

Press release: Highways England helps football fans reach festive fixtures

At one of the busiest times of the year football fans are gearing up to travel the country to see their teams in action during the hectic festive fixture schedule.

Press release: UK and allies reveal global scale of Chinese cyber campaign

The UK government and its allies are holding responsible elements of the Chinese government for an extensive cyber campaign

Speech: Condemning Hizballah's illegal activities

Thank you very much indeed Mr President. I would like to join other colleagues in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing and I'd like to join other colleagues in making clear that the United Kingdom also condemns Hizballah's building of tunnels leading into Israel. As others have noted Mr President, it is a clear violation by Hizballah of Security Council resolution 1701. It threatens Israel's security, it threatens Lebanon's security and it threatens regional stability. We are clear that Israel has the right to defend itself against Hizballah and all other armed militia groups which put the security of Israel at risk. All Israelis, all Lebanese, have the right to live in peace without fear for their security.

For too long Mr President, as other speakers have noted, we have witnessed Hizballah blatantly disregard UN resolutions. Their continued possession of weapons outside of Lebanese state control; their reported attempts to acquire dangerous new missile capabilities; as well as their statements threatening Israel, remain deeply alarming. Without an end to Hizballah's illegal activities in Lebanon, and the region, we will continue to see regional stability threatened.

The United Kingdom recognises the important work carried out by UNIFIL in

maintaining calm and stability along the Blue Line over the last 12 years and we pay tribute to those nations who have provided commanders and troops for UNIFIL throughout that time. But the existence of the tunnels reinforces the importance of ensuring UNIFIL's mandate is effective and strong, and that it has full access to all areas within its operation. We condemn any attempts at restricting UNIFIL's freedom of movement. We recognise that there is a question of access to private property in the context of investigating where the tunnels are and we recognise this can be difficult. But it is not impossible to resolve this issue and we look forward to a workable solution being found.

We welcome UNIFIL's response and its actions to monitor the situation in addition, and maintain calm, including by deploying additional troops and liaison teams to sensitive locations along the Blue Line. It is vitally important that UNIFIL continues to liaise closely with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities. We call on the Lebanese state, and in particular the Lebanese Armed Forces, as the sole and legitimate defenders of Lebanon, to take appropriate action to neutralise the tunnels as a matter of urgency, working closely with UNIFIL. And we encourage Israel to continue sharing with UNIFIL, to the fullest extent possible, any information that would assist UNIFIL and the LAF in taking action. Where there are difficulties we urge all parties to work together constructively to overcome these. It is in neither side's interest for the situation to escalate.

Mr President, the United Kingdom has been clear in this Council on many occasions that we condemn Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, whether by land, sea or air. Such actions undermine confidence and stability and we call for all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular 1559 and 1701, to be respected in full. In this regard, the UK welcomes the commitments by both Israel and Lebanon including the recent statement from the Lebanese Foreign Ministry on the full implementation of 1701, refusal to accept any violations and respect of the Blue Line.

Mr President, finally the UK calls on all sides to continue to abide by their commitments and to avoid actions and rhetoric that could destabilise the situation and region.

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Regulator finds quality and transparency in charity accounts has fallen

Commission's review also finds just half of charities are meeting public benefit reporting requirements

Press release: Regulator finds quality and transparency in charity accounts has fallen

Charities are not doing enough to demonstrate their public benefit, or explain how they spend their money, according to [reviews of charity accounts](#), published today by the Charity Commission.

Charity trustees are under an important legal duty to publish a trustees' annual report and accounts, by which they are accountable to the Commission and the public. The regulator has therefore carried out proactive scrutiny of charity accounts and trustees' annual reports*, and assessed these against public expectations and public benefit reporting requirements.

Just 70% of trustees' annual reports and accounts in the '[Public reporting review](#)' met the Commission's basic benchmark of user requirements, compared with last year's 74%. The quality benchmark was based on [recent research into trust in charities](#) which found that 'ensuring a reasonable proportion of donations make it to the end cause' and 'making a positive difference to the cause they work for' were the most important factors driving public trust and confidence in charities.

The main reasons why charities' accounts submissions did not meet the Commission's basic benchmark were failure to evidence that their accounts had been subject to independent scrutiny by an auditor or independent examiner, as required by law, and/ or not providing meaningful information about their charity's purposes or the activities carried out to achieve those purposes.

Just 52% of trustees' annual reports in the '[Public Benefit reporting](#)' review met the public benefit reporting requirements. Although this is a 1% increase on last year, trustees are still falling short on the requirements to explain activities undertaken by the charity to further its purposes for the public benefit, and to provide a 'public benefit statement'.

The reviewers looked for evidence of some reflection on the difference that the charity's activities had made. Positive examples of compliance included explaining why the trustees believed that the charity's activities provided public benefit; explaining who had benefitted from what the charity had done, whether a particular group of beneficiaries or the wider public; and explaining the impact of what the charity had done, such as examples of how the charity's services had led to improvements in people's lives.

The regulator has provided guidance to all trustees included in the reviews that did not meet its expectations. Extensive support to assist trustees and independent examiners on the preparation and scrutiny of reports and accounts is available on GOV.UK.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission said:

The public want and deserve to know how charities spend their money so this deterioration in the quality of accounts is of serious concern. The trustees' annual report and accounts are a key way to build confidence among supporters, so many charities are clearly missing an opportunity.

I would urge those charities that find reporting difficult to take advantage of the pro-forma reports and accounts available on our website.

We also need to see a step-change in trustees' attitudes to public benefit reporting. It is disappointing that nearly half of charities fail to explain the activities they undertake and the impact they have. We want to see charity thrive, so charities must be clearer about who they help and what difference they are making.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. *The reviews were based on a random sample of 105 charity accounts submissions, covering accounting years ending during the 12 months to 31 December 2016.
2. The sample was selected in May 2018.
3. The Commission's research into public trust and confidence in charities was published on 11 July 2018 and is available on [GOV.UK](#).
4. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
5. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.