

UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice UK National Address

Chair, distinguished guests.

Crime as a global issue

The United Kingdom recognises organised crime as a global problem that both drives instability amongst and between states, and poses a threat to security.

Criminals and terrorists exploit and exacerbate the conditions that allow crime to thrive, and create a cycle of destruction. They undermine judicial institutions and the rule of law, challenge state governance, and weaken the ability of law enforcement to deal with crime.

Crime and terrorism threaten national security and can act as an obstacle to prosperity and development in affected states. Crime inhibits economic growth, risks the reputation and standing of financial markets, discourages investment, and creates barriers to business. Its impact is broad in scope and pernicious in nature.

The rule of law ensures that the state functions for its citizens. It is associated with growth and investment; peace and security; accountability and democracy; and equality and justice. The rule of law reduces space for corruption and is therefore essential to the achievement of the goals that the post 2015 development agenda aims to tackle.

The rule of law exists where law and order are prevalent, where there is equal treatment before the law, where public authority is bound by, and accountable before, pre-existing, clear and known laws and where human rights are protected. Human rights and the Rule of Law are the building blocks of shared prosperity. They are also what people want: The UN's My World survey shows that people want accountable government, access to justice and the promotion and protection of all their human rights.

The United Kingdom firmly believes that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms contained in the UN international human rights instruments without distinction of any kind.

Crime threats to the UK

In the United Kingdom alone there are around 40,600 people involved in organised crime. Driven by their pursuit of financial gain, criminals engage in illicit activities related to the illegal drugs and firearms trades, fraud and financial crime, money laundering, organised immigration and human trafficking, and cyber crime.

We are committed to fighting these crimes, including the corruption that enables and perpetuates them. This commitment is most recently demonstrated through the

passage of a new Modern Slavery Act against human trafficking and a new Serious Crime Act that improves our ability to investigate and prosecute crime.

The UK hosted the WeProtect Summit in December 2014 to tackle the sexual exploitation of children online. 48 countries committed to signing the statement of action and the UK announced £50 million over five years towards the establishment of a new UNICEF child protection fund. We encourage states to support these commitments and the UAE's initiative to hold a further Summit to tackle online sexual abuse later this year.

Transnational crime and terrorism

We are committed to working with other UN Member States to tackle organised crime, which is inherently transnational and requires an international response. The same is true of terrorism.

For example, we face a pervasive threat from ISIL. We are concerned not only by their actions in Syria and Iraq, but also by their ability to inspire terrorist activity around the world. Over the last year we have tragically seen ISIL-inspired attacks carried out in a number of countries, and serious plots disrupted in more.

The international reach of ISIL draws comparison with powerful organised crime groups, in that they move money illicitly and exploit vulnerable people. Together we must further disrupt this activity, in particular by taking steps to prevent our young people turning to crime and terrorism.

International collaboration in tackling crime

In this respect, and many others, no one country can tackle organised crime alone. Criminals and criminal activity transcend both state borders and state interests.

Strong and effective international collaboration is therefore vital to combat transnational organised crime, the criminals that perpetuate it and the vulnerabilities that drive and enable it. The United Kingdom is fully supportive of the statement made at this Congress by the European Union.

This Crime Congress marks 60 years of Member States joining forces to tackle crime prevention and criminal justice. The United Kingdom recognises the achievements made so far, but there is still more we can do and more we can gain, by working together to strengthen the global architecture.

The Doha Declaration provides a useful framework for this intergovernmental response to crime that we need. In making this declaration we continue to demonstrate a clear and united front to criminal networks. I look forward to our on-going cooperation.

The United Kingdom thanks Qatar for hosting the 13th UN Crime Congress, and I would like to close by thanking the chair for this opportunity to address the assembly.