

Report by OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media: UK response, November 2022

Thank you Mr Chair and thank you Ms Ribeiro for your report and for yesterday's event marking 25 years of your important institution.

Media freedom is an essential part of a healthy information ecosystem. The free flow of independently generated and evidence based information is the scaffolding for building democracy. We agree with you that media literacy is essential. People must be able to understand the role media plays in supporting democracy and security and be able to critically assess and use information. Disinformation leads to the polarisation of society and makes societies more insecure.

Your report, rightly focused on the impact of Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine – your second report this year delivered against the backdrop of this war. In Ukraine, in those areas under temporary Russian control, journalists continue to be targeted, with at least eight killed and 18 kidnapped for reporting the facts of the continuing invasion.

We will never recognise Russia's illegal attempted annexation of Ukrainian territory, nor the imposition of Russian legislation that seeks to deny the rights to freedom of opinion and expression. The rights of the people living and working in those regions under temporary Russian control remain protected under international human rights law. Independent journalists in those regions now face even greater challenges, yet their work remains as vital as ever, including efforts to ensure accountability.

Mr Chair, the report by the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) today also highlights in the Russian Federation the most severe deterioration of media freedom in the OSCE region in the past 25 years. An internal war of repression accompanying, and enabling, the external war of aggression in Ukraine. The [Moscow Mechanism report on Russia](#) outlines censorship, closure of independent media and websites, banning of foreign media, treason and extremism charges against Russian journalists for doing their legitimate work.

The actions of the Russian Government are not compatible with their obligations under international law and their OSCE commitments. They are not compatible with a proper functioning democracy. We support your call on Russia to fulfil its OSCE principles and commitments and ensure an enabling environment for media to freely report on matters of public interest without undue interference, threats and intimidation.

Belarus too remains in a downward spiral. The report found a clear pattern of systematic repression against independent journalism: judicial reprisals, arrests, convictions behind closed doors on trumped up charges, and lengthy

imprisonments. Ms Ribeiro, we echo your [call on Belarus](#) “to stop prosecuting media workers as a deliberate way of sowing fear and silencing free voices.”

We greatly value your important work across the whole OSCE region, including in the Western Balkans and Central Asia, and on key topics such as the safety of journalists, on restrictive measures at the national level that limit media freedom, and on the dangers of misinformation and disinformation.

Yesterday we marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, yet, Ms Ribeiro; you describe the situation in our region as bleak. We cannot afford to be indifferent when journalists and media workers are killed, attacked, threatened or harassed. We must be relentless and determined to stamp this out.

We point to the [2018 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Safety of Journalists](#). This Decision has authority. Adopted by consensus. It is a road map for us all to provide a safe and enabling environment for journalists, and to ensure our laws, policy and practice fully comply with international human rights law and OSCE Commitments.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this year's Human Dimension Conference in Warsaw. We heard from journalists and civil society actors fighting for improved media freedom across the OSCE region. The UK remains committed to continuing this dialogue and working with your office to implement some of the recommendations from the conference to ensure media freedom is protected and journalists are able to operate safely across the OSCE region.

Ms Ribeiro – we thank you for all the many activities that you are carrying out to fulfil your mandate. We all share the responsibility to respond and end impunity for crimes against journalists. The UK is committed to this.

Thank you Mr Chair.

Call for Evidence: An inspection of the Home Office's Afghan resettlement schemes

News story

The Chief Inspector invites anyone with knowledge and experience of the Home Office's Afghan resettlement schemes to submit evidence for his next inspection.



In line with his 2022-23 inspection plan, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration has commenced an inspection of the Home Office's Afghan resettlement schemes

This inspection will examine the effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of the Home Office's processing of applications to Afghan resettlement schemes.

The Independent Chief Inspector invites anyone with knowledge or experience of applying to the schemes to submit evidence to inform this inspection and welcomes views on what is working well and what could be improved. He would be particularly interested to hear from those with first-hand experience of applying to the schemes.

The ICIBI is trialling a new system which will allow responses to be submitted securely via a simple online form. Please click [here](#) to submit your response.

This call for evidence will remain open for three weeks until 27 November 2022.

Please note: The [ICIBI's statutory remit](#) does not extend to investigating or making decisions about individual applications. This remains a Home Office responsibility. However, the Chief Inspector can take an interest in individual cases to the extent that they illustrate or point to systemic problems.

David Neal, Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, November 2022.

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Laugharne hotel investment scheme

Lands director with ban

Kayboo Limited was incorporated in 2010 and in 2011, purchased the luxury Hurst House Hotel in Laugharne, Carmarthenshire before renaming it The Corran Resort and Spa.

Keith Michael Stiles, currently from Donegal, was appointed a director of Kayboo in August 2012 and was responsible for the company's investment scheme – known as a fractional ownership scheme – that secured funds to expand the hotel.

The fractional ownership scheme saw Kayboo agree, as landowner, to grant to a company limited by guarantee a 999-year lease on each individual hotel room. The company limited by guarantee would then grant a sub-lease to the hotel operator who would pay rent.

Investors would purchase membership in the company limited by guarantee, representing a fraction of that room, and become entitled to a share of the rent paid by the hotel operator.

Kayboo, however, went into administration in October 2016 and the company's insolvency triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Investigators uncovered that Kayboo received £6.4 million in respect of the existing hotel building (known as "Phase 1"), but the company only registered 3 leases for investments worth £585,000.

Further enquires discovered that Kayboo misled investors to believe that a scheme to develop 28 rooms in a nearby semi-derelict farmhouse at East House Farm (known as "Phase 2") was low risk, that the property had been safely secured, and investors would be protected if the company became insolvent.

Kayboo received £10.6 million from investors to develop Phase 2. But no leases were registered, most of the property was never purchased by Kayboo and secured lenders did not give any permission for the scheme.

On 7 October 2022, the Secretary of State accepted an 8-year disqualification undertaking from Keith Stiles, after he did not dispute that he allowed Kayboo to mislead investors, and that it secured over £500,000 of deposits from December 2015, after he ought to have known that the company was insolvent.

Effective from 28 October 2022, Keith Stiles is banned from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

Mark Bruce, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Keith Stiles allowed his company to misrepresent the true risks of its complex investment scheme to investors. Furthermore, he allowed

the company to continue taking hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of deposits when he should have known that the company was insolvent and unlikely to honour its future commitments.

Thankfully Keith Stiles has been removed from the corporate arena for a significant amount of time. His disqualification should serve as a stark warning that we will investigate failed investment schemes such and sanction directors who mislead the public.

Keith Michael Stiles is from Donegal (Ireland) and previously of Studham (Bedfordshire) and his date of birth is 16 March 1959

Company Kayboo Ltd (Company Reg no. 07394929).

Keith Stiles' disqualification concludes a series of investigations into individuals linked to Kayboo, including:

Details of misconduct

Solely for the purposes of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 and for any other purposes consequential to the giving of a disqualification undertaking, Mr Stiles did not dispute the following matters:

"I allowed Kayboo Ltd to mislead investors from 2013 to 26 February 2016 in the sale of fractional leases in Phase 2 The Corran Resort, contributing to the loss of their investments totalling £10,603,700:

- Marketing material led investors to believe that East House Farm development would complete within 12 months, as part of a hotel complex in which they had purchased fractional leases. They were assured of security, that the leases were available to buy and that they could sell their leases on the open market. They were assured that, should Kayboo Ltd become insolvent, they would remain members of a company with a long lease on the room and they had the right to appoint a new operator to run the hotel. The only direct references to the properties not being owned by Kayboo Ltd were contained within the 'Agreement for Lease and Sublease' (which was part of the contractual documents provided to a number of the investors) which refers to an "Acquisition Agreement" between Kayboo Ltd and the current owner and contains a condition that the former agreement is conditional on Kayboo Ltd acquiring the Property within 12 months, and the Agreement for Sale and Membership of a Company (which was provided to all of the investors) which makes one mention of "on acquiring the property". Otherwise, this information was not disclosed to investors.
- However, both East House Farmhouse and 5 of the 8 barns were at no stage purchased, at no stage subject to an unconditional agreement to purchase, and no leave was obtained by the secured lenders controlling them to sell fractional leases on them. Legal advice was given to Kayboo Ltd on 3 June 2013 not to exchange contracts for any room sales without a firm agreement in place with the secured lender on the 5 barns.
- Kayboo Ltd additionally failed to disclose to investors that its

attempts to obtain planning permission for Phase 3 of the development, vital to the success of the whole development, had been rejected on 17 June 2013 and (appeal) 27 October 2014, or that Kayboo Ltd had applied on 26 March 2015 for a materially altered plan of 200 lodges and restaurant, which was then rejected on 4 December 2015.

I allowed Kayboo Ltd to accept £557,400 from investors from 7 December 2015 to 26 February 2016 to their unreasonable risk and ultimate detriment, after I ought to have known, that Kayboo Ltd was insolvent."

About disqualifications

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 restrictions](#).

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

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Transformation Consultation: modernising IPO's services

The proposed changes will update the law and remove legal barriers, allowing the IPO to be more innovative and deliver world-class digital services. They will also address current inconsistencies between different IP rights.

Responses to the consultation will help shape the laws underpinning the transformation programme, helping ensure the UK's IP framework is fit to embrace the opportunities of the future.

There are two parts to the consultation – you can respond to either or both:

Part A focuses on proposed changes to the law to enable digital transformation of the IPO's services. The IPO is seeking evidence and views on a range of options on how legislation could be altered to better support innovation.

Part B focuses on proposed changes to improve the IPO's tribunal function and align processes that should work in a similar way across rights.

The consultation is a key strand of the 'One IPO' transformation programme. One IPO will provide a single, integrated system across all IP rights and vastly improved digital services.

The Government is seeking a range of evidence and views from businesses,

representative organisations, and legal practitioners on proposals covering a wide range of areas, including.

- standardising some legislative requirements across IP rights
- the use of artificial intelligence and automation
- greater flexibility on fees
- improvements to the tribunals function
- the types of media that can be used in patent applications

The One IPO service will start being rolled out to the first patents customers a year from now. Trade marks and designs will be added in 2025.

Early details and demonstrations of the One IPO service have already been shared with customers for parts of the new service, including the [new IPO customer accounts](#) and the [new patents application service](#).

However, changes in legislation, not just technology, are needed to allow the IPO to deliver best-in-class services and remain fit for the future.

Andy Bartlett, IPO Deputy CEO said:

The One IPO transformation programme will bring the IPO into the 21st century. But changes to the law will be needed in order to achieve true digital transformation of our services. Many of the laws that govern how the IPO operates were written for a paper-based world.

Removing barriers that prevent us from being innovative means we can provide modern digital services. It's essential that we hear from you to shape the laws that will underpin those services.

CIPA President Alasdair Poore said:

"We welcome these proposal and the consultation. This is an opportunity for the UK IPO to develop its services and maintain its position as a world leading intellectual property office, ensuring that it can offer businesses and their representatives services covering intellectual property, patents, trade marks and designs, which take advantage of and embrace the many opportunities of the new digital world."

The IP Federation's President, Matthew Hitching, said:

The IP Federation believes that digital transformation has great potential to improve access to the IPO's data and services for all users, as well as providing efficiency gains and cost savings. Our members work daily with IP offices worldwide, and we will apply those experiences to respond constructively to the consultation.

President of CITMA, Rachel Wilkinson-Duffy said:

The One IPO transformation project is a huge undertaking and will change the way we register and manage trade marks and other IP rights in the UK.

The consultation will last for 9 weeks, ending on Friday 6 January.

More information about the [consultation and how to respond](#) is available on our consultation website.

- 1) More information about the [One IPO transformation programme](#) is available.
- 2) Responses are invited to either or both parts of the consultation
- 3) We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on GOV.UK. The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.
- 4) The IPO will also be hosting a series of meetings with stakeholders as part of this consultation process.
- 5) This consultation is the first to address potential legal changes needed for the IPO's Transformation programme. As the programme develops, there may be additional changes to legislation which government may consult on in the future.

Russia destroys Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair, and my thanks to your fellow panellists, the Deputy Minister and the other speakers for sharing their thoughts today.

This week has borne witness to yet again more brutal tactics employed by the Russian Federation against the people of Ukraine. On Monday, Russia launched a series of further attacks against civilian energy infrastructure targets, reportedly leaving 350,000 Kyiv apartments without electricity and water. President Zelenskyy has outlined that almost one-third of the country's energy infrastructure has now been damaged or destroyed, and it is reported that approximately 1.5 million households were left without electricity after the Russian missile strikes on 22 October.

Putin is losing his war and is resorting to desperate measures as a result.

Ill-equipped, poorly trained, and poorly-led troops are being sent by President Putin to die in a foreign country in a war they either do not believe in or do not understand.

Unable to defeat the courage of the Ukrainian army, Putin has turned his attention to defenceless Ukrainian civilians, destroying the electricity that keeps their lights on, or the heating that keeps them warm. Putin hopes that in doing so he will destroy their spirit. But as we have all seen over the past eight months, the Ukrainian people will not be so easily cowed. The Russian army continues to sink to new depths, but the Ukrainian resolve – and that of its partners – will not be overcome.

Let us be clear. Attacks disproportionately killing civilians, and destroying infrastructure indispensable to the survival of civilians, are prohibited under international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes. President Putin, and all those who have joined him in this murderous adventurism, will be held to account.

Mr Chair,

We cannot stand by and contribute to Russian revenues from the sale of oil, gas and coal that fund this war. Reducing global reliance on Russian fossil fuels will accelerate our clean energy transition by bringing on clean energy at scale. Hydrogen and nuclear energy, as well as investment in new technology such as energy storage; low carbon and electric transport; and industrial decarbonisation will lead towards a greener future.

As we approach winter, the unity of the international community and our outrage at Russia's continued disdain for human life and international law must not and will not fade away. As Ukrainian lights flicker off and temperatures drop, Ukraine is not only defending its right to exist as a sovereign country. Ukraine is defending the right of all peoples of all states to live in freedom, without fear of aggression from external authoritarian, belligerent powers. We stand by Ukraine now. And for as long as it takes.

Thank you.