

[News story: GC function explained at lunchtime lecture for European Commission](#)

The Deputy Government Chemist, Selvarani Elahi, gave a lunchtime lecture at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Geel, Belgium

The Deputy Government Chemist, Selvarani Elahi, was invited to give a lunchtime lecture at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC JRC) in Geel, Belgium on the 28 March 2017.

Selvarani gave a presentation titled "Dispute Resolution and Fighting Food Fraud – UK Style" in which she gave an overview of the history of LGC, the home of the Government Chemist. She explained the role of the Government Chemist and highlighted three case studies, showing the value the function brings to food testing related disputes.

Selvarani also detailed the benefits of joining the [Food Authenticity Network](#), a free on-line resource developed by UK government to help bring together those involved in food authenticity testing.

Following the lunchtime lecture, Selvarani met with the Head of the EC JRC's Food Fraud Unit and other scientists to discuss and agree avenues for future collaboration. The meeting was very fruitful and it was agreed to pursue future collaboration opportunities.

[News story: CIC Webinar: Tuesday 25 April 2017 @ 11.00am](#)

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[Press release: New squad formed to](#)

tackle drone threat to prisons

A specialist squad of prison and police officers has been formed to tackle the threat drones pose to prison security, Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah revealed today.

The team of investigators will work closely with national law enforcement agencies and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to inspect drones that have been recovered from prisons in a bid to identify and track down those involved in attempts to smuggle in contraband.

Crucially, this new set-up will investigate the specific drones use by individuals around prisons.

The latest crackdown will help disrupt the flow of drugs and mobile phones, which hinder attempts to create prisons that are places of safety and reform, and where offenders have the chance to turn their lives around.

And it follows recent successful convictions of a number of offenders, including two offenders whose collective sentence spans over a decade – the most significant to date.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

We are absolutely determined to tackle the illegal flow of drugs and mobile phones into our prisons and turn them into places of safety and reform.

The threat posed by drones is clear, but our dedicated staff are committed to winning the fight against those who are attempting to thwart progress by wreaking havoc in establishments all over the country.

My message to those who involve themselves in this type of criminal activity is clear; we will find you and put you behind bars.

The newly-formed team of officers will contain staff from the police and HMPPS. They will bring together intelligence from across prisons and the police to identify lines of inquiry, which will then be passed to local forces and organised crime officers.

This announcement comes after the longest sentence of this type was handed down on Friday 31 March. A joint operation between police and prison officers led to the arrest of Remo White-Channer and Romaine Gayle.

The two were jailed for six years and six months and four years and four months respectively for attempting to flood prisons across Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Kent with contraband worth around £48,000.

As part of a crime group they used drones to try and fly packages containing cannabis, spice and heroin, as well as phones into three different prisons. The strong sentences send a clear message that those found flying drones into prisons will face significant time behind bars.

In December, Dean Rawley-Bell, 21, was jailed for four years and eight months after he used a drone in attempts to smuggle drugs and mobile phones into HMP Manchester.

In October, drug dealer Renelle Carlisle, 23, was jailed for three years and four months after he was caught outside HMP Risley in Warrington with a drone in his bag, trying to smuggle drugs inside.

And in July, 37-year-old Daniel Kelly was locked up for 14 months for trying to supply offenders at HMP Elmley and Swaleside in Sheppey, HMP Wandsworth in London and HMP The Mount in Hemel Hempstead with contraband.

The new squad is the latest step in efforts to disrupt drugs and mobile phones in prisons. The Justice Secretary has secured funding for 2,500 extra frontline prison officers, as well as introducing mandatory drug testing and the training of over 300 drug detection dogs to specifically detect psychoactive substances.

The Government has made it a criminal offence to possess any psychoactive substance in a prison, an offence which is punishable by up to two years.

Proposed changes in the [Prisons and Courts Bill](#) will make it easier for prisons to test offenders for emerging dangerous psychoactive substances, whilst all prisons have been equipped with portable and fixed detectors to tackle phones.

A £3 million intelligence hub to tackle gang crime behind bars has also been established by the Justice Secretary.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary's 2017 Easter message](#)

Easter is a time of hope and new life for all Christians. This year my thoughts are with all those facing persecution and denied the right to worship freely, particularly Christians in the Middle East – and especially those who suffered in the terrible attacks on Palm Sunday in Egypt.

The UK will continue to stand with our international friends and partners as strong advocates for freedom of religion or belief for all. We must work to spread the mutual respect, tolerance and understanding of different faiths which bind us together as a global community and build a better, more

peaceful world.

I send all Christians my warm wishes for a happy and peaceful holiday.

[News story: Easter 2017: Theresa May's message](#)

Easter is a moment to reflect and an important time for Christians and others to gather together with families and friends.

This year, after a period of intense debate over the right future for our country, there is a sense that people are coming together and uniting behind the opportunities that lie ahead.

For at heart, this country is one great union of people and nations with a proud history and a bright future. And as we face the opportunities ahead of us – the opportunities that stem from our decision to leave the European Union and embrace the world – our shared interests, our shared ambitions, and above all our shared values can, and must, bring us together.

This Easter I think of those values that we share – values that I learnt in my own childhood, growing up in a vicarage. Values of compassion, community, citizenship. The sense of obligation we have to one another.

These are values we all hold in common, and values that are visibly lived out everyday by Christians, as well as by people of other faiths or none.

I think of those who go out of their way to visit the sick or bereaved, providing comfort and guidance to many in our country at some of the most difficult moments in their lives. I think of the sacrifices and service of aid workers who put themselves in harm's way to bring much-needed relief in war-torn parts of the world.

We should celebrate all these contributions and others like them, and the difference they make in our society and around the world.

In doing so, we should be confident about the role that Christianity has to play in the lives of people in our country.

And we should treasure the strong tradition that we have in this country of religious tolerance and freedom of speech.

We must continue to ensure that people feel able to speak about their faith, and that absolutely includes their faith in Christ. We must be mindful of Christians and religious minorities around the world who do not enjoy these same freedoms, but who practise their religion in secret and often in fear.

And we must do more to stand up for the freedom of people of all religions to practice their beliefs openly and in peace and safety.

So this Easter, whatever our faith, let us come together as a nation confident in our values, and united in our commitment to fulfil the obligations that we have to one another.

Let us work together to build that brighter future we want for our country. And let us together build a stronger, fairer Britain that truly does work for everyone. And let me wish you all a very happy Easter.