

News story: UK agrees sale of HMS Ocean to Brazil

HMS Ocean heading for the Caribbean. Crown copyright.

Sold to the Brazilian Navy for around £84M, the profit generated from the sale will be reinvested in defence at a time when the Royal Navy is being strengthened with two types of brand new frigates and two huge aircraft carriers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth, which will eventually take on the role as the nation's new flagship, recently set sail from the port of Gibraltar carrying two Chinooks and four Merlin helicopters as she readies for helicopter trials at sea.

Throughout HMS Ocean's impressive 20 years since entering service in 1998, she has covered more than 450,000 nautical miles. The long-planned decision to take her out of service in 2018, as she reaches the end of her planned service life, was confirmed in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015.

Her military record spans from Operation Palliser during the Sierra Leone civil war to Operation Ellamy as part of an international coalition in Libya in 2011.

Most recently, HMS Ocean demonstrated her humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities when she bolstered the hurricane relief effort on Operation Ruman in the Caribbean last summer. It is fitting that one of her final operations mirrored that of her first, when in early 1999 she was deployed at short notice to render assistance to Honduras and Nicaragua in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

The sale of HMS Ocean was managed by the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA), which is part of the MOD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support. The Authority provides an efficient sale and disposal services to the armed forces as well as customers in the UK and overseas.

Clive Walker, Head of DESA, said:

We have a proven track record of supplying surplus defence equipment on a government to government basis. The successful sale of HMS Ocean to the Brazilian Navy will provide a financial return to the UK which will now be reinvested in defence.

HMS Ocean will decommission from the Royal Navy in March, with plans for the Brazilian Navy to take possession of the ship in June 2018. Modifications to the ship will be made by UK companies Babcock and BAE Systems in the

meantime, with this work funded by Brazil.

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement: UN Panel of Experts report on Yemen

I am deeply concerned by the findings of the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen that missiles and related military equipment of Iranian origin were introduced into Yemen after the imposition of the targeted arms embargo.

This puts Iran in non-compliance with Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015) and reaffirms our concerns that they are undertaking destabilising activity in Yemen and the wider region.

I call on Iran to cease activity which risks escalating the conflict and to support a political solution to the conflict in Yemen. I also call on all parties to the conflict to abide fully by applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

News story: Technical consultation on trade secrets

A [technical consultation on the Trade Secrets Directive](#) has launched. We are seeking views on the draft Regulations which will bring the Directive into UK law.

A trade secret is a form of confidential business information that can give a business a competitive edge in the market. The government believes it is important businesses are able to protect their trade secrets. This is because they can be of great commercial value.

The EU Trade Secrets Directive was adopted on 8 June 2016 and came into force on 5 July 2016. It sets out minimum standards for measures, procedures and remedies that should be available in the unlawful acquisition, use or disclosure of trade secrets. It includes a definition of a trade secret and provisions for protecting confidential information during legal proceedings.

The UK has a strong and well established legal framework that allows for the effective enforcement of trade secrets. As a result, a number of provisions

in the Directive already exist in UK law. The changes proposed relate primarily to procedural matters in the courts. They are intended to provide clarity, transparency and consistency across the UK's various jurisdictions.

Responses should be sent to enforcement@ipo.gov.uk by 16 March.

[News story: Carillion: Official Receiver's update](#)

A spokesperson for the Official Receiver said:

As a result of agreements entered into over the past week to purchase contracts held by Carillion ongoing employment has been confirmed for 942 employees.

Most employees who have transferred so far have done so on existing or similar terms and I will continue to facilitate this wherever possible.

Regretably 152 employees are being made redundant and they will leave the business later this week. Those who have lost their jobs will be able to find support through Jobcentre Plus' Rapid Response Service and are also entitled to make a claim for statutory redundancy payments.

Discussions with potential purchasers continue and I expect that the number of jobs safeguarded through the liquidation will continue to rise. I am continuing to engage with staff, elected employee representatives and unions to keep them informed as these arrangements are confirmed.

- in total, to date 7,610 jobs have been saved and 1,141 jobs have been made redundant through the liquidation
- this information does not include contracts where an intention to purchase has been entered into but has not yet formally occurred
- further information about rights in redundancy is available on gov.uk
- continued support by Carillion's public and private sector customers is enabling as many employees as possible to be retained in the interim until all contracts have been worked through

[Press release: New campaign targets cartels as tip offs rise by third](#)

The increase follows a previous Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) campaign targeting this illegal behaviour.

The CMA is now launching a [new campaign](#) to encourage more people to come forward with information that will help it hunt out illegal cartels. The campaign is part of a ramping up of the CMA's enforcement activity and comes after the award of an extra £2.8m from the government for this work.

Cartels are businesses which cheat their customers by agreeing not to compete with each other so that they can keep their prices high. There are serious penalties for being in a cartel, but many workers in the UK know little about them, putting them and their companies at risk.

The new campaign encourages people to be "Safe, not Sorry" if they think they may have involved themselves in cartel activity and to make sure they are the first to report it to the CMA. Witnesses – those not involved themselves but who have seen something untoward – are also asked to "Do the Right Thing" by reporting it to the CMA.

The CMA saw a 30% increase in tip offs in 2017, following the launch of the CMA's first digital campaign.

As part of the new campaign, the CMA is reminding people that, if they come forward with information about their involvement, they can receive significant reductions in fines and avoid being disqualified from running a company. If they are the first to come forward, they can receive total immunity, including from criminal prosecution. Witnesses who blow the whistle can receive a reward of up to £100,000.

Stephen Blake, Senior Director for Cartels at the CMA, said:

We are committed to tackling cartels wherever we find them. More people are reporting illegal activity to us and we urge anyone with information to come forward. If you're involved, it's better to be safe, not sorry and to tell us about it first – before someone else does.

For those who were not involved but have witnessed illegal activity, we urge them to do the right thing. We know that this is a sensitive issue and some people could worry about what might happen to them if they speak to us. All information is treated confidentially and we can discuss any concerns that people may have over keeping their identity secret.

Francesca West, Chief Executive at whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work, which is backing the “Safe, not Sorry” campaign, said:

We know from our experience that speaking up isn't easy, but it is often the only way to prevent further harm. It is encouraging the CMA has seen a 30% rise in people coming forward to report the illegal behaviour of cartels.

Over the past two years, the CMA has issued £151m in fines following successful investigations into anti-competitive practices and it is currently investigating 15 cases where competition law may have been broken.

The new campaign will target a range of industries that are at a greater risk of cartels forming. These sectors include: construction, manufacturing and business support services. These are sectors that have either a history of reported cartel activity or characteristics that make them vulnerable to cartels.

Recent cases where the CMA has taken enforcement action include:

- [Water tank firms fined over £2.6 million](#), after they formed a cartel to divide up customers and fix minimum prices for tanks used in large construction projects (such as, schools and hospitals).
- [Somerset estate agents fined over £370,000](#) for fixing the minimum prices of their commission rates, meaning that local home owners were denied a fair deal when selling their property.
- [Amazon marketplace seller fined over £160,000](#) and director disqualified from running a company after agreeing to fix the prices of popular posters and frames with a competitor. The competitor contacted the CMA to report the cartel activity and received immunity.

If you have witnessed a cartel or have been involved in a cartel and wish to apply for leniency, call: 0203 738 6888 (witnessed); 0203 738 6833 (leniency). For more information, visit the [Stop Cartels](#) webpage or view the CMA's [video guidance](#).

Notes to Editor

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Youtube](#) and [Flickr](#).
2. Businesses found to have been involved in illegal cartels can be fined up to 10% of their annual turnover. Individuals can face up to 5 years in prison and directors can be disqualified from holding director positions for up to 15 years. These can be reduced or eliminated altogether where a business or individual reports their involvement in a cartel and co-operates fully with the CMA's investigation.

3. The campaign encourages people to visit the CMA's designated '[Stop Cartels](#)' page which features videos, short guides and case studies to explain what cartels are and how people can report them. The campaign page can be found at: www.gov.uk/stopcartels
4. [Public Concern at Work](#) is a dedicated whistleblowing charity that offers independent and confidential advice to workers who are unsure whether or how to raise a public interest concern. It operates an advice line managed by qualified lawyers with a wealth of experience in whistleblowing law and practice. To contact Public Concern at Work, call 020 7404 6609.
5. Enquiries should be directed to the CMA press team at press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6191.