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Rt Hon. Ed Miliband

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs
King Charles Street, London
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23 July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

As civil society organisations from around the world, we are writing about the Illicit Finance Summit that the UK will be hosting in December 2026. We welcome the opportunity to engage with you in your recent appointment on this important international event. At a time of overlapping crises – conflicts, economic strain, climate shocks, deepening inequalities and stalling multilateralism – illicit wealth, and the systems and people who enable it, remain a key driver of these challenges. We welcome the UK's decision to push forward with the Summit, and the extra preparation time created by its rescheduling should be used to raise collective ambition for its outcomes.

The role of dirty money in fuelling conflict and instability makes this more than an abstract policy concern. Illicit wealth often begins with the theft of billions in public resources that could be invested in healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Instead, they are diverted through corruption, state capture, tax abuse, and criminal networks, weakening institutions and eroding the delivery of basic public services. This all undermines hard-won development gains that countries have worked for decades to advance.

As assets disappear into the global financial system, countries with low-middle incomes are often left with the fewest resources to respond, while secrecy, tax loopholes, and enablers in global financial centres continue to conceal the proceeds of corruption and crime. Property - a key theme of the summit - is bought by corrupt politicians, kleptocrats, and violent political groups to help entrench the very system that enabled their theft. Clear examples include corrupt funds from the DRC used to purchase property in South Africa and the United States, the Myanmar junta leader's family buying luxury property in Thailand, and Sudanese militia-linked property in the UAE. Notable cases closer to home for the UK include those related to the former Bangladeshi regime and from Russian sources. Corporate secrecy in the UK's Overseas Territories play a central role in enabling corruption and money laundering, and are responsible for over a quarter of lost revenues lost to tax abuse worldwide.

Meanwhile, the UK government conservatively estimates that the global illicit gold market - another key summit theme - is worth at least £60 billion annually. This visibly underwrites environmental harm and violence, financing both sides of the conflict in Sudan, armed

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groups in Venezuela, autocratic and violent leaders in the Central African Republic, and Putin's war machine.

The cross-border nature of these challenges requires a cross-border response, and the Summit can create a dynamic space for ambitious jurisdictions to commit to coordinated action against criminal and corrupt networks, while safeguarding our public budgets. We encourage the UK to use its convening power between now and December to secure ambitious, measurable commitments from participating countries, and to ensure they reflect the needs and priorities of those affected by illicit wealth.

In particular, your personal championing of the Summit's importance, in international forums and bilateral engagements, would make a meaningful difference in reinforcing the message that tackling illicit finance is integral to economic resilience, sustainable development, and global stability.

The credibility and ambition of summit commitments will also depend on meaningful engagement with civil society – organisations working at the local, national, and global levels who bring evidence and expertise on existing loopholes and perspectives from countries most affected by illicit wealth. We hope to see this reflected throughout the Summit's preparation, delivery, and follow-up.

Beyond the Summit itself, the UK is preparing to take on leadership roles across the G20, the Financial Action Task Force, the Open Government Partnership and G7. This provides a real opportunity for the UK to give sustained momentum to international action on illicit finance.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further in support of these goals.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned

Transparency International

Transparency International UK

21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative

Accountability Lab

Accountability Lab Liberia

Accountability Lab Nigeria

African Center for Governance, Asset Recovery and Sustainable Development

Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ)

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Alianza Contra La Corrupción

Anti-Corruption Data Collective

Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc

AWTAD Anti-Corruption Organization

B4Ukraine

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication

Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity

Center for the Study of Democracy

CiFAR - Civil Forum for Asset Recovery

Corruption Watch (Transparency International South Africa)

Durrësi Aktiv Center

Enhancing Communities Action for Peace and Better Health Initiative (e-CAPH)

Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency (FACT) Coalition

Financial Transparency Coalition

FIND

Global Legal Action Network (GLAN)

GRUPO DE AJUDA PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO COMUNITARIO

Human Rights First

Integrity Initiatives International

International Lawyers Project

IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands

LexCollective

Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN)

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NGO international

Open Contracting Partnership

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Peace & Justice Network Pakistan

Public Eye

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Indonesia

Razom We Stand

Sigaw ng Kabataan Coalition

Somali Youth Development Foundation (SYDF)

Spotlight on Corruption

Students for Global Democracy Uganda

The Anti-Corruption Research and Education Centre (ACREC)

The Foundation for Conservation and Sustainable Development-FCDS

The Sentry

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World Youth Bank

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