# Two British men held in Norway’s high-security prison over £1.5m silver coin money laundering allegations



Two British men are currently imprisoned in Norway’s Ringerike Prison, a high-security facility known for housing some of the country's most dangerous inmates, including mass murderer Anders Breivik. Samuel Cook, 31, and a colleague believed to be a former Royal Marine, were detained while transporting £1.5 million worth of silver coins as part of their duties as close protection officers. The duo was apprehended on April 22, shortly after their arrival in Oslo, following allegations of aggravated robbery.

The Norwegian police stopped the men as they were making their delivery and subsequently arrested them based on suspicions that the silver coins they were carrying were linked to criminal activity. According to Steve Cook, Samuel's father, the local police have claimed that there is a “high probability” that the coins were obtained through illegal means. The Oslo District Court, in support of the police appeal, argued that the circumstances suggested the men were aware that the coins might have been connected to illicit activities. Despite this, the pair insist they believed they were engaged in a legitimate business operation, having been hired by a UK company to perform what they thought was a straightforward task.

For over a month, the men have remained in custody at Ringerike Prison, and their future remains uncertain as the local legal system deliberates their case. Initially arrested on charges of aggravated robbery, their situation was later reframed to that of negligent money laundering, according to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. They face the possibility of various legal outcomes, particularly as Norway's judicial system navigates increasingly complex cases surrounding financial crimes. The Norwegian authorities have been intensifying efforts to crackdown on money laundering and other financial offences, reflecting a broader trend in many countries concerned with tackling economic crime.

In previous instances, British nationals have faced significant legal challenges in Norway relating to financial misconduct and bribery. Notably, in 2015, two British men were arrested in connection with bribing a Norwegian public official for the procurement of naval vessels, drawing attention to the collaborative efforts between British and Norwegian authorities in combating corruption on international platforms. Similar financial crime cases highlight the intricate nature of cross-border legal jurisdictions and the severe consequences of financial misconduct.

Samuel's family has only managed to communicate with him sporadically since his arrest, expressing deep concern for his well-being. His parents, who describe themselves as "distraught," have stated that Samuel has no prior criminal record. Steve Cook has emphasised the absurdity of their situation, questioning why someone would risk a lengthy prison sentence for a payment of just £250 per day for a task meant to be straightforward.

Legal representation for Samuel has confirmed the accusations, with Odd Martin Helleland, his solicitor, stating that the Oslo District Court found reason to hold them as investigations continue. The Norwegian Correctional Service has remained tight-lipped, citing legal restrictions as the case proceeds under the National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime (Økokrim). As the legal proceedings unfold, the implications of the case echo wider themes of financial integrity and the accountability of international business practices.

The British Embassy has vowed to support the detained men within the limits of diplomatic jurisdiction. However, it must be noted that UK officials cannot interfere with local legal proceedings or provide direct financial assistance for legal fees, as outlined in the government’s guidance for British nationals imprisoned abroad. As the families await further developments, their fears and questions about the legitimacy of the charges linger, underscoring the complexities of navigating a foreign legal system while facing serious allegations.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753889/Two-Brits-held-Norwegian-prison.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753889/Two-Brits-held-Norwegian-prison.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norway-prisoner-pack/information-for-british-nationals-imprisoned-in-norway)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.dailynorthern.com/5697/two-convicted-in-money-laundering-scheme-involving-counterfeit-euros-at-norway-border-crossing/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-30896155)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://globalinvestigationsreview.com/article/arrests-made-following-norwegian-and-british-bribery-probe)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753889/Two-Brits-held-Norwegian-prison.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14753889/Two-Brits-held-Norwegian-prison.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norway-prisoner-pack/information-for-british-nationals-imprisoned-in-norway> - This official UK government publication provides guidance for British nationals arrested or detained in Norway. It covers topics such as arranging visits, sending money to a prisoner, and applying for a transfer to a UK prison. The document also explains the Norwegian judicial system and offers contact information for consular assistance. While consular staff can offer support, they cannot interfere with local legal procedures or provide financial assistance for legal fees. The publication aims to ensure that British citizens are treated fairly and in accordance with Norwegian law during their detention.
3. <https://www.dailynorthern.com/5697/two-convicted-in-money-laundering-scheme-involving-counterfeit-euros-at-norway-border-crossing/> - In 2024, two individuals were convicted for attempting to launder €1.5 million in counterfeit euros at a Norwegian border crossing in Halden. The counterfeit notes were linked to a sale in Gothenburg involving luxury watches and cryptocurrency. The primary defendant received a sentence of two years and nine months, while the accomplice was sentenced to two years and three months. Both denied the charges but were found guilty of failing to declare the importation of the counterfeit currency. The case highlights ongoing efforts by Norwegian authorities to combat financial crimes at border crossings.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-30896155> - In 2015, two British men were arrested in the UK for allegedly bribing a Norwegian public official to facilitate the purchase of six decommissioned naval vessels. The men, aged in their 40s and 50s, are accused of paying over $150,000 into the official's personal bank account. A third individual was also arrested in Norway. The case underscores the international nature of corruption investigations and the collaboration between UK and Norwegian authorities in addressing such offences.
5. <https://globalinvestigationsreview.com/article/arrests-made-following-norwegian-and-british-bribery-probe> - Following a joint investigation by Norwegian and British authorities, two British nationals were arrested for allegedly paying a Norwegian public official $150,000 to facilitate the sale of six former naval ships to a Nigerian private security company. The arrests highlight the ongoing efforts to combat corruption and bribery in international defence procurement processes. The case also underscores the importance of cross-border cooperation in addressing complex financial crimes.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/17/joshua-french-freed-norway-uk-congo> - In 2017, Joshua French, a dual Norwegian-British citizen, was released from a Congolese prison after being sentenced to life for murder. French and his friend, Tjostolv Moland, were convicted in 2009 for killing their driver in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2014, French was found guilty of strangling Moland, who was found dead in his cell. French's release was secured through a humanitarian agreement between the Norwegian and Congolese governments, facilitated by his mother's advocacy.
7. <https://www.amlintelligence.com/2021/01/uk-citizens-charged-with-defrauding-denmark-of-over-e1-bn-in-tax-authorities-call-it-one-of-the-largest-cases-of-fraud-in-danish-history/> - In 2021, two British citizens were charged in Denmark for their involvement in a sophisticated tax fraud scheme that defrauded the Danish financial system of nearly €1.3 billion. The operation was described as one of the largest cases of fraud in Danish history. The charges highlight the international dimension of financial crimes and the challenges authorities face in addressing complex money laundering operations that span multiple jurisdictions.