

London rapist receives increased sentence following referral to the Court of Appeal

News story

Blessing Eyewu-Ago has had his sentence for rape increased under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.



A London man has received an increased sentence for rape after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP.

Blessing Eyewu-Ago, 36, entered the victim's home uninvited, where he waited for her to return from work. When she got home, he demanded to have sex with her. After she refused, he prevented her from leaving her flat before raping her.

The offender was then arrested the following morning at Heathrow Airport as he was attempting to leave the country.

On 27 January 2022 the offender was found guilty of rape, false imprisonment and kidnapping at trial and was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment at Woolwich Crown Court. He also had to sign the sex offenders register for an indefinite period.

Following the verdict, the Solicitor General referred Eyewu-Ago's case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme, because he felt that the sentence length did not reflect the severity of the crime of rape.

On 29 April 2022, the Court of Appeal found Eyewu-Ago's sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 12 years' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP said:

This was a sickening act of rape by Blessing Eyewu-Ago, who then tried to flee the country in an attempt to escape justice.

I am satisfied that the Court's decision to increase his sentence today both better reflects the appalling circumstances of this particular rape and demonstrates that crimes of sexual violence will be met with severe punishment.

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[International Earth Day celebrated in Ashgabat](#)

World news story

To celebrate International Earth Day 2022, the British Embassy in Ashgabat organised a screening of Sir David Attenborough's documentary 'A Life on Our Planet'.



To celebrate International Earth Day 2022 on 22 April, the British Embassy in Turkmenistan hosted a screening of Sir David Attenborough's award-winning Netflix documentary film 'A Life on Our Planet' and a [Creative Earth art exhibition](#).

The events were organised with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan, as part of activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between UK and Turkmenistan.

A 'Life on Our Planet' film screening in Ashgabat.

The purpose of the event was to support the key achievements and outcomes of the COP26 international conference on Achieving Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change and was a strong call to all to protect and restore the

earth's natural habitats and ecosystems.

David Attenborough's latest documentary, 'A Life on Our Planet' is a candid first-person account of humanity's impact on nature and a message of hope for future generations. Sir David highlights the problem the world is facing at an alarming rate as a result of human-induced climate change. The film was created in 2020 by the world-famous British film studio Silverback Films and the global environmental organisation the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The film reflected the impact of humankind on nature, as well as the history of the evolution of life on the planet in order to draw attention to the loss of nature on earth.

Coincidentally, today the UN named Sir David "Champion of the Earth". The UN conferred its "most distinguished environment award" for his dedication to telling stories about nature and the climate crisis and advocating for protection.

Creative Earth art competition.

UK Ambassador to Turkmenistan Lucia Wilde said:

As the first generation with a clear understanding of our impact, we must work to restore nature now to protect our planet and ourselves. This film shows the scale of the challenges that we are facing, and the role that everyone here can play in creating the solutions we know we need.

I would like to say a huge thank you to each person here for joining us today. Today we have a crucial opportunity to come together and put nature at the heart of everything we do. Today is a great chance for us to step into a new way of thinking – to encourage our friends, families and wider community to take action and build a better future where we can live in balance with our natural world.

This inspiring event concluded with the children's [Creative Earth climate change art exhibition](#), where the embassy displayed some of the best work by the truly creative and talented schoolchildren in Turkmenistan depicting their vision of an ecologically friendly and climate neutral life on our planet in the future.

Painting from the Creative Earth art competition.

A painting from the Creative Earth art competition.

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Appointments to the Adaptation Committee of the Climate Change Committee

Defra and the Devolved Administrations have appointed Professor Nathalie Seddon, Dr Ben Caldecott and Dr Swenja Surminski to the Adaptation Committee of the Climate Change Committee.

The Adaptation Committee (AC) is comprised of experts in the fields of climate change impacts, science, environmental economics, conservation, public health and business, and provides independent, expert advice on preparing for and adapting to climate change to UK and devolved governments and parliaments.

Whilst these appointments are not regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, they have been made in line with the guidance set out in the Ministerial Governance Code for Public Appointments. They will run from 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2025.

Climate Adaptation Minister Jo Churchill said:

I'm pleased to welcome Professor Seddon, Dr Caldecott and Dr Surminski to the CCC's Adaptation Committee.

Their expertise will be invaluable as the committee continues to provide crucial advice to the UK Government and devolved administrations on how we can ensure that we are prepared for the impacts of climate change.

Baroness Brown, Chair of the Committee, said:

I am delighted to welcome the three new members of the Adaptation Committee of the Climate Change Committee: Professors Swenja Surminski, Nathalie Seddon and Ben Caldecott. The growing recognition of the importance of adapting to climate change, and of the Committee's work, was reflected in an impressive field of candidates for these roles. Swenja, Nathalie and Ben will help us build on the analysis underpinning the third climate change risk assessment, especially in the key areas of business risk and preparedness, the natural environment and financing adaptation.

Professor Seddon will take on the role of natural environment and agriculture lead within the Committee, previously held by the late Georgina Mace and then

by Professor Kate Jones.

Dr Caldecott will be leading on economics and natural capital within the Committee, previously led by Ece Ozdemiroglu.

Dr Surminski will be taking on the role of leading the Committee's work on addressing climate change risks to business and industry, previously held by Rosalyn Schofield.

Professor Seddon said:

It is a great honour and privilege to be taking up the role of Natural Environment Lead on the Adaptation Committee, a position once held by the late Dame Georgina Mace. An inspiring colleague and mentor, Georgina was the leading light on the fundamental importance of biodiversity for human wellbeing. I want to ensure that we build on her great work and realise her vision, with a focus on how best to scale up nature-based solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss in the UK.

I am looking forward to working alongside brilliant colleagues to ensure that the best evidence informs and enables a just transition from where we are now (living in an increasingly climate-vulnerable country with badly degraded natural habitats), to where we need to be (living as part of resilient, biodiverse and flourishing landscapes). The UK has an opportunity and an obligation to make this transition, not only for our own benefit but to inspire other nations to do the same.

Dr Caldecott said:

Adaptation investments reduce knowable (and unknowable) future damages from climate impacts, and adaptation investments today can deliver growth, improvements in productivity, and potential "win-wins" for climate mitigation and nature recovery. Integrating climate risk into economic and financial decision-making across society is essential for these productive and necessary investments in our national resilience to materialise.

I am excited to be working with my new colleagues on the Adaptation Committee on these and related topics. We know every future state has some greater combination of climate-related risk and we need to take action today to reduce and manage those risks. The work of the Adaptation Committee is a critical part of the UK response to understanding and planning for this darkening risk landscape.

Dr Surminski said:

I am very excited to join the AC at this important time, when the need for adaptation is growing, but action including public and private investment still lagging. Climate change impacts are getting worse, and also increasingly complex and more difficult to manage.

Importantly, adaptation is an investment, with multiple benefits today and tomorrow. I am keen to work with the AC, with Government, the Devolved Administrations and the private sector to help close the adaptation gap.

For many years I have been a close collaborator of the AC, including as lead author of the UKCCRA2 and 3. I am very grateful for all the support and guidance, including from my predecessor Rosalyn Schofield.

Biographical details

Professor Nathalie Seddon

Nathalie is Professor of Biodiversity and Founding Director of the [Nature-based Solutions Initiative](#) in the Department of Biology at the University of Oxford. Nathalie trained as an ecologist at Cambridge University and has over 25 years of research experience in a range of ecosystems across the globe. As a University Research Fellow of the [Royal Society](#), she developed broad research interests in the origins and maintenance of biodiversity and its relationship with global change. She holds a host of other positions, including Director of the [Agile Initiative](#) at the Oxford Martin School, co-Director of the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, and Founding non-executive Director of the Oxford University Social Venture, [Nature-based insetting](#).

Dr Ben Caldecott

Ben is the founding Director of the [Oxford Sustainable Finance Group](#) and the inaugural Lombard Odier Associate Professor of Sustainable Finance at the University of Oxford. Ben is also the founding Director and Principal Investigator of the [UK Centre for Greening Finance & Investment \(CGFI\)](#), established by UK Research and Innovation in 2021 as the national centre to accelerate the adoption and use of climate and environmental data and analytics by financial institutions internationally.

Dr Swenja Surminski

Swenja has been Head of Adaptation Research at the [Grantham Research Institute](#) at the London School of Economics (LSE), overseeing research projects on climate risk management, finance and resilience strategies since 2017. She is also Chair of the [Munich Climate Insurance Initiative](#) and a member of the [Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance](#). Swenja has recently accepted a new role as Managing Director Climate and Sustainability at Marsh McLennan. Her work focuses on capacity building and knowledge transfer between science,

policy and industry, building on her work in industry and as advisor to governments, private sector and civil society, including as Visiting Academic at the Bank of England.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. Adaptation Sub-Committee members receive £550 per day based on a time commitment of up to three days per month.

Further information:

- The Adaptation Sub-Committee (ASC) of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), commonly referred to as the Adaptation Committee (AC) of the Climate Change Committee, is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body created under the Climate Change Act (2008). The ASC is jointly sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. Further information about the CCC is available at: www.theccc.org.uk.
- The Board for the ASC comprises a Chairperson and five members.

A monumental week in Local Land Charges

It has been a momentous week in Local Land Charges (LLC). Five local authorities have joined the register. This significant achievement is a product of acceleration in local authority data transformation. The latest local authorities to join the register brings the total number to 39.

We have also welcomed City and County of Swansea Council as the first of 22 Welsh local authorities to join the register.

Swansea is paving the way for the remaining Welsh local authorities to join the register, making local land charges information instantly accessible, speeding up the conveyancing process and making homebuying easier and less stressful for the people of Swansea.

By working with the LLC Programme, City and County of Swansea Council will realise the benefits of the service and is leading the way for Wales in ensuring digitally accessible data.

The other local authority areas to join the register this week and have instant online access to LLC data are:

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Portsmouth City Council

- Harborough District Council

HM Land Registry's Director of Transformation Karina Singh said:

We are delighted that Swansea's Local Land Charges service is the first Welsh local authority to join the central digital register. The Swansea and HM Land Registry teams have worked closely together to cleanse and transform the data at speed. Homebuyers and their conveyancers will now benefit from instant access data, provided in the digital, standard format. This also lays the ground for Ministers' wider ambitions for quicker planning decisions as part of the levelling up agenda.

Mark Kelso, Programme Director for HM Land Registry's Local Land Charges Programme, said:

This has been a momentous week for the LLC programme. Five local authorities have joined the national service, including our first Welsh local authority. This is a significant achievement and really shows how the programme is gathering pace and the strength of the collaboration between the programme and local authorities across England and Wales.

HM Land Registry's award-winning digital LLC Register is making the conveyancing process quicker and simpler for everyone. I'm incredibly pleased that property buyers in Solihull, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Swansea and Harborough local authority areas will now have instant, easy access to LLC data.

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with local authorities to migrate their local land charges data to a central, digital register as part of a phased approach. Once migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results using the [Search for Local Land Charges](#) service.

Business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access local land charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme](#).

Improving fish and eel passage on the Bristol Frome

Four weirs on the stretch of river running through Yate are being modified.

A small notch is being cut into 3 of the weirs, and eel tiles and baffles are being fixed to the fourth weir, making it easier for fish and eels to swim upstream and reach important spawning ground.

By improving the weirs, it is hoped this will help increase the number and variety of fish found locally. The work is a key part of fish passage in the catchment as it will allow easier access to 8.6 kilometres of upstream river.

The work on the weirs began last week and is due to be completed mid-May.

The 4 weirs are part of a flood defence scheme built in the 1960s. The scheme funnels high flows of water past Yate to reduce the risk of flooding. The river was significantly shortened and straightened when the flood scheme was built, and the weirs help prevent erosion of the riverbed.

The Frome is home to brown trout, stone loach, minnow, stickleback, and bullhead – and the endangered European eel.

European eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic Ocean, before floating in their larval form on ocean currents towards Europe. Once they reach the freshwater estuaries around the coast, like the Bristol Channel, they turn into elvers and swim up into rivers, including the Frome, where they spend up to 20 years living and feeding. Once they have grown and matured, they swim all the way back to the Sargasso Sea (nearly 5,000 kilometres) where they lay their eggs.

To help eels travel upstream eel tiles are being attached to the wall at the side of one of the weirs. The eel tile is a blank board on one side, but on the other side of the board facing the wall, are lots of little cones.

Because eels are long and thin, they are not very good swimmers, but they are very good at wriggling and crawling. Eels can use the gaps between the cones to wriggle through and this will help them to climb over the weir.

Baffles – long strips of recycled plastic attached to the front of the weir – help to concentrate flows of water by channelling the water through notches cut into the plastic. This increases the depth of water and reduces the speed so that fish can swim through the notches and over the weir.

Heather Barker, Bristol Frome project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

This work should see an increase in the number and variety of fish we find in the Frome, and generally make this a better place for

people and wildlife.

The work is part of a wider programme of projects through the Frome Reconnected Partnership to improve the River Frome. The weirs along this stretch of river are surrounded by public open space and alongside the Frome Valley Walkway. We hope the local community will appreciate the work we are doing to improve the local environment and value the river and its habitats.