

Press release: UK aid to protect critically endangered wildlife and create thousands of sustainable jobs

- UK aid to protect endangered Sumatran tiger, with only around 30 left in one critical habitat
- Partnership work in Indonesia will help create 16,000 sustainable jobs
- UK aid has a unique role to play in tackling the underlying causes of the illegal wildlife trade, while protecting the livelihoods of local communities.

UK aid will protect critically endangered wildlife in Indonesia and Liberia by creating sustainable jobs for people who work near these animal's habitats, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced today ahead of next month's Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference.

On a visit to the ZSL, London Zoo – which is leading the global Sumatran Tiger breeding programme – Ms Mordaunt committed to tackle the underlying causes of the Illegal Wildlife Trade and to protect species including the critically endangered Sumatran Tiger, Asian Elephant, Orangutan and West African Chimpanzee.

UK aid, through the Partnerships For Forests programme, is helping to create sustainable jobs and livelihoods for local communities in Africa and Southeast Asia. This provides communities with an alternative to clearing forest or hunting wildlife to make a living, and ensures that vital forest habitat for wildlife is protected. This is essential for the long-term survival of key wildlife species like the chimpanzee and the tiger.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

“The Illegal Wildlife Trade and the destruction of forests and natural habitats are having a catastrophic impact on both iconic wildlife and the world's poorest people.

“Nobody wants to see extraordinary species become extinct, or the communities living near their habitats struggle for jobs and livelihoods, which is why UK aid has a unique role to play in tackling the underlying causes driving these problems, namely poverty and rapid, unmanaged deforestation.

“It's only by working together with local communities that we will preserve endangered wildlife like the Sumatran Tiger, and protect them for future generations.”

Chief Executive at WWF Tanya Steele said:

“We don't have to choose between helping people and saving our wildlife.

“Projects like this show UK aid can be used to help the world’s poorest people and save some of our most threatened species, like the Sumatran tiger and Sumatran elephant.

“Next month, world leaders are meeting in London to find ways to stop the illegal wildlife trade. That will only succeed if local communities are part of the solution not the problem.”

Dominic Jerney, Director General of ZSL, London Zoo said:

“As an international conservation charity, ZSL welcomes DFID’s increased focus on protecting critically endangered wildlife, tackling the illegal wildlife trade and supporting marginalised communities.

“ZSL’s own work in Indonesia with flagship species such as the tiger and its habitat enable us to address critical threats such as forest loss, mitigating forest fires and IWT.

“ZSL works closely with local communities; we help to empower them in managing their natural resources; and we ensure they have a voice in decision making to support their economic resilience.”

The Department for International Development (DFID), is part of a ground-breaking public-private partnership to protect chimpanzee habitats in Liberia and tiger habitats in Indonesia, through investments to develop sustainable rubber and cocoa. The project will help to create an estimated 16,000 fair wage jobs and in turn improve the livelihoods of 50,000 people. These jobs bring benefits to entire households and their dependants arising through the investment in the area.

The range of support demonstrates, ahead of the Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in October, DFID’s unique place in addressing the underlying causes of Illegal Wildlife Trade and the UK’s role as a world leader in supporting global biodiversity.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Indonesia’s Bukit Tigapuluh Landscape is home to some of the world’s most endangered species, the Sumatran Tiger (only 30-40 remain in the landscape), the Orangutan and the Asian Elephant. DFID’s support will:

- Help 28 public and private organisations work together to protect the landscape, including local government, national conservation authorities, private companies, NGOs and indigenous community leaders to secure critical remaining wildlife areas, preventing the loss of remaining habitat and curbing the risk of poaching.
- Help to develop ‘green’ (environmentally sustainable) rubber, other products like wild forest honey, and establish a wildlife corridor within the conservation landscape.

In Liberia’s Gola Forest:

- To counter the mounting threat of deforestation and boost forest and biodiversity conservation, DFID's Partnerships for Forests is supporting the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and local conservation partners in Liberia to develop a market for forest-friendly Gola cocoa.
- RSPB and partners are already supporting smallholders around protected forest in Sierra Leone to market forest-friendly cocoa, the first shipment of which was sold to international markets in 2017. This will protect wildlife habitats for threatened bird species and critically endangered West African chimpanzee and the endangered pygmy hippopotamus.

In addition to these projects, DFID's total support to this programme is helping to prevent the destruction of over one million hectares of forests and wildlife habitats in Africa and Southeast Asia by 2020.

- Low-level poachers are usually young, poor villagers who poach to earn money. A poacher might receive £35 for a live chimpanzee which would sell for £14,000. When wildlife is slaughtered for quick cash and trees are illegally logged, ecosystems break down – and the poorest people are hit hardest.
- DFID's wider work, which in many cases will have knock on benefits in addressing the underlying conditions driving the illegal wildlife trade or destruction of wildlife habitats, could constitute as much as £583mn of support from 2011 to 2022. This is an approximate combination of DFID's support for job creation, tackling deforestation, tackling illicit financial flows and other areas in IWT priority countries. This announcement relates to three projects DFID is funding through Partnerships for Forests. Two projects in Indonesia and one in the Gola Forest. In total these projects represent a £2.1mn allocation. DFID's total support to the Partnerships for Forest programme is £56.5mn.

1. A public-private partnership to develop a green rubber plantation and establish a wildlife corridor. The plantation is being developed by PT Royal Lestari Utama, a joint venture backed by tire manufacturer Michelin, working closely with WWF Indonesia. This will contribute to the protection of the 400,000 hectare landscape. The initiative has secured green commercial finance of US\$95 million.
2. A coalition of 28 public and private organisations work together to protect the landscape, including local government, national conservation authorities, private companies, NGOs and indigenous community leaders. This will help to meet the most immediate conservation needs in the landscape, including community engagement and the development of long-term economic security for habitat and wildlife protection activities – supporting communities to be the first line of defence for the environment they live in. .
3. Creating incentives for the protection of the Gola rainforest through the production of 'rainforest-friendly' cocoa as an alternative to other, unsustainable agriculture and logging practices, working with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and local businesses.

The UK (DFID, FCO, Defra) is hosting an international conference on IWT to inspire global commitment to eliminate the illegal wildlife trade. The conference will bring together global leaders, governments, the private sector, NGOs, academics and others. Bringing the global community back to London this year re-affirms our combined commitment to tackling the trade at the highest levels.

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Speech: Community Engagement and Political Stability to Ensure Peace in Abyei

Thank you Mr President. I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his presentation and I would also like to thank Special Envoy Haysom both for your presentation and for your excellent work you have done during your tenure to support peace and stability between South Sudan and Sudan and we look forward to working with you in your new role.

Mr President, I would like to touch on three issues. First, I would like to talk about the progress that's been made by UNISFA, and particularly by the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), against the benchmarks set out in Resolution 2412 (2018).

The UK welcomes the maintenance of standing clearance for all UNISFA air and ground patrols along with both governments' support of the Mission, particularly ceasing to obstruct the movements of the Mission as we have seen in previous reporting periods.

However, as the Netherlands has said, the lack of progress against other benchmarks has been disappointing and we do urge both governments to devote their efforts to change this. Establishing the four remaining JBVMM team sites and holding two meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism must be a priority.

While both government's efforts are essential to progress, we do recognise, as Special Envoy Haysom has said, that wider dynamics, including both government's focus on the South Sudan peace process and a lack of agreement from local communities for JBVMM team sites have both contributed to delays.

Therefore, we believe it is essential, as France has said, that UNISFA and the JBVMM engage local communities so their concerns can be considered and their support garnered.

Second Mr President, let me touch on the Secretary-General's recommendations for UNISFA which, broadly speaking, we welcome. We support the recommendation to augment the civilian component of UNISFA, particularly via the deployment of community liaison officers. We also acknowledge the Secretary-General's recommendation to deploy a civilian Deputy Head of Mission and we commend UNISFA for improving the security situation in Abyei and reducing the need for a large military presence in the area. We welcome therefore Secretary-General's recommendation that UNISFA's military component concentrate its deployment along the borders of the Abyei area in light of the finding that cross-border military action is the most likely threat to security in the area.

Despite improvements to the security situation, we, like many others, are concerned by reports of increased criminality within the Abyei Area and at the continued delays to establish the joint administrative arrangements, including the Abyei Police Service. We therefore fully support for the recommendation to deploy three formed police units to the three major population centres in the Abyei Area.

Third and finally, again, as others have said, only a political settlement can address the underlying causes of this conflict and ensure that long-term stability for the people of Abyei is a reality.

It is this Council's responsibility to ensure that the Mission is resourced appropriately to support this overarching aim. We welcome very much Special Envoy Haysom's sense of optimism that I detected that Sudan and South Sudan are now more willing and more able to make progress on the political track. I look forward to hearing from them both today on how they intend to do that and of course, they will have our full support.

[News story: UK fighter jets intercept Russian bombers approaching UK airspace](#)



UK fighter jets intercept Russian bombers approaching UK airspace

Today (20 September), RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon fighter aircraft scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth to monitor two Russian planes approaching UK airspace. The Russian Blackjacks long-range bombers were not talking to air traffic control, making them a hazard to all other aviation.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Russian bombers probing UK airspace is another reminder of the very serious military challenge that Russia poses us today.

We will not hesitate to continually defend our skies from acts of aggression. Once again the rapid reactions of our RAF have demonstrated how vital our Armed Forces are in protecting Britain.

The RAF worked closely with NATO partners to monitor the jets as they passed through a variety of international airspace before they were intercepted by the RAF over the North Sea. Subsequently, our fighters escorted the Russian Blackjacks north, out of the UK's area of interest. At no time did the Russian bombers enter UK sovereign airspace.

RAF QRA was launched today because the Russian Military aircraft were not talking to air traffic agencies. The RAF routinely intercept, identify and escort Russian aircraft that transit international airspace within the UK's area of interest and continue to be on call; 24/7, 365.

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woodland in light of ash dieback

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Press release: Foreign Secretary statement to media on his visit to Burma



Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has today (20 September) completed a two day visit to Burma which included talks with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and a tour of northern Rakhine, the area where thousands of Rohingya have fled.

Speaking to media, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Burma is a country that has made some important steps towards democracy in the last few years, holding their first democratic elections three years ago. Although they are not fully democratic they have been moving in the right direction.

On the Rohingya crisis, the Foreign Secretary said:

I went to Rakhine State myself to see what had happened. What is essential now is that the perpetrators of any atrocities are brought to justice, because without that there can be no solution to the huge refugee problem. We will use all the tools at our disposal to try and make sure there is accountability.

I'll be going to New York next week for the United Nations General Assembly to discuss what we should do. Britain can't act alone. We need to act in concert with other countries – we are a believer in the international rules based order. It's incredible important for all of us that those perpetrators face justice.

On the first day of his visit, Foreign Secretary Hunt met human rights defenders from the Association for the Assistance of Political Prisoners and toured the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon.

Further information

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