

PRESS RELEASE: 'REVOLUTIONARY' ECONOMIC CRIME MANIFESTO LAUNCHED AS MPs WARN THAT UK REMAINS DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR CRIMINALS, KLEPTOCRATS AND FRAUDSTERS

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The All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Anti-Corruption & Responsible Tax and Fair Business Banking are today (Wednesday 17th April) publishing a landmark new 'Economic Crime Manifesto' (attached).

The document sets out what any future government must do to tackle the UK's 'economic crime crisis', which is still costing the UK economy £350 billion a year, according to [some estimates](#).

The Manifesto recommends that a future government:

- **Further strengthen transparency** so that we can follow the flow of dirty money. To achieve this, we must:
 - § **Implement existing legislation and insist on public registers of beneficial ownership in the UK's Overseas Territories as well as push the UK's Crown Dependencies to honour their commitment and establish public registers.** It is unacceptable that legislation from six years ago has not been implemented and these tax havens remain hubs for money laundering and tax evasion.
 - § **The Register of Overseas Entities should publish information on the owners of UK properties.** At present, the owners of [45% of properties in the UK owned by foreign entities hide their identity behind opaque trust structures](#). This loophole is being exploited by oligarchs and kleptocrats.
 - § **Insist that all companies provide complete information on beneficial ownership to our corporate register - Companies House.** At present English, Welsh and Irish Limited Partnerships are excluded and this loophole is being taken advantage of by money launderers.
- **Introduce smart regulations** to deter wrongdoing and end the UK's dirty money culture. To achieve this, we should:
 - § **Extend the Government's new 'failure to prevent' offence to include all companies and create a new offence to cover money laundering,** making it clear that professionals can have no part in enabling economic crime.
 - § **Introduce criminal liability for senior decision makers in companies if they have willingly, or through sheer negligence, allowed companies to engage in economic crime.** Both these measures will provide a strong incentive for all professionals to change their behaviour and tackle the UK's dirty money culture.

- **Properly resource chronically under-funded enforcement agencies** without placing an additional burden on the taxpayer. Delivered by:
 - § **Creating a ringfenced ‘Economic Crime Fighting Fund’** that can reinvest fines secured and criminal assets confiscated to fund further enforcement activity. It is scandalous that prosecutions for fraud have [fallen by 67% since 2011](#) and prosecutions for money laundering have [fallen by 56% since 2010](#).

- **Strengthen the UK’s crumbling sanctions regime.** The overhaul must begin by:
 - § **Closing the loopholes that allow Russia to continue to export and trade oil products with the UK and its allies.**
 - § **Stopping sanctioned individuals from hiding their assets and wealth** - often transferred to trusts, transferred to relatives, or held in a UK tax haven – from enforcement agencies so to sidestep sanctions.
 - § **Providing global leadership on the seizure of frozen Russian state and individual assets**, and repurposing these assets for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

- **Restore accountability** to boost dwindling public trust in the UK’s key political institutions. This can be delivered by:
 - § **Extending the current regulatory framework to include all lobbyists.** [96% of lobbyists work outside the current regulatory framework](#) and cannot be held accountable.
 - § **Strengthen the Electoral Commission and increase its powers so it is an independent and effective watchdog.** Political parties should be compelled to rigorously check the sources of their donations and the Electoral Commission should be able to prosecute wrongdoing.
 - § **There should be a new Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament to oversee the UK’s efforts combating economic crime and corruption**, working under Privy Council terms.

In this landmark policy document, senior parliamentarians argue that the failure of successive governments to act decisively poses a direct threat to the UK’s national security, economic prosperity, global reputation, social stability and democratic integrity.

Dame Margaret Hodge MP, Co-Chair of the APPG on Anti-Corruption & Responsible Tax

said: *“The policies in our manifesto can move Britain from being a haven for illicit wealth to a global leader in the fight against corruption, economic crime and dirty money.*

“With a General Election this year, all parliamentarians – both old and new – will have to work to ensure that the UK is no longer the destination of choice for

criminals, kleptocrats, and fraudsters. The next Parliament must continue pursuing the fight against our dirty money epidemic.”

Nigel Mills MP, Co-Chair of the APPG on Anti-Corruption & Responsible Tax, said: *“Economic crime is corrosive, and it impacts all of our daily lives. Honest people and businesses are being undercut by those not paying their fair share, while fraudsters and money launderers use and abuse the UK to aid and abet in all manner of crimes. If we can deliver on this revolutionary manifesto, then we can once again proudly say that Britain is ‘open for business’.”*

Bill Browder, Head of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign, said: *“Russia is a rogue state with an insidious dictator intent on destabilising the UK and its allies. Opponents to the regime find themselves shot out of the sky, beaten to death in prisons or poisoned in British cities. Yet the UK Government continues to pussyfoot around its Russian dirty money problem. Sanctions are hardly going to work if Putin’s cronies can squirrel their assets away in the murky corners of the British financial system, or if the enforcement agencies responsible for taking them on are hopelessly outspent and outmanoeuvred. The recommendations in this manifesto could turn the tide in the fight against Russian dirty money.”*

ENDS.

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