

Adapting to prevent terrorist threats and the need to protect human rights

Mr President, I would like to thank you for hosting this important debate today, and also Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Executive Director Coninsx and Ms Fatima Akilu for their informative and important briefings.

It's been twenty years since the Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Our work has strengthened the cooperation we need to protect all our citizens and counter the scourge of terrorism.

Subsequent Security Council resolutions have built an effective toolkit for guidance and measures for states to respond to the evolving threat.

They now cover everything from international legal cooperation to counter-terrorist financing, from specific challenges like aviation security to broad issues like human rights, gender, and civil society.

With the support of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the Committee has helped assess states' implementation of the resolutions and identified emerging challenges, examples of best practice, and opportunities for technical assistance.

Of course, the Council and the Committee have not been acting alone.

In 2014, the Global Coalition against Daesh brought together 83 partners, including the United Kingdom, to combat Daesh and liberate eight million people from its control.

Organisations such as the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, of which the UK is a founding member, have bolstered international cooperation.

Other parts of the UN system, most importantly the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, have also played an important role.

Through this work, and through the leadership of the United Nations Security Council, we have built a shared understanding of the terrorism threat and developed the tools to counter it.

Mr President, as a result of our collective efforts, Al-Qaeda has been degraded. Daesh was defeated on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria.

But sadly, the threat has evolved and remains with us.

Terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda and Daesh affiliates, continue to operate around the world.

Terrorist narratives continue to radicalise individuals in diffuse and unpredictable ways. New threats from extreme right-wing groups have increased.

So, the work of the Council and of the Committee remains vital.

Looking forward, I want to stress four key priorities:

Firstly, the Council should continue to learn and adapt to the latest threats and emerging trends.

I mentioned extremist right-wing groups. Terrorist misuse of social media and other new technologies needs greater attention. We also need to tune in to how longer-term effects of COVID-19 might influence the terrorism dynamic.

Secondly, the Council should reaffirm states' obligation under international law to protect and promote human rights whilst countering terrorism.

The threats posed by terrorism do sometimes require states to take extraordinary measures. However, too often counter-terrorism is used to justify egregious human rights violations and oppression. States must act within the boundaries of international law. Otherwise, we undermine the very rights and freedoms that the UN was established to promote.

While it is not the only instance around the world, a case in point is the situation in Xinjiang where the Uyghur and other ethnic minority communities face severe and disproportionate measures, with up to 1.8 million people having been detained without trial.

These well-documented measures are inconsistent with China's obligations under international human rights law including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

They run counter to the Security Council's long-standing requirement that counter-terrorism measures comply with States' obligations under international law, including international human rights law.

Third, the Council should reaffirm the importance of inclusion and partnerships.

Effective counter-terrorism requires more than the cooperation of governments. It requires whole societies.

That means promoting the leadership of women, young people, and minorities, building effective partnerships with the private sector, with religious leaders, and ensuring we listen to all the voices of our peoples.

And fourth, the Council should push for coherence within the UN system.

We welcome the existing close cooperation between the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as the Al-Qaeda and Daesh Monitoring Team and other UN agencies.

It remains vital that this continues, especially in the area of capacity-building, so that resources are deployed effectively and where they can have the greatest impact.

Mr President, as the terrorist threat endures and evolves, so too must our resolve to fight it remain firm.

The Security Council's counter-terrorism architecture has been an integral part of that fight over the last twenty years, and the United Kingdom will work to ensure it remains relevant, efficient and effective in the years ahead.

Thank you.

UK Space Agency CEO to step down

Press release

Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, has announced he will leave his role in 2021



UK Space Agency CEO Graham Turnock

Following a 4-year term leading the Agency, which delivers the UK's civil space programme, Graham will step down from his position this year.

Recruitment for his successor will begin soon, and an announcement will be made in due course.

Graham said:

It has been an immense privilege to serve as UK Space Agency Chief Executive during one of the most exciting and challenging periods of the UK's short space history. I have relished the opportunity to work with some amazing people both within the Agency and across the space sector domestically and internationally.

However, with the end of the term of my original appointment now in

sight, it is time for me to look to new horizons and for a new Chief Executive to lead the UK through its ambitious journey into space.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

Graham has been instrumental in the UK's recent successes in space. He led the UK spaceflight programme, which plans to launch the first UK satellite from the British Isles as early as 2022, and has ensured UK leadership in the decade's most exciting global missions to the Moon and Mars.

He was also a strong advocate for a coordinated government approach to space which led to the creation of the National Space Council last year, aiming to bring long-term strategic and commercial benefits to the UK.

Nick Shave, Chair of UKspace, said:

Under Graham's leadership, the UK Space Agency has transformed, more than trebling in size and partnering with the sector on world-class science and technology programmes. I wish him well in his next endeavours.

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Lord Chancellor: It's time for action on mental health in prisons

When Sir Simon Wessley delivered his landmark Independent Review of the Mental Health Act, he told the government that more must be done. More must be done to deliver a modern mental health service that respects the patient's voice. More must be done so individuals can shape their own treatment.

And this government has done more, more than any other to put the treatment of mental illnesses on par with physical ones.

But Sir Simon also said more must be done to support mentally unwell people within the criminal justice system. And not only that, but more must be done to help those with conditions like autism and dyslexia.

As a barrister, part-time circuit judge and now as Lord Chancellor, I've seen victims, witnesses, and defendants with these conditions struggle too often in our criminal justice system.

Support for all victims of crime continues to improve at every stage of the justice system – with a further £40m investment announced in the Chancellor's Spending Review. But for those who may need some extra guidance when navigating what can be a daunting web of courts, tribunals, probation and prison systems – we must go further.

It might be that people with conditions like autism get lost in the complex processes and legal language that are difficult for them to understand. It can even be as simple as them needing more help to fill in forms to get accommodation when released from prison.

As a backbencher, I campaigned to improve our approach to autism and related conditions. I am determined to make important improvements. That is why, as a first step, I have commissioned a Call for Evidence and a review to find out how prevalent these issues are and put together a clearer picture of what support is already out there.

This review won't just cover conditions such as autism and dyslexia but a whole host of learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as emotional and behavioural changes that are a result of brain injuries.

Not only will this provide us with greater understanding and a better ability to support people with life-long conditions, but it will boost public safety by helping them engage better with rehabilitation and reduce their chances of reoffending.

My family's experience of autism has taught me that people with so-called neurodivergent conditions – autism, ADHD, dyspraxia and dyslexia – have so much to offer when they get the right help. But sadly, they still face stigmas and outdated prejudices that too often result in deeply unjust outcomes.

That is why I'm proud to have led, along with the Health Secretary Matt Hancock, landmark reforms to the Mental Health Act announced today.

Among the many changes, we are putting a stop to the awful practice of confining people to a psychiatric hospital because it's seen as a simple way of managing potentially dangerous behaviour that results from their autism. When that happens, we as a society have failed that person. Autism is a lifelong condition, not something that can be removed through treatment like an acute mental illness – and we must find a way to support those people to live their lives and fulfil their potential in the community.

The wider changes we are making to the Act will also help reduce stigmas and improve the care of people with mental health conditions, including those who end up in the criminal justice system. There are too many repeat low-level offenders with acute mental health problems, often started or made worse by drugs and alcohol, unable to get the medical help which would stop them

committing crime.

Prisons should be places where offenders are rightly punished for their crimes, not simply somewhere to send those whose biggest danger is their own mental health.

Our reforms will ensure these vulnerable people get the right treatment, in the right place, at the right time while also allowing our hard-working prison officers to do the job they were employed to – dealing with criminals, not the mentally unwell.

We will end that outdated practise of using prisons as so-called ‘places of safety’ for defendants waiting for a mental health assessment or a hospital bed. Instead, judges will work with medical professionals so they can always be taken directly to a hospital from court.

We are also proposing that no prisoner should wait longer than a month to move to a secure hospital when they become seriously mentally unwell, ensuring these patients get the specialist treatment their conditions require.

An offender suffering a broken leg would not be left to languish in their cell without professional help, so why should we expect those suffering significant mental health problems to do so?

These reforms will help many ordinary people suffering from serious mental illness but, as ever, protecting the public has been a key priority. Unfortunately, if we ignore the plight of those in mental distress there can be deadly and unforeseen consequences.

Too many innocent people have been injured and killed over the years by those who should be being cared for in hospital. These changes will help to prevent future victims and also give existing ones the right to know when their attacker is granted community leave or discharged from hospital, bringing them in line with victims of other serious crimes.

My number one responsibility as Lord Chancellor always has been, and always will be, to keep the public safe. But in a year that has highlighted the importance of looking after our mental health and supporting vulnerable people, it is only right that we build back better, safer and fairer to create a system that allows everyone to get the help they need, when they need it.

Not only will this make our country fairer, but ultimately safer too.

Community projects urged to apply for Sellafield funding

News story

Are you involved in a community project addressing social or economic issues in West Cumbria?



If so, you could be eligible for the latest round of grant funding from Sellafield Ltd's social impact fund.

Time's running out, though. The deadline for applications is Sunday, 28 February 2021.

Examples of projects we've helped in the past include:

- a programme to help young carers
- support for West Cumbria Domestic Violence
- funding for a Copeland Youth Network employability skills programme

Tracey West, from our Social Impact Team, said:

We're really keen to hear from any projects helping to address social and economic needs in Copeland and Allerdale.

We also fund feasibility studies. So, if you're considering a larger project, we could fund your initial research to ensure its viability before you then seek further funding.

It's often helpful to discuss your project with us before applying. Anyone wanting to do so should email us at socialimpact@sellafieldsites.co.uk

UK on the cusp of a transport revolution, as self-driving vehicles set to be worth nearly £42 billion by 2035

- report predicts connected and automated vehicles (CAV) to be worth £41.7 billion by 2035
- investment in this area could create nearly 40,000 jobs on British soil – helping to build back greener
- ground-breaking report cements the UK as a world-leader in CAV technology

The full economic value of self-driving vehicles in the UK has been revealed, as Transport Minister Rachel Maclean sets out that the connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) market could be worth £41.7 billion by 2035.

Addressing the CES technology conference today, Minister Maclean is set to unveil a [report, conducted by researchers at the Connected Places Catapult, Element Energy and Cambridge Econometrics](#). The report forecasts that in 2035, 40% of new UK car sales could have self-driving capabilities, with a total market value of £41.7 billion – setting the future of self-driving vehicles further within Great Britain's grasp.

This could in turn create nearly 40,000 skilled jobs in the CAV technology area, strengthening the UK economy and reinforcing this government's commitment to building back greener and stronger.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

The investment in and development of CAVs could truly transform the way people and goods are transported, with innovation like this at the heart of our ambition to build back better.

We're on the cusp of a driving revolution. Not only could this tech unlock vast opportunities for the UK economy and jobs market, it could significantly improve the safety and efficiency of how we travel over the coming decades.

Since 2015, government has worked to make the UK one of the best places in the world to develop and deploy CAV technology.

Government has already invested £200 million into CAV research and development (R&D), helping British start-ups develop their tech for use both

in the UK and internationally.

Together with industry, this investment has led to many successes.

UK start-ups that have received government R&D support, including Five and Oxbotica, have gone on to successfully raise tens of millions of dollars in private investment, competing internationally with some of the world's largest self-driving vehicle companies.

In 2020, Oxbotica launched Project Endeavour, which will be running highly automated trials in Oxford, London and Birmingham. The project will demonstrate automated driving in a variety of urban and city environments and will develop models with local authorities and communities to help them prepare for the future launch of automated vehicle services.

Several government-backed CAV trials have also successfully demonstrated world-leading capabilities in recent years, such as the Streetwise project in London in 2019, which saw self-driving vehicles carrying commuters to and from work.

The ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to deploy CAVs is also being realised through work to update UK law and regulations to make sure that the technology can be safely used on UK roads. In August 2020, [government announced a consultation to enable the use of Automated Lane Keeping Systems](#) – an early form of automation in vehicles – on UK roads as early as this year. The response to this consultation is set to be published in early 2021.

Lord Grimstone, Minister for Investment at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, said:

Self-driving vehicles represent a huge economic opportunity for the UK, unlocking much-needed jobs and economic growth.

Government is backing business to realise this – driving forward the future of the UK's automotive and technology sectors and helping us build back better.

Nicola Yates, CEO of Connected Places Catapult, said:

CAV technologies have the potential to revolutionise transport. Designed in the right way, a system of connected autonomous vehicles could make our transport network more accessible, safer, more efficient and better for the environment. Connected Places Catapult has been pleased to partner with stakeholders across government, industry and academia over several years to make sure that the UK is one of the best places in the world for CAV development. This new report, developed in partnership with Element Energy and Cambridge Econometrics, shines a light on the economic opportunities for a UK CAV industry.