

Press release: Film producer whose company raised £5 million from investors disqualified

The disqualification order was made against Mr Cowan following an investigation by the Insolvency Service which also commenced the winding up of [Warlord Productions Ltd](#) in the public interest.

Mr Cowan was the sole director of Warlord Productions Ltd a company which raised money from members of the public, who believed they were investing in a feature film, claiming it would have an A list cast. The film was never made.

The official receiver's investigation uncovered that the company set out to raise £2.5 million for the film Henry 5. Despite raising over £5 million from private investors, little if any of the money was used for film production. Instead, over £3.4 million, went in sales commissions, and of the remaining £1.6 million, £1.15 million was paid to two of Mr Cowan's other companies and £200,000 towards the purchase of a house without any security being taken.

To make matters worse, for almost half of its investors by value, the company did not keep records who the investors were, or how much they had invested. Consequently, if the film had been made, and had generated profits records weren't held that would have allowed returns to be made. When it became clear that the film would not be made, the company was not in any position to repay monies raised.

Anthony Hannon, Official Receiver in the Public Interest Unit, said:

Little if any of the large sums raised from the public were used for the stated purposes, and there has been detriment both to the investing members of the public and to the reputation of investment in the UK film industry.

The Insolvency Service will look closely at any evidence of misconduct and take appropriate action where directors have used investor monies for other purposes.

Mr Cowan is of Peacehaven, Sussex. His date of birth is February 1965.

Warlord Productions Ltd (Company No. 08379786) was incorporated on 29 January 2013 and was wound up in the public interest by the High Court on 1 July 2015.

The disqualification order was pronounced by Chief Registrar Briggs on 22

November 2017, with the deputy official receiver appearing on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Mr Cowan did not attend and was not represented.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

Further information about the work of the Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team is [\[available\]\(https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/bis-criminal-prosecutions\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/bis-criminal-prosecutions)

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

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Speech: Kenya's democracy is at a crossroad: Article signed off by Heads of Missions

Kenya is special. As diplomats living here, we see and admire daily the determination and creativity of the Kenyan people; the energy and innovation of Kenyan business; and the inspiring democratic journey that Kenya has made since independence. These and Kenya's many other achievements have made it a hub for the region and indeed for the continent and the world.

Like all democratic countries, including our own, Kenya's democracy is not perfect. But it can and should remain a source of strength, and an inspiration to all of us.

That is why, as friends, we are deeply concerned by recent political developments in Kenya. Both the government and the opposition have taken steps that have undermined Kenya's institutions, and driven wedges among its citizens.

A father of multi-party democracy has made unsubstantiated claims about elections and unilaterally sworn himself as "President", in deliberate disregard of the Constitution for which he so proudly fought.

The government, which should be the guarantor of liberty and freedom of expression for all under the law, has shut down television stations, seized the passports of opposition leaders, refused to obey court orders, and deported a prominent opposition lawyer. These events follow two elections that left many Kenyans dead and many more livelihoods disrupted.

For friends of Kenya, alarm bells are ringing.

The ambitions of politicians are fundamentally weakening institutions, and breaking the bonds of shared citizenship, which Kenyans have built up patiently over decades.

We are concerned not because we presume to dictate how Kenyans should regulate their country's affairs – we don't. But as fellow democracies, we know our freedoms and rights were hard won, and how carefully we must cherish, strengthen and protect them if our nations are to thrive and prosper.

For democracy to work, leaders must govern justly on behalf of all citizens. When citizens disagree with the decisions leaders make, they dissent peacefully. Opposition provides a check on governmental power. A free media and civil society keep the public informed and facilitate dialogue, and that dialogue improves the policies and programs that leaders deliver to their

citizens.

Institutions and Constitutions are not abstract things of interest only to lawyers. They are the only way to ensure that everyone can get justice regardless of gender, religion, wealth or personal connections; can build a better future for their family; and can have their voice heard in the decisions that affect their lives.

Today, Kenya stands at a fork in the road along its democratic journey. Its leaders need to take the right path for Kenya to succeed.

We strongly urge the government to comply fully with court orders and follow legal process in appealing or contesting them. Freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and all civil rights need to be protected. When individuals are arrested, their rights should be respected and due process followed. Citizens have the responsibility to protest non-violently, and security services should avoid unnecessary or excessive use of force. Whatever the conduct of others, the government has a special duty to protect democratic institutions and adhere to the Constitution and the rule of law at all times.

Meanwhile, the opposition must accept the decision of the Supreme Court to uphold the election of October 26. Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto are the legitimate President and Deputy President of Kenya. The opposition needs to accept this as the basis for the dialogue that it and many Kenyans want. Stoking and threatening violence are not acceptable, nor are extra-Constitutional measures to seize power.

As partners, we will do all we can to help; but only Kenyans can resolve the country's problems. We again call for an immediate, sustained, open, and transparent National Conversation involving all Kenyans, to build national cohesion, address long-standing issues, and resolve the deep-seated divisions that the electoral process has exacerbated.

We are investing in Kenya and have great hope for the future. But Kenyans must summon now all their strength and resolve, reaffirm the Constitution, and put the country back on the path to democracy, prosperity, and security.

This op-ed was signed off by:

Nic Hailey High Commissioner for the United Kingdom

Robert F. Godec Ambassador of the United States

Jutta Frasch Ambassador of Germany

Alison Chartres High Commissioner for Australia

Sara Hradecky High Commissioner for Canada

Mette Knudsen Ambassador of Denmark

Anna Jardfelt Ambassador of Sweden

Victor Conrad Rønneberg Ambassador of Norway

Frans Makken Ambassador of the Netherlands

Tarja Fernández Ambassador of Finland

Kim Ramoneda Chargé d’Affaires a.i, France

[News story: UK/ Egyptian workshop on Higher Education](#)

On 11 February leaders of universities across Egypt were invited to a workshop at the British Embassy in Cairo to share best practice on improving higher education, by giving university teachers the recognition they deserve for their work, and ensuring that students leave university with the skills they need for the modern job market.

The workshop, delivered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the British Government’s Department for International Trade, was attended by Prof Dr Mohamed Salheen, Adviser to the Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research, as well the British Ambassador to Egypt, John Casson, and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, UK Trade Envoy to Egypt.

HEA is a UK-based organisation which works with ministries, universities and individual academics across the world to help them improve education standards. For teachers, this includes ensuring that systems are in place to recognise and reward good teaching. For students, it means ensuring that students stay in university, get thorough assessment and constructive feedback on their efforts during their studies, and leave university with the skills they need for the modern workplace.

British Ambassador John Casson said:

Giving young Egyptians the chance for world class education is at the heart of the UK’s partnership with Egypt. When you put together world class UK university expertise and Egypt’s best young talent and institutions there is no limit to what we can achieve together. Everywhere I go I am inspired by the talent and ambition of young Egyptians and this workshop is a fantastic opportunity to share ideas that will help teachers and students succeed in giving Egypt excellent universities and young people with the skills to succeed in the modern world.

Ian Hall, HEA Partnership Development Manager, said:

We are delighted to have this opportunity to speak to senior university leaders in Egypt. While every country is different, we've seen that higher education providers across the globe face many of the same issues. We'll be sharing lessons learned from the HEA's work across the world, including from our projects in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman, and how these could be applied within an Egyptian context. Our aim is to promote teaching excellence and to enable student success. An important route to achieving student success is by motivating great teaching in higher education through the reward and recognition of those who deliver it. We've also decided to focus on student employability which is increasingly under scrutiny from governments and employers, quite apart from being critically important to students themselves. We want to highlight some of the work we have done to help institutions develop holistic strategies to supporting employability, particularly through curriculum design.

[News story: Latest Carillion update from the Official Receiver](#)

A spokesperson for the Official Receiver said:

“Arrangements have now been finalised to transfer prison facilities management and defence bases catering and cleaning contracts to new providers and as a result we have been able to safeguard employment for a further 4,418 employees.

“Ongoing employment has been confirmed for more than a third of Carillion's workforce so far as part of the liquidation. There is a lot of interest from potential purchasers in the contracts the company delivered which will see the number of jobs safeguarded continue to increase.

“Employment could not be secured for a further 59 employees working on paused construction projects and regrettably 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.

“Most employees who have transferred so far have done so on existing or similar terms and I will continue to facilitate this wherever possible as we work to find new providers for Carillion's other contracts.

“The process to find new suppliers to deliver Carillion's contracts continues. 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 6,668 jobs have been saved and 989 jobs have been made redundant through the liquidation
- further information about rights in redundancy is available on [gov.uk](https://www.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: Foreign Secretary holds talks with Aung San Suu Kyi](#)

Lasting an hour, the talks focused on the Rohingya crisis and took place a day after the Foreign Secretary visited Cox’s Bazar where he saw first hand the scale of the humanitarian disaster.

During the meeting Mr Johnson expressed his deep concern over the current situation and urged Burma to work with the international community to create conditions in Rakhine which will allow Rohingya refugees to return safely, voluntarily and in dignity to their homes under international oversight.

The Foreign Secretary also urged for the involvement of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in the repatriation of the Rohingyas and raised the plight of two Reuters journalists currently detained in Burma.

Speaking after the meeting Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I have held talks with Aung San Suu Kyi and discussed the range of challenges facing her country.

I spoke to her about my own experience witnessing the terrible conditions of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and my deep concern about their future.

I underlined the importance of the Burmese authorities carrying out a full and independent investigation into the violence in Rakhine, and to hold to account those responsible for human rights violations.

I underlined the urgency of creating the conditions in Rakhine that could make it a safe place for the Rohingya refugees to return to, free from fear, and in the knowledge that their basic rights will be respected and upheld.

The UK is already a major donor to the humanitarian crisis. We will continue to use all our diplomatic tools and influence on the

global stage to find a way to provide a better future for the Rohingya community.

I encouraged her efforts to broker a nationwide peace settlement to put to an end seventy years of conflict in her homeland.