

Top procuratorate to investigate controversial killing

The Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) announced Sunday that it will investigate a case which caught media and public attention over the weekend.

On April 14, 2016, more than 10 people went to Su Yinxia's company in Guanxian County in east China's Shandong Province to collect payment for loan sharks allegedly by means of insulting Su and her son Yu Huan.

Police arrived at the scene but Yu later stabbed four of the debt collectors including Du Zhihao, who died the next morning.

Yu was sentenced to life in prison by the Intermediate People's Court of Liaocheng, Shandong, on Feb. 17.

Investigators will examine and review the evidence to determine whether Yu was acting in self-defence, the SPP said in a statement.

The SPP will also investigate possible dereliction of duty by the police officers concerned.

The Higher People's Court in Shandong announced Sunday that it has accepted Yu's appeal.

Press release: First-time buyers relying on parents to get onto housing ladder

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Research shows a rise in 'bank of mum and dad' helping their children onto the housing ladder.

Increase in funding to help Wales' most disadvantaged pupils – Kirsty

Williams

The Cabinet Secretary has also announced that the Pupil Deprivation Grant will be renamed the Pupil Development Grant (PDG).

The Welsh Government is to invest over £90m through the Pupil Development Grant over the next financial year to help disadvantaged pupils in Welsh schools.

Extending the PDG was a key part of the progressive agreement between the First Minister and Kirsty Williams.

The Education Secretary has revealed significant expansions to the programme, from the amount allocated to the youngest pupils, to extending the funding to pupils not educated at school, to providing more support to children who are looked after by their local authority.

The changes, which come into affect in April, include:

- Doubling the grant to £600 per eligible child in nursery and reception classes.
- Extending support to all three year old looked after children. The funding can also be used to support previously looked after children who have been adopted.
- Extending the support to pupils whose education happens outside a school setting. Currently only those from pupil referral units received the support.

Kirsty Williams said:

“It remains our national mission that every child has the opportunity to succeed.

“I am pleased that this grant is having a significant impact in breaking the link between poverty and attainment that has dogged our education system. However, there is more to do, which is why we are extending the grant to ensure every child has a fair start in life.

“I am also announcing a small but significant change in the name of the grant. Not only does this reflect the excellent practice that already exists across Wales, but this more positive name will better emphasise learner progression alongside reducing the attainment gap.”

Extra £7 million for innovative all-Wales autism service

Today's announcement brings the total amount of funding allocated to supporting autism services in Wales to £13 million up to 2021.

Wales is the first part of the UK to create a national service to provide lifetime support to children and adults with autism, and their families. The innovative service, which will be rolled out across the country by 2018, will provide new adult diagnostic services; support for families and carers; help with transition from child to adult provision and training for professionals.

The additional £7 million funding announced over four years (2017/18 – 2020/21) will ensure all regions in Wales are able to provide consistent, high quality, and sustainable autism support.

Minister for Social Service and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, said:

“Wales has long been a leader in providing support for people with autism and their families, publishing our first action plan back in 2008. The National Integrated Autism Service is another important step forward. It will help ensure people receive consistent services and get the right support, at the right time, wherever they live in Wales.

“The additional funding I have announced today, at the start of National Autism Week, demonstrates our continued commitment to improving autism services. I am confident that the four year funding will enable regions to deliver sustainable support to families.”

The funding will also help deliver the Welsh Government's Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan. This includes a commitment to developing improved autism resources, such as the new scheme developed by the WLGA, “Can you see me?” which is to be rolled out in the coming months.

The initiative promotes understanding and acceptance of autism within communities in Wales. It is launched today with a video showing support from sporting stars from Wales' national football and rugby squads.

Leaflets and posters for outlets such as shops, banks, hairdressers and cinemas as well as dentists and GPs have been created to support interactions with people with autism. People with autism can also choose whether they would like to make others aware of their autism by wearing a wristband or showing a card (which will also be available for mobile phones).

Steve Thomas CBE, Chief Executive of the WLGA, said:

“This scheme, which has been led by the National ASD Development Team within the WLGA, will be a significant step in terms of recognising the needs of individuals with ASD across communities in Wales. I am delighted that local authorities will take this forward and play a key role in promoting it. The WLGA warmly welcome the extra funding that has been announced by the Minister, which will help us deepen our work with individuals with ASD, their family and carers, and professionals working with children and adults with ASD.”

News story: PM to visit Scotland to set out plan for Britain

The Prime Minister will visit staff at the East Kilbride base of the UK's Department for International Development on Monday to set out her aim of building a global Britain that fully embraces its role on the world stage.

As the UK prepares to enter into negotiations to leave the EU, the Prime Minister will make clear that the deal we seek will have at its core the aim of making Britain a stronger, fairer, more united and more outward-looking country.

She will also set out that the deal struck must work for all nations of the UK, and the UK as a whole.

This Plan for Britain, she will explain, will be about getting the right deal for Britain abroad and a better deal for ordinary, working people at home.

The work you do here – in conjunction with your colleagues at the Department for International Development in London – says something important about Britain.

It says that we are a kind and generous country. It says that we are a big country that will never let down – or turn our back on – those in need. And it says that we are a country that does – and will always – meet our commitments to the world – and particularly to those who so desperately need our support.

And that is important to remember.

For we stand on the threshold of a significant moment for Britain as we begin the negotiations that will lead us towards a new partnership with Europe.

And I want to make it absolutely clear as we move through this process that this is not – in any sense – the moment that Britain steps back from the

world. Indeed, we are going to take this opportunity to forge a more Global Britain. The closest friend and ally with Europe, but also a country that looks beyond Europe to build relationships with old friends and new allies alike.

The work you do will be at the heart of that effort.

Because from this building, work is co-ordinated that saves lives around the world; that builds a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries; and that makes our own country and people safer and better off too.

It's not all about charity of course. You know that better than anyone. So often, the work you do is about empowering people to live better, fuller lives.

For example, your work is leading the world in efforts to end the outrage of violence against women and girls. That is a cause that is particularly close to my heart.

You ensure that the UK is working well with important international institutions like the UN and the Commonwealth.

And researchers here are exploring the potential for new vaccines to prevent the devastation caused by serious illnesses and epidemics. I know, for example, that the work to tackle the awful Zika virus that is a source of such anguish for people across Latin America is being led by researchers at Glasgow University, supported by UK government funds.

But sometimes events happen that simply require an immediate and significant response.

And it is because of the work you do that we have recently been able to announce significant support for the nations facing up to major humanitarian crises this year.

Somalia, where we have pledged £110 million of UK aid to provide up to 1 million people with emergency food assistance, over 600,000 starving children and pregnant and breastfeeding women with nutritional help, over 1 million people with safe drinking water, and more than 1.1 million people with emergency health services.

And, of course, our commitment to Somalia goes further than money. We look forward to bringing the international community together in London in May for the second London-Somalia conference, where we hope to be able to help that nation secure and build on the progress it has made in recent years.

It is because of the work you do that the UK was one of the first major donors to respond to the UN's appeal for South Sudan. We are leading the way in that desperate nation by making sure millions of people get the food, water and medicine that they so urgently need.

That includes food for over 500,000 people, life-saving nutritional support

to more than 27,500 children, safe drinking water for over 300,000 people and emergency health services for over 100,000 more.

And it is because of the work you do that the UK is able to lead the way in helping countries elsewhere in the region – in Uganda and Ethiopia. And in Kenya, where the Hunger Safety Net Programme aims to reduce poverty and hunger in the short-term, and to build economic resilience for the most vulnerable people in the poorest parts of the country. And that is the best way to give them a sustainable, long-term route out of poverty.

Across Africa, vulnerable men, women and children are being helped by initiatives and projects that come with a simple badge of hope: a badge that says UK Aid.

And the same goes for other parts of the world too. Wherever people are in need, that same badge of hope appears.

The UK is at the forefront of the response to the Syria crisis, with life-saving humanitarian support reaching millions of people inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

In 2016, the UK was the third largest bilateral contributor to the humanitarian response in Syria, and the second largest overall since the start of the response in 2012. We have pledged more than £2.3 billion to support those affected by the conflict, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

That is a record of which we can all be proud.

And because we are a country that does not duck our responsibilities, let us remember the amazing work being done in Afghanistan today. One of the legacies of years of conflict in that country is the deadly phenomenon of landmines that still lie strewn across hundreds of acres of that land.

But thanks to UK Aid – and in particular, thanks to the work of organisations such as the Halo Trust that has its headquarters right here in Scotland – almost 100 square kilometres of contaminated land has been cleared. And more than 1 million people have benefited as a result.

We will continue with that work – and continue to support Afghanistan's security – because that is in the interests of Afghanistan and in the interests of Britain too.

UK Aid is a badge of hope for so many around the world. It appears on the side of buildings, school books, medical supplies and food parcels in some of the toughest environments and most hard-to-reach countries on the planet.

And it says this: that when this great union of nations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – sets its mind on something and works together with determination, we are an unstoppable force.

That is why the Plan for Britain I have set-out – a plan to get the right deal for Britain abroad as well as a better deal for ordinary, working people

at home – has as its heart one over-arching goal: to build a more united nation.

Because I believe when we work together, there is no limit to what we can do.

A more united nation means working actively to bring people and communities together by promoting policies which support integration and social cohesion.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that means fully respecting, and indeed strengthening, the devolution settlements. But never allowing our Union to become looser and weaker, or our people to drift apart.

So in those policy areas where the UK government holds responsibility, I am determined that we will put the interests of the Union – both the parts and the whole – at the heart of our decision-making.

International development is a prime example of that, and your work here, on behalf of your fellow citizens across the United Kingdom, has a huge impact.

Indeed, the work we do as a United Kingdom on the world stage make an eloquent case for our Union as a whole.

It is about the values we share in our family of nations.

Values of freedom of speech, democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law.

This proud shared heritage provides the bedrock of our lives together in the UK.

And on that foundation we have built a country where we share the challenges that we face, and bring all the expertise, ingenuity and goodwill we share across this Union to bear to tackle them.

That allows us to do amazing things, like the life-saving work which is led from this building.

So as Britain leaves the European Union, and we forge a new role for ourselves in the world, the strength and stability of our Union will become even more important.

Alongside the visit to DFID, the Prime Minister is also due to meet officers from Police Scotland to discuss counter-terrorism issues.

She will then be joined by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon for a bilateral meeting.