time, the Council calls for action against the lasting threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices to civilians and peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

Twenty years after the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention landmines remain a major threat. As discussed in the Secretary-General's report, landmines continue to kill and maim indiscriminately. It is civilians, and all too often children, that are the victims of these brutal weapons.

Although a great deal has been done and achieved to rid the world of these horrific weapons, it is clear that there is more to do. Mr President, the United Kingdom fully agrees that instruments of international law provide protection against the proliferation of explosive weapons. We remain fully

committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which we chaired in 2017; the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We call on any states not already party to these Conventions, to accede to these key international disarmament initiatives without delay. It is only when we stop producing these atrocious weapons, that people will stop being killed by them.

The UK will continue to uphold our own commitments under the Convention. We are working to clear landmines in the Falkland Islands, the only part of our territory that is contaminated with landmines. We are also proud to offer substantial international assistance. Last year, we tripled our funding for Mine Action and will spend \$130 million over three years to tackle the humanitarian and development impact of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. This support is making 150 square kilometres of land safe, which will help 800,000 people, and ensure that every year, over 100,000 people – especially children – fully understand the dangers posed by landmines and how to avoid them.

Mr President, we welcome the significant role played by the UN and in particular, the UN's focus on Strengthening National Capacity and the importance of Partnerships. In support of this, we provide funding to the Voluntary Trust Fund of the United Nations Mine Action Service and, through the UK military's Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search branch, have supported the UN to develop the United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Standards. We welcome their completion and recognise the role they will play to ensure the safety of UN personnel who take part in demining activity.

As identified in the SG's report, there is an appalling trend of increased use of improvised explosive devices by non-state actors. The United Kingdom supports Resolution 2370 which restricts terrorist actor's access to weapons. We the call for more stringent national measures to deny terrorists ready access to weapons and explosive precursors. We also support the second UN General Assembly Resolution on Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices.

Mr President, international cooperation is vital to tackle the criminal and terrorist networks facilitating and using IEDs. The UK is actively engaged in facilitating discussions amongst the international community on the topic of IEDs and Mine Action. The conference we hosted in May considered the challenges of realising a mine-free world, and looked at how we could overcome them. Much of the remaining clearance challenge stems from recent indiscriminate contamination by mines and IEDs. It is vital that we continue to assess the challenges ahead and collaboratively consider the means to meet these challenges. We must augment our efforts where we can so we can collectively tackle the scourge of landmines.

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Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Charges in suspected people smuggling investigation

The operation targeted seven addresses in London and Kent aimed at dismantling a suspected organised crime group (OCG) believed to be involved in the facilitation of Georgian nationals into the UK through Ireland.

The investigation, which started in June 2017, is being led by Immigration Enforcement CFI in the UK and supported by the Joint Agency Task Force (JATF). The JATF comprises Immigration Enforcement, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and other law enforcement partners. The task force enables cross-border cooperation across a range of policing areas, as well as intelligence sharing, which helps keep communities safe and secure.

The seven appeared at Uxbridge Magistrate's Court on Wednesday 27 June.

The following were each charged with conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration:

- George Kupatadze, aged 43, of Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12
- Gurami Shariashvili, aged 26, of Carlton Avenue, Bedfont, TW14

- Givi Shariashvili, aged 44, of New Road, Bedfont, TW14
- Mikheil Tchotashvili, aged 34, of Market Street, Newham, E6
- Leri Mgaloblishvili, aged 45, of Talbot House, Ladbroke Crescent, W11

Ilia Diasamidze, aged 34, of Lewisham High Street, SE13, was charged with assisting unlawful immigration. Sidonia Gulbani, aged 26, of Market Street, Newham, E6, was charged with identity document offences.

They have all been remanded in custody to appear at Isleworth Crown Court on 25 July 2018.

Deputy Director Dave Magrath, from Immigration Enforcement CFI said:

Our investigation is targeting an organised network suspected of being involved in a systematic attempt to help individuals evade the UK's immigration controls.

We have been working closely with the PSNI in Northern Ireland and the GNIB in the Republic of Ireland and that vital co-operation will continue as the investigation proceeds with the evidence we have seized today.

Detective Chief Superintendent David Dowling of the Garda National Immigration Bureau said:

This is an example of the continued cooperation between the relevant agencies in our efforts to target all types of criminal activity, including illegal immigration in both jurisdictions.

In addition to the six men and one woman charged, two further arrests were made for identity document offences. The two Georgian men, aged 28 and 31, were given police cautions and detained pending their removal from the UK.

Officers also arrested four people, two men and two women, all Georgian nationals, who immigration checks found had either entered the UK illegally or overstayed. They will have their cases progressed in accordance with the immigration rules and if it is found that they have no right to remain in the UK, steps will be taken to remove them from the country. Approximately £1,800 in Russian currency was seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit the [Crimestoppers website](#).