

Commissioner launches police camera survey

The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner is beginning the process of gathering the latest information from all police forces under his jurisdiction on their use of overt surveillance camera systems.

The Commissioner, Professor Fraser Sampson, has written to the chief officers of all 43 geographical forces in England and Wales, the Ministry of Defence, the British Transport Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, asking for details of their use and governance of all overt surveillance camera systems deployed in public places.

The survey covers all facial recognition enabled systems, drone mounted camera systems, helicopters or aeroplane mounted systems, Body Worn Video (cameras on police uniforms), ANPR (automated number plate recognition) systems and any other surveillance camera systems in public places that fall within the definition of section 29(6) of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The survey asks about the capabilities of systems, whether they use equipment from non-UK suppliers about which there have been ethical or security concerns, what due diligence they have undertaken to ensure they are working with trusted partners, and how their systems comply with the Home Secretary's Surveillance Camera Code which they have a legal duty to observe.

About facial recognition in particular, Professor Sampson's survey asks forces whether they currently use facial recognition technology and, if so, whether it's live (real-time) or retrospective, and whether it is initiated by officers using cameras on their mobile phones or some other kind of system. If none is currently in use, the survey asks whether the force intends to start using facial recognition technology in the future.

Professor Sampson said: "There is little doubt that the police use of surveillance camera systems in the public sphere has been increasing in recent years. This survey will provide an important snapshot of what kinds of overt surveillance camera systems police are using, what they are being used for, and the extent to which facial recognition technology is now being used. It should also tell us whether police forces are complying with the new Surveillance Camera Code as they should be.

"It will be very interesting to see how much things have changed since similar surveys were conducted in 2017 and 2019 by my predecessor in the role of Surveillance Camera Commissioner," he said.

The government's revised [Surveillance Camera Code of Practice](#) came into force in January this year and emphasises the importance of the legitimate use of technology 'to a standard that maintains public trust and confidence'.

Stressing the importance of diplomatic efforts over military solutions to deliver long-term stability for DRC

Thank you, President. Let me begin by thanking SRSK Keita and Ms Lusenge for their briefings today – and I also welcome the participation of the countries of the region in the meeting.

I will focus my intervention on three points – the security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC; regional efforts; and MONUSCO.

President, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the security situation in eastern DRC. The current spike in violence jeopardises recent efforts to pursue peace and prosperity, and exacerbates the already severe humanitarian situation.

The risk of regional war is the highest it has been for many years. An immediate de-escalation on all sides and a mutual respect for sovereignty is urgently needed. De-escalation efforts should include an absolute rejection of hate speech and the manipulation of regional public opinion by self-interested actors.

President, we welcome ongoing diplomatic efforts, including through the Nairobi process led by President Kenyatta and AU-endorsed engagement by President Lourenco. The United Kingdom offers our support to these efforts to pursue dialogue, de-escalate tensions and to make use of regional mechanisms to resolve disputes.

As these efforts continue, the United Kingdom stresses the primacy of political and diplomatic efforts over military solutions to deliver long-term stability and prosperity for DRC and the region. It is equally vital that regional engagement works with existing political processes, in particular the Government of DRC's newly developed DDR programme, and which contributes towards the end of the State of Siege, enabling the re-establishment of local civilian governance.

We await with interest the plans for the proposed East African Community (EAC) regional force and urge EAC Partner States to engage closely and effectively with MONUSCO to manage the potential risks of parallel military deployments. As they design their intervention, we encourage EAC Partner States to draw on lessons learnt from MONUSCO's deployment.

President, humanitarian considerations must also be given sufficient attention by all actors to ensure the 5.9 million internally displaced civilians in DRC receive the assistance they need. Recent violence by the M23 armed group has resulted in a large spike in humanitarian need.

Kidnapping and violence against humanitarian workers is increasing and is severely impacting the ability of agencies to reach affected populations. We urge the Government of DRC to work more closely with humanitarian agencies, including OCHA, to find specific, and practical solutions to the threats to humanitarian delivery – including through strengthened civil-military cooperation.

President, let me acknowledge the challenges facing MONUSCO in this complex context. As we have seen by the loss of nine MONUSCO personnel in recent months, the Mission operates in dangerous circumstances, and we pay tribute to their personnel for what they do. We call on all actors to avoid any statements or actions which increase the risk to MONUSCO personnel and express our full support for the Mission in implementation of its mandate. In concluding, let me commend SRSK Keita and MONUSCO as a whole for their continued efforts in increasingly challenging circumstances.

I thank you.

[PM meeting with President Erdoğan: 29 June 2022](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister met Turkish President Erdoğan at the NATO Summit in Madrid today.



The Prime Minister welcomed the announcement that Türkiye, Sweden and Finland have agreed a memorandum agreement, paving the way for Finland and Sweden's accession to the alliance.

He said Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO will make the alliance stronger as we look ahead to a more dangerous decade.

The Prime Minister praised President Erdoğan's leadership on the issue of

getting grain out of Ukraine. The Prime Minister stressed that President Putin's ongoing blockade of Ukraine's ports is creating an international humanitarian crisis, both in Ukraine and around the world.

The leaders discussed deepening the UK-Türkiye relationship, particularly in technology and energy.

They agreed to look at measures to further improve business mobility between our two countries, helping to create jobs and boost economic growth for both the UK and Türkiye.

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[UN Human Rights Council 50: UK statement on Burundi](#)

World news story

The UK delivered a statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Burundi.



UK Government

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The United Kingdom congratulates the Special Rapporteur on his appointment and we thank him for this update. As this is the first Interactive Dialogue since the end of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank the former Commissioners for their important work.

Madam Vice President,

We note that there have been some positive developments in Burundi since the last report of the Commission of Inquiry. We welcome in particular the progress made on media freedom, including the easing of restrictions on some local and international news outlets.

Despite these positive steps, the UK remains concerned by the overall human rights picture in Burundi, particularly the targeting of political opposition figures, and we call on the Government to make further progress. We also urge Burundi to: undertake to cooperate fully with the Special Procedures Mandates of the Council, including the Special Rapporteur; re-engage with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and agree to the re-establishment of the OHCHR country office.

Special Rapporteur,

We would welcome your views on how the international community can best play its part in supporting the Government of Burundi to promote and protect the rights and freedoms of its people.

Thank you.

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[Transport update: investment in the East Coast digital programme](#)

I am pleased to announce over £1 billion investment in the East Coast digital programme, which aims to introduce the European train control system (ETCS) to the Southern section of the East Coast Mainline.

European train control system, also known as digital signalling, brings signalling onto a screen in the train's cab.

This provides drivers with continuous real time information, for example maximum allowable speeds, and removes the need for line-side signals.

Trackside sensors are retained to track the train on the network and support adaptive decision-making, through assessing and understanding that particular train's characteristics such as speed and braking distance.

This investment will fund the fitment of trains and lineside technology on the stretch of line from London King's Cross to Stoke Tunnel, just north of Peterborough, as well as the integration of this technology into the network and its operating companies.

This will be the first deployment of European train control system on a mixed-use mainline in the UK rail network, increasing punctuality and reliability for both passenger and freight services across the whole line.

Trains will be able to run closer together safely, enabling more services to run on the same stretch of track. Fewer signalling failures and faster recovery from any delays will make the service more reliable for the customer.

This programme of work presents a unique opportunity to enable a positive step-change in technology on the network, with a move away from systems of signalling that emerged from Victorian times, and towards a high-performing digital alternative.

As the rail sector continues to recover from the pandemic, it is vitally important that capacity and reliability are both increased in a financially viable way as demand returns.

This large upfront investment in the rail sector also presents an opportunity for savings in the long run, as maintenance of these assets is more affordable across the whole life of the signals. Furthermore, this programme will create approximately 5,000 highly skilled jobs in the rail industry.

Initial enabler projects have already begun, including the fitment of trains and some infrastructure on the Northern City Line, with works to continue through the 2020s.

This major investment is symbolic of this government's ongoing commitment to modernising our railways, making them fit for the 21st century.

Deployment of this innovative technology for the first time on a mixed-use mainline in the UK will deliver improvements for the user, support the creation of a financially sustainable railway and also grow and level up the economy by delivering an upgrade to this vital economic artery which stretches along the spine of this country.

See [£1 billion technology investment to bring railway into 21st century](#) news story, published 29 June 2022.