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Policy paper

Statement of cooperation on Home Affairs between Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Home Office of the United Kingdom

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London, November 2023

Introduction

The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania ('Mol') and The Home Office of the United Kingdom (the 'HO') acknowledge the importance of the bilateral relationship and the common interest to cooperate closely on Home Affairs.

The Participants reaffirm their commitment set out in the UK-Albania Joint Communiqué of 13 December 2022 to enhance cooperation and in acknowledgement that the highest threats from Serious Organised Crime, which are threats to the security of both nations' citizens, stem from illicit finance, corruption, narcotics and organised immigration crime, agree that their strengthened collaboration will focus on tackling these shared priority areas.

The Participants also affirm that enhanced cooperation with international partners is critical in the fight against Serious Organised Crime.

I. Illicit finance

The Participants recognise the importance of bilateral dialogue and cooperation to improve our understanding of and response to illicit financial flows impacting the UK and Albania. They agree to deliver a coordinated and joint response and commit to sharing expertise and experience, including on money laundering methodologies and professional enablers who exploit policy, regulatory and legislative loopholes.

The Participants recognise the central role of information sharing and joint interventions both of which help increase the number and scale of investigations, prosecutions and recovery of assets benefited from criminal activity related to money laundering. They also recognise the central role that the private sector should play in tackling high end money

laundering and the importance of tackling cash smuggling between the two countries to break the criminal model that relies on this funding source. The Participants commit to concerted efforts to develop and progress joint interventions in these areas.

II. Corruption

The HO and MoI agree on the imperative to build strong law enforcement institutions to help fight endemic corruption and criminality, and the importance of developing the capacity and independence of other key institutions including the Albanian State Police.

Both countries recognise the importance of closer cooperation at all levels as they pursue high harm criminal organisations: to challenge and prosecute corruption and to promote positive systemic changes and resilience to corruption. In this context, they will enhance their bilateral dialogue on tackling corruption, and encourage cooperation in building systemic integrity, including independent institutions which are empowered to investigate and prosecute corruption where it is found. They will work together alongside international partners to exchange experiences, challenges and best practice relating to their domestic policing policies and actions aimed at removing corruption and malpractice.

III. Narcotics

Recent global narcotics trends have highlighted the important roles the UK and Albania have in responding to criminal offenses of drug trafficking and links with illicit proceeds derived from these criminal activities. Both countries recognise the value of close cooperation and the need to work closer with key international partners to define the specific narcotics issues to address to tackle this threat.

As key players in tackling this issue, the HO and MoI today express their desire to enhance their bilateral cooperation in the fight against narcotics

trafficking. Participants seek to build on their existing operational collaboration in this field and develop areas of joint policy including with international partners.

IV. Organised immigration crime

Both countries recall the UK-Albania Joint Communiqué (2022) which focused on enhanced cooperation to tackle illegal migration. While Albanian small-boat arrivals have reduced by 90% in 2023, we are committed to strengthening further the implementation of our shared international commitments especially in the areas of border control, the fight against organized crime, including human trafficking and exploitation in all its forms, and illegal migration.

The UK-Albania Joint Migration Taskforce (JMTF) has been effective at tackling illegal migration. The JMTF will further develop its operational capabilities to tackle this threat, including through work alongside other international partners who face this cross-border threat. Participants will strengthen cooperation at the operational level, including but not limited to, effective biographic, biometric and judicial data-sharing.

V. Delivery

In recognition of the importance of these areas of cooperation, the HO and MoI commit to establishing a senior official level dialogue to meet on an annual basis to discuss progress and identify further areas of collaboration.

For the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania

Taulant Balla, Minister of Interior

For the Home Office of the United Kingdom

James Cleverly, Home Secretary

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