

Biggest overhaul of state threats legislation for a generation

The Home Secretary has introduced the National Security Bill, which brings together vital new measures to protect the British public, modernise counter espionage laws and address the evolving threat to our national security.

This Bill will keep our country safe by making the UK an even harder target for those states who seek to conduct hostile acts against the UK.

It will provide new and updated tools for our law enforcement and intelligence agencies to tackle modern threats, which range from cyber-attacks and spying to interference in our economy and democracy.

This Bill will, for the first time, make it an offence to be an undeclared foreign spy in the UK and introduce a new foreign interference offence to disrupt illegitimate influence activity done for, or on behalf of, a foreign state.

A new sabotage offence will be introduced to provide greater scope to respond to new tactics and technology, such as the use of drones and cyber attacks. It will address the serious threat from state-backed attacks on sites, data, and infrastructure critical to the UK's safety or interests.

This Bill will also criminalise acts which are committed in preparation for state threats offences, meaning that the perpetrators can be disrupted before serious damage is done and it will allow the courts to hand down significantly longer sentences for foreign state backed crimes.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The British public should be in no doubt of my determination to keep them and our country safe from those who would seek to do us harm.

The threat of hostile activity from states targeting our democracy, economy and the values we hold dear is real and ever-evolving – which is why the modernising measures included in the National Security Bill are so essential.

These tougher laws and more powerful tools for our world class police and intelligence agencies, will be critical to help those on the front line deal with the threats we are constantly facing.

MI5 Director General, Ken McCallum said:

The UK is in a contest with states who are trying to undermine our

national security and democratic institutions.

Laws designed to deal with wartime espionage have not kept pace with the threats MI5 is now tackling. State actors are stealing not only national security secrets, but our cutting-edge science, research and technology. They are attempting to interfere covertly with our democracy, economy and society. We see coercion and, at the extreme, direct threats to life.

The laws of the past continue to serve us against 'traditional' espionage. It must be right that Parliament looks at modernising the powers the State has to protect us all from the full range of today's threats.

This National Security Bill will replace existing espionage laws which were primarily designed to counter the threat from spies during the First World War. It will create a modern set of offences to apprehend and enable prosecution of people not captured by existing legislation, and increase existing maximum sentences. This will protect the UK from those who conduct espionage, disclose sensitive information and trade secrets to foreign states and otherwise assist foreign intelligence services.

While the core of the Bill focuses on countering hostile activity from foreign states, it will also include reforms to restrict the access of convicted terrorists to civil legal aid. Reforms to civil claims will prevent public funds from being given to those who could use it to support terror.

This Bill will introduce a Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, requiring individuals to register certain arrangements with foreign governments, to help combat damaging or hostile influence being exerted by foreign states in the UK. These laws will apply to threats from any state which would do the UK or its citizens harm, recognising that the threat we face today is growing, diversifying and evolving.

The National Security Bill, formerly known as the Counter State Threats Bill, will be introduced to Parliament today, with its further stages as parliamentary time allows.

Proposed measures included in the Bill will:

- reform existing espionage laws
- introduce new offences to tackle:
 - state-backed sabotage
 - foreign interference
 - the theft of trade secrets
 - assisting a foreign intelligence service (e.g. by being a covert foreign spy)
- create a foreign influence registration scheme, (FIRS). This will bring us in line with our allies in Australia and the United States by creating a scheme requiring individuals to register certain arrangements with foreign governments

- enhance police powers to support the investigation of state threats activity to enable the police to obtain evidence of espionage activities
 - reform existing prohibited places provisions to protect the UK's most sensitive sites
 - provide powers to allow state threats to be tackled at an early stage and for other offences that are committed where there is a state link to be sentenced accordingly
 - introduce a new suite of State Threat Prevention and Investigation Measures (STPIMs) to use as a tool of last resort to manage those who pose a threat but who cannot be prosecuted
 - also include measures to restrict the ability of convicted terrorists to receive civil legal aid and prevent the exploitation of our civil damage systems by convicted terrorists
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[UK-Ghana trade links boosted as political and business leaders meet in London](#)

Economic ties between the UK and Ghana were boosted this week as the UK-Ghana Business Council (UKGBC) met in London.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford and Minister for Trade Policy Penny Mordaunt co-chaired the discussions and Minister for Trade & Industry Alan Kyerematen led the senior delegation from Ghana.

The formation of the UK-Ghana Investors Group, made up of investors and business leaders with the aim of creating investment opportunities, was announced and UK representatives welcomed recent deals in the gold supply

chain and security sectors worth more than £100 million.

Established in 2018, the UKGBC is a high-level forum to promote bilateral relations and partnerships between Ghana's private sector and UK counterparts.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

The UK and Ghana trade is already worth almost a billion pounds per year, but there is so much more our two economies can do together.

The signature of the UK-Ghana Trade Partnership Agreement last year paved the way for closer economic ties and this week we've discussed the potential for huge growth in both countries, driven by British International Investment's ambitious plan for the year ahead.

I'd like to thank the Trade Minister for contributing to such a valuable discussion and look forward to visiting Ghana in the weeks to come.

Minister for Trade Policy Penny Mordaunt said:

The UK's trade ties with Ghana already help businesses in both our nations flourish, and I'm determined to deepen these ties to create more jobs and deliver mutual prosperity.

I'm delighted we have now been able to meet in person at this UK-Ghana Business Council, to identify further barriers to trade and increase market access, particularly in the maritime and digital sectors.

This will also allow us to continue excellent progress on the UK-Ghana Trade Partnership Agreement, and I look forward to working with Ghanaian counterparts to finalise the remaining elements of the deal.

Ghana is one of the fastest-growing economies in the region and the UK's fourth-biggest export market in sub-Saharan Africa, with the UK aiming to boost UK-Ghana trade to £1.4 billion by 2024.

Since the last meeting of the UKGBC, the UK-Ghana economic partnership has supported more than £223m of investment in infrastructure across the country,

the biggest UK investment into infrastructure in Ghana in a generation.

The Council meeting also took place just weeks after announcing a £2 million partnership with UK charity Shell Foundation, to turbocharge Ghana's e-mobility, battery, solar and charging sector.

Members of the council celebrated the achievements of the UK-Ghana partnership over the last year, including:

- UK companies working across Ghana including Mabey Bridge, One Web and Quant have this year delivered roads, bridges and security, as well as high-speed internet;
- UK support through the Jobs and Economic Transformation (JET) programme has driven growth in Ghana's auto, garments and pharma sectors and drawn global investment toward Ghana.
- The UK-Ghana Trade Partnership Agreement, signed in 2021, is providing concrete benefits for both the UK and Ghana by allowing Ghana duty-free, quota-free access to UK markets.
- British International Investment has named Kwabena Asante-Poku, a former partner and Head of Transaction Services in Ghana and Nigeria at PwC, as the head of its Ghana operations. Asante-Poku updated members on BII's ambitious plans for a new SME fund in Ghana and other key projects.

The UK is committed to deepening trade ties across Africa. Last month the UK welcomed the Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area, Wamkele Mene, to London, where we announced £35 million of UK funding to support its implementation.

BEIS in the 2022 Queen's Speech

- Queen's Speech focuses on the priorities of the great British public – boosting economic growth to address the cost of living and creating conditions for more high-wage, high-skill jobs
- Energy Security Bill delivers on the commitment to build a sustainable homegrown energy system that is more secure, clean, and affordable, as well as enabling the extension of the energy price cap beyond 2023
- measures to help further strengthen consumer rights and protect households and businesses will also be published

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has today (Wednesday 11 May) hailed this week's Queen's Speech, which reinforced the government's commitment to boost economic growth across the country, create the conditions for more people to have high-wage, high-skill jobs, make streets safer, and support the NHS.

The speech set out the government's legislative agenda for this parliamentary session and affirmed the government's commitment to focus on the priorities

of the British public and how the government is growing the economy to address the cost of living. This includes building a sustainable homegrown energy system, strengthening consumer rights, tackling illicit finance, reducing economic crime and helping businesses grow.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The Queen's Speech reinforces our commitment to delivering on the priorities of the British public. It shows we are working to boost economic growth to tackle the cost of living, create jobs and spread opportunity across the country.

We continue to stand by workers and businesses by doing whatever we can to ease their burdens as they face global pressures on the cost of living, having already supported the hardest hit with £22 billion of help.

The Queen's Speech includes key measures that will deliver on the promises the government made at the start of this Parliament, and BEIS will be at the forefront of delivering.

This includes:

Accelerating our transition to more secure, more affordable and cleaner homegrown energy supplies

The UK is at the forefront of new, clean energy technologies. Over the past 12 years, the UK has increased renewable capacity connected to the grid by 500% – more than any other government in British history – as a result of £90 billion investment. Our British Energy Security Strategy set out plans to accelerate this further to reduce our exposure to volatile global gas prices in the long term, with a home-grown energy system based on renewable energy and low carbon technologies.

The Energy Security Bill will deliver on the government's commitment to do that, bringing into legislation measures to propel this transition to a cleaner, more affordable energy system that is fit for the future. It will also enable the extension of the energy price cap beyond 2023.

The Bill follows a £9.1 billion package of support to help households with energy bills in the immediate term and boosts protection for consumers by extending the default tariff price cap – preventing suppliers from overcharging consumers and shielding approximately 22 million households.

It also provides powers to introduce a price cap for those on heat networks to ensure they are charged a fair price for heating.

The government will fire the starting gun on new technologies, such as carbon, capture, usage and storage (CCUS), and low carbon hydrogen. Low carbon technologies, such as these, will help us meet our net zero obligation

by reducing emissions from industry and provide power when the wind is not blowing, or the sun does not shine.

By introducing state of the art business models, the government will support the growth of a 10GW hydrogen economy and new CCUS industry, unlocking tens of thousands of jobs across the UK by 2030 while supporting the economic transformation of our industrial regions and giving investors certainty.

This legislation will also establish our new Future System Operator, which will look at Great Britain's energy system as a whole, integrating existing networks with emerging technologies such as hydrogen.

The Bill will also introduce competition in Britain's onshore electricity networks to encourage investment and innovation, through which consumers could see savings of up to £1 billion by 2050 on projects tendered over the next ten years.

Strengthening powers to tackle illicit finance, reduce economic crime and help businesses grow

The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill will tackle economic crime, strengthen our national security, and boost small businesses. Through the Bill, the government will crack down on the kleptocrats, criminals and terrorists who abuse our open economy. Stronger anti-money laundering rules, reforms to corporate law, and the biggest upgrade to the Companies House register in 170 years will root out wrongdoers so legitimate businesses can thrive.

Anyone setting up, running, owning or controlling a company in the UK will need to verify their identity with Companies House. Companies House will be able to challenge information that looks dubious and inform security agencies of potential wrongdoing.

The government is committed to keeping costs low for small businesses, and will introduce measures to streamline filing requirements to reduce red tape.

Millions of the UK's small businesses will benefit from more reliable, better quality Companies House data to inform their decisions. The government will also increase transparency around limited partnerships so they can't be used for illicit purposes.

Rebuilding trust in the UK's audit, corporate reporting and corporate governance system

We will rebuild trust in the UK's audit, corporate reporting and corporate governance system and the insolvency regulatory framework and ensure accountability for those with key roles in that system.

The government will prepare and publish a draft Bill to revamp the UK's audit and corporate reporting regime, increasing the resilience and choice in the statutory audit market and reinforcing the UK's reputation as a world-leading

destination for investment.

By creating a strong new statutory regulator, tackling the dominance of the Big Four audit firms and making directors of big companies more accountable, the Bill will strengthen the UK's position as one of the best places to do business and invest while helping reduce the risk of sudden big company collapses.

The government will also be publishing draft legislation to promote competition, strengthen consumer rights and protect households and businesses. This will protect consumers' hard-earned cash and help them get better deals. It will do this by boosting consumers' rights, strengthening enforcement, and promoting more competition in UK markets, so that consumers have confidence in markets and businesses compete on a level playing field.

This legislation will tackle bad business practices, such as subscription traps and fake reviews, that cost consumers money. Prepayment schemes like Christmas savings clubs will have to fully safeguard customers' money through insurance or trust accounts.

The government will create a best-in-class competition regime, to make markets for consumer goods and services more competitive and dynamic to ensure that consumers get the best deals.

To beef up the enforcement of consumer protections, the legislation will also give the Competition and Markets Authority more powers to crack down on bad businesses ripping off consumers.

Reforming the UK's data protection regime

The government wants to take advantage of the benefits of Brexit to create a world class data rights regime that will allow us to create a new pro-growth and trusted UK data protection framework that reduces burdens on businesses, boosts the economy, helps scientists to innovate and improve the lives of people in the UK.

The Data Reform Bill, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, will give consumers and small businesses more control of their data and how it is used by taking powers to increase industry participation in Smart Data schemes.

Hidden Assets

Press release

In a recent very complex case in the South East, Sarah Bell, Traffic

Commissioner for London and South East revoked the licence of Danehurst Transport Ltd and disqualified the transport manager, Grzegorz Zajac for an indefinite period.



The commissioner discovered a long list of maintenance failings within the operator's business. But these were not the only significant issues in this case.

Mr Sonowski was formerly a driver for Mr Zajac's previous company, GLZ Logistics Ltd. This company surrendered its licence and Mr Zajac offered to act as transport manager for Mr Sonowski. During the inquiry it became apparent that Mr Zajac's involvement in ensuring safe operation was minimal. The Traffic Commissioner also noted that GLZ had been a recipient of significant funds through the Government 'Bounce-back' facility, alongside other debts.

The commissioner said "I can no longer allow him [Mr Zajac] to mislead Operators, Applicants, and Traffic Commissioners as to his integrity and competence. Similarly, it acts as a warning to those considering engaging him as a transport consultant. Mr Zajac's lackadaisical approach to the role is an insult to the hard-working professional competent Transport Managers that are the mainstay of this industry."

In a further development, the operator hired his vehicle from a company called Truckfast Hire Ltd, not a company local to him, but one he claimed had offered the best deal. This company changed its name to HGV Hire Ltd. Under further examination, it was found that Truckfast Hire Ltd has since been liquidated with money owed to HMRC, trade and expense creditors and that HGV Hire Ltd had taken over much of the business, with people linked to Truckfast involved. In addition, the directors of HGV Hire Ltd are currently disqualified from holding or obtaining a goods vehicle operator's licence until 2031 due to previous involvement in companies called Continental Europe Express Ltd and E Haul Ltd.

The commissioner requested that her decision be sent to the Liquidator of Truckfast/Truckserve Holdings Ltd as it will enable them to potentially ascertain what happened to previous assets of Truckfast/Truckserve.

Further details can be found [here](#)

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