

Speech: Participating in the JCPOA and ending Iran's destabilising regional behaviour

Thank you very much indeed Mr President. Thank you for scheduling this debate. And we're very grateful to Secretary Pompeo for taking the time to be here today.

This debate comes at a very important moment. The world is an unpredictable place right now and the developments we're going to discuss today risk making it more so. I'd also like to join others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General and in thanking the Dutch Representative and his team for all the work they have done on 2231.

Today's agenda Mr President, is the implementation of that resolution. That resolution was an endorsement of the JCPOA but throughout the negotiations and at the adoption of the resolution, we were clear that the Council was not only addressing nuclear issues but continuing to impose binding restriction to curb Iran's ballistic missile and proliferation activity because it threatens the region and beyond.

I just want to stress Mr President, the point about the ballistic missile proliferation is not solely about nuclear missiles, notwithstanding that there is a link with nuclear capability. Any conventional payload would cause extensive harm to civilians and infrastructure and Member States in the region Mr President, will naturally be deeply concerned about being confronted by such a threat from Iran. In itself it heightens instability in the region and it heightens the risk of miscalculation. And as Secretary Pompeo said the international community has been trying to curb this activity since at least 2006.

Mr President if I may, I'd like to set out the policy of my government towards Iran. We are motivated by three objectives. Firstly and most critically, to uphold the global non-proliferation regime and prevent Iran achieving a nuclear capability that would threaten the Middle East region and Europe beyond it. Secondly, to constrain Iran's destabilising actions in the region. And thirdly, to encourage Iran to normalise its economic and diplomatic relations with the region and the West and assume its rightful role as a responsible power, constructively engaged.

The United Kingdom participated in negotiations on a nuclear deal with Iran to secure the first of those objectives. And we believe the JCPOA has done so. It remains critical for our national security and we believe for the shared security of our partners and allies. And I agree with what the French ambassador said on the way forward. We were also clear that the nuclear deal contained elements designed to encourage Iran on a path to normalcy in its trade and diplomatic relations with the outside world.

The Secretary-General's report records Iran continues to comply with its nuclear related obligations and the IAEA confirm this in their report of 12 November. We expect this commitment to continue and we look to Iran to continue to abide by its obligations under the deal in full. So our first objective Mr President continues to be met and for this reason the United Kingdom, together with France and Germany, have been working to ensure that Iran continues to receive the economic benefits from sanctions relief agreed as part of the nuclear deal.

To this end, in September we announced the creation of a European Special Purpose Vehicle to help facilitate this. This work continues and we hope to announce further progress soon.

There remains however much work to do towards the second objective: the ending of Iran's destabilising regional behaviour.

And no one should be in any doubt Mr President about the strength of our concern and the strength of our commitment to tackle that and the fact that compliance with the JCPoA – important as it is – for all the reasons the French Ambassador set out it is not a licence to engage in destabilising behaviour elsewhere, whether or not that has a nuclear link.

Iran cannot, Mr President, expect to improve its relations with the rest of the world or ensure its economic prosperity and security while pursuing its current path. Business will not invest and public finances should be spent at home and not diverted to adventurism abroad. The briefing given by the Under-Secretary-General today has been very clear and the findings in the Secretary-General's report should continue to trouble this Council. As the report notes, the United Kingdom along with our E3 partners raised our concerns over recent Iranian ballistic missile launches into Syria in a letter on 20 November. Since then as the Security Council discussed on 4 December Iran has test fired a medium range ballistic missile with a capability falling under MTCR Category 1. This latest launch like those referenced in the E3 letter is inconsistent with Security Council Resolution 2231.

Now Mr President, we heard a number of arguments when we met before to discuss this issue in consultations. I'm sure we'll hear many of those arguments again today so I'd like to address them briefly if I may. Some colleagues have made the point that the language in Resolution 2231, OP7 and Annex B Paragraph 3 are not binding. The second plank of that argument is that the Council should therefore not concern itself with Iran's behaviour because we argue it's inconsistent with it.

Mr President, we believe that's an extraordinary but it's also a flawed argument for two reasons. Leaving aside the question of whether the language is legally binding or not, this Council has the power to make recommendations to Member States with a view to resolving any matter that threatens the maintenance of international peace and security. It is clear that these recommendations should be taken seriously by Member States rather than openly flouted. The call upon Iran to comply with the request not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering

nuclear weapons has a clear purpose and that purpose Mr. President, is to reduce international and regional tension. In defying the Council's clearly expressed view Iran is, to say the least, not contributing to the stability of the region. Rather she is ignoring the expressed wishes of this Council.

Tendentious arguments which seek to diminish the Council's voice on this serve only to undermine the Council's prerogative and authority and to encourage other States to disregard the resolutions of the Security Council. We should all Mr. President be deeply concerned by such irresponsible behaviour. Another fallacious argument which I'm sure we'll hear today is that the MTCR is irrelevant, that it is only an arms export regime. Mr President, the MTCR is itself an important part of international efforts against proliferation. MTCR Category 1 which describes a platform capable of delivering first generation nuclear weapon commonly defined as around 500 kilograms minimum to a distance of 300 kilometres. So it matters that Iran test fired a ballistic missile with a capability that falls under MTCR Category 1. These missiles are not harmless tools of self-defence; they are a source of concern and they are included in this resolution because if Iran were to develop a nuclear weapon these missiles would be its delivery vehicle. They therefore not only threaten the region but Europe and potentially others beyond. Testing them is provocative and the Council should respond.

Therefore Mr President, let me say that we demand Iran ceased activity that defies Resolution 2231. We demand that Iran and all Member States fully comply with the resolutions prohibiting the proliferation of missile technology to and from Iran – on which by the way there is no doubt that these are indeed legally binding.

And our second objective, we note with deep regret but also concern that throughout the region Iran continues to play a negative role, supporting non-state actors that undermine the stability of its neighbours.

On Iran and Syria, Iran has been the key supporter of Bashar al-Assad's murderous seven-year campaign. Militias funded and controlled by Iran have been integral to Assad's military campaign to retake opposition-held territory, committing gross abuses of human rights in the process. Iran has proactively shipped weapons systems into Syria, inflaming tensions with its neighbours as well as violating the provisions of Resolution 2231.

For example Mr President, in just the past week, Israel has had to take action to prevent Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants tunneling under its borders. These Hezbollah activities are a clear violation of Security Council Resolution 1701 and they are further evidence of Iran's destabilizing activity. The United Kingdom condemns the existence of these tunnels. They threaten Israel and Lebanon. The violation of Israeli sovereignty is deeply concerning and moreover, Mr President it takes Iran's destabilising activity literally to new depths.

In Yemen we are watching the ongoing talks in Stockholm carefully and we welcome the attendance of the Houthi delegation. And I accept Mr President, it's important to note that Iran has expressed its strong support for the

talks in Sweden. But the situation in Yemen remains of serious concern and the Secretary-General reports today includes information about ballistic missiles fired at Saudi Arabia by the Houthis as well as anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles recovered in Yemen. These weapons have characteristics and components consistent with those known to be manufactured in Iran.

Mr President, I have had in the course of my recent work I have been to Tehran to discuss many of these issues with the Iranian leadership and each time I've been clear that this habit of testing weapons that threaten her neighbours defy the Council by exporting weapons and militias around the regions makes it very difficult to see how Iran can play a constructive role in her region. And it means that she has no legitimacy when complaining when this Council puts such behaviour on its agenda.

Mr President I have long said that Iran has legitimate security interests in the region; we recognise that. But the way Iran goes about pursuing those interests is leading to increasing destabilisation and is simply not legitimate in the modern world. A different approach is available to Iran that concentrates on reintegration into the economic community of the world and into the world of diplomatic engagement. We support Iran in seeking to benefit from economic development. We won't have to fulfil her undoubted potential as a vibrant economy and an important power.

But these are not unconditional goals Mr President; Iran can never achieve these objectives without a vital change in approach on the issues I've mentioned here today. Iran needs to take steps to address the concerns of this Council seriously and to recognise that its expeditionary and expansionist security doctrine will only provoke more challenge and lead to greater instability within the region. This is why Mr President, the United Kingdom together with our European partners will continue to participate in the JCPoA. We will continue to work with everyone to convince Iran to take a radically different approach to the region and help secure for herself a more prosperous future.

Thank you Mr President.

Speech: Lord Ahmad Speech at Amnesty International Annual Human Rights Day Reception

To my lords, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and welcome. I wish to thank Mr Speaker for allowing Amnesty to host this event, but also thank Kate and her team for organising the event today and to thank you for all you do; not just holding the government to account, because that is an important

role, but equally for your dedication and devotion to this important agenda of Human Rights.

I am also delighted, as I came in I had a chance to speak to some students from Hillview School in Kent – and I understand their member of parliament has just arrived, Tom Tugendhat – talking of holding people to account, as you many of you know, he is the chair of the foreign affairs committee, so I assure you it is not just the members of the opposition who hold the government to account, but the work of our committees do. Particularly in my case as a Foreign Office Minister, the foreign affairs committee, assuring that we do stick to our principles, we do deliver upon our policies and our commitments.

The area of Human Rights is something I believe in very passionately and take very seriously, and therefore not withstanding other events – and there are a few others going on today – it is important that we show our commitment, not just through events like this, but through collaborative and collective action on this important agenda. It should not matter who you are, where you are, what country, what age, what gender, what faith, what creed, what colour – no matter who you are, wherever you are our collective responsibility on this important agenda is clear.

Therefore, I am delighted to support, amongst other human rights defender organisations, the sterling work done by Amnesty International around the world, and Kate, thank you for this opportunity to allow me to come and share some of my thoughts.

As I was walking over from the Foreign Office, there were many colours, there were many voices, there were many placards, and there were many views. But, as I reflected on this particular event, I am proud of the fact that those freedoms that we take sometimes for granted, are very apparent today amongst all days. It is important that we should respect, regard, protect and indeed strengthen those freedoms, not just here in the UK but around the world.

I am proud of the fact that we have passionate political debates on important issues of the day – not just in parliament, but around the country; on the streets, through our newspapers and press and indeed, as I know clearly from my own children – as my 13 year old or coming on to 35, keeps reminding me of her human rights – it is an important element that we continue to discuss these issues within our own homes.

But you know my lords, ladies and gentlemen, it is a cherished freedom. It is right we cherish it, but that we also stand up for those who are denied these freedoms – for which it is just a distant dream. For them, disagreeing with the government is not just difficult; it is dangerous – indeed, in parts of the world, tragically it is deadly.

Threats to Human Rights Defenders

Indeed, as we look at 70 years on from the Human Rights declaration, there are 300 Human Rights Defenders have been murdered this year alone. Why? For defending the human rights of others – that is crucial. That is 300 families

shattered. 300 communities shocked and living in fear. And many thousands of ordinary people robbed of a brave and committed advocates, close friends and family.

For every one of those killed, there are many, many more thousands locked up, attacked and threatened.

Early this week, and I was delighted Kate Allen was there as well – both of us heard directly from two Human Rights Defenders; one from Kenya Wanjeri Nderu and Dina Meza from Honduras. It is was important as we marked that particular day that we should not forget the mental harm that is often done, the abuse Human Rights Defenders suffer, because they can be as damaging – those psychological wounds – as a physical one.

UK support of Human Rights Defenders

These incredibly courageous people – I salute them and look up to them – put themselves at risk to defend the rights that matter to us all, and that is why, here at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I and others that work with me make it a priority that we put human rights and Human Rights Defenders at the heart of our work. We learn from them. We not only advocate for them, we seek to also protect and strengthen the work they do – we must continue to strengthen the work we do in this area.

We work with Human Rights Defenders on our campaigns, be it to end modern slavery which our Prime Minister, Mrs May has championed around the world, that scourge and crime of human trafficking; and as I know as her representative on preventing sexual violence in conflict, and I know again, talking to the students from Hillview, the importance of girl's education – that is why, amongst other things, I am proud of our government's collective shared commitment to ensure that every girl, no matter where they are around the world, receives 12 years of quality education – it is only through education that we will empower girls. Human Rights Defenders are essential to our work to promote good governance, media freedom, to deliver equality; whether it be gender or LGBT equality; and importantly to end the death penalty and torture.

I also, through my travels, meet many dedicated Human Rights Defenders, many of whom are faith leaders and faith communities on the front line. In the summer, I was honoured and humbled to be asked by our prime minister to also take on the additional role as her Special Envoy on the important issue of Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Over the past year, I have done this on many occasions during overseas visits, including in Iraq, Algeria, Egypt and Indonesia, to name but a few. It is so important, as we are defending the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief, we should not do so alone; it is the responsibility of us collectively, to promote and respect those who hold different religious beliefs, or no religious beliefs whatsoever, but collectively stand up for their right to do just that – not just internationally, but when we see challenges at home, we should stand up. As we approach Christmas in a year of goodwill – good to remember at this particular time. It is important that we

do, and it is an area that I have been looking at very closely, and as we look at Freedom of Religion or Belief, we also recognise that there are many people, because of their Christian faith around the world who won't be able to celebrate, who will not be able to have the family dinners, who will not be able to go to church to worship in the way they wish to do – a poignant moment to reflect on.

Tribute to NGOs

But we do value our engagement with organisations such as Amnesty and the many other human rights NGOs that share common aims and aspirations.

I should like to take this opportunity, if I may, to pay tribute to the work of Amnesty International in particular and other NGOs present here: because it is you who give a voice to those who are unheard; it is you who stand up for those who are knocked down; and, crucially, it is you who defend those who risk their lives to defend others. Simply put, thank you, for everything you do.

If anyone were in any doubt as to whether defending human rights was truly a global issue, I would suggest – if you haven't do so already – is to read Amnesty's report, which as I admitted to Kate I had when I saw her on Monday that I had just received and not yet read, but I have now, which details how their "Write for Rights" campaign has led to 5.5 million actions, in 208 countries and territories around the world.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour to be here with you this afternoon, but it goes without saying that the issue of human rights and Human Rights Defenders is significant. The challenges that Human Rights Defenders face around the world are widespread, but they can only be tackled effectively through working together on a global scale.

So as we mark that 70 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on this Human Rights Day let us pay tribute, let us remember and those who have a faith let us pray for those brave Human Rights Defenders around the world, let us pay tribute to their courage, their incredible vision and tenacity, and ultimately let us commit to work together, even more closely than we have already, to ensure we play our part in helping them to deliver the change we all want to see. Thank you.

[**News story: Non-executive director appointment to Ofgem**](#)



This appointment takes effect from 1 December 2018 and lasts for 5 years.

[Ofgem](#) protects the interests of existing and future electricity and gas consumers, promoting value for money, security of supply and sustainability.

John Crackett has been a non-executive board member of the UK Office for Nuclear Regulation since July 2011. Before this he was Managing Director of Central Networks – the UK’s second-largest distributor of electricity – and also an E.ON UK Board member responsible for Safety, Health and Environment.

Published 12 December 2018

[News story: Cold weather health warnings issued by PHE](#)

Latest update

Tuesday 29 January 2019

An incoming band of cold weather, with the potential for snow, has prompted warnings from Public Health England (PHE) to look out for those most at-risk.

Over the past few weeks temperatures across the country have been low. Now Met Office forecasters say that this week some parts could see snow and everywhere will continue to see cold temperatures.

These warnings have prompted PHE scientists to warn people to prepare for the bad weather now and to keep a careful eye on forecasts. Every winter thousands of people die from illnesses linked to exposure to the cold when indoor and outside.

Dr Emer O’Connell, Public Health Consultant with PHE said:

With continued cold weather forecast, now is the time to prepare and look out for those most at risk of falling ill.

If you can, check on family, friends and neighbours who are older, have heart and lung conditions or young children as all these groups are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold.

Steve Ramsdale, Chief Operational Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Snow and wintry showers are expected to affect many parts of the country on Tuesday 29 January. The main accumulations are likely to be over high ground in Wales and the north and west of England where 2 to 5 cm is likely in places.

Elsewhere, whilst some snow may fall there is less likely to be any significant accumulations though parts of East Anglia and the high ground of Surrey, Sussex and Kent may see 1 to 3 cm. It will remain cold and unsettled for the rest of this week, temperatures could fall quite widely to minus 3 or minus 4 degrees overnight, with a mix of rain snow and ice, particularly on Thursday (31 January).

Further information is included in PHE's [tips to help you to prepare for cold weather](#).

Previous updates

12 December 2018

With many parts of England forecast to receive their first bout of cold this winter, Public Health England (PHE) is today (12 December 2018) issuing weather warnings.

The [Met Office](#) has forecast a short spell of cold for the northeast, north west, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, and West Midlands. The cold, which could drop below zero degrees in many places, could also trigger some snowfall, but it is not certain where.

As a result, PHE is urging people all over the country to think about what they can do to keep warm and well during the cold.

Dr Owen Landeg of Public Health England, said:

This cold is likely to arrive late on Thursday and into Friday. Before then it's really important to think about what you can do to prepare and protect more vulnerable friends and family from the ill-effects of the cold.

It is best to wear lots of thin layers, have plenty of warm food and drinks to stay warm, and check weather forecasts before heading

out. Also, wear shoes with a good, slip-resistant grip to prevent any accidental falls.

When indoors, stay warm, heat homes to at least 18°C, and keep up-to-date with the weather forecast – all of this is particularly important if anyone in the home is very young, 65 or over or has a long-term heart or lung condition, as they can feel the ill-effects of cold more than the rest of us.

Frank Saunders, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office said:

It's going to be cold over the next few days, with temperatures for many parts limited to between 3 and 6°C through the day.

Many of us will wake up to a frost on Friday and Saturday morning, before wet and windy weather moves in later on Saturday.

To prepare for cold weather:

- look out for friends and family who may be vulnerable to the cold, and ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their homes adequately
- try to maintain indoor temperatures to at least 18°C, particularly if you are not mobile, have a long-term illness or are 65 or over. When temperatures are at 18C we start to see changes in the body, when the blood starts to thicken and this can cause clotting. Clotting can cause problems and is one of the reasons we see more heart attacks and strokes in the days following colder weather
- stay up to date with the latest weather forecasts on the [Met Office website](#)
- if eligible, seek entitlements and benefits – [power and utility companies have schemes](#) have schemes which make at-risk groups a priority for reconnection following power cuts
- avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold-related illness or falls
- discuss with your friends and neighbours the need to clear snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby

[Stay Well This Winter](#) contains useful advice on staying warm this winter.

[News story: News from the Adjudicator](#)

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On 1 November the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced that it had designated [two additional retailers to be covered by the Code](#). I welcomed this announcement and the opportunity to build on the strong progress I have made for groceries suppliers since 2013. I have already held an introductory meeting to which the Code Compliance Officers (CCOs) of the additional designated retailers were invited. Next steps will be to work with them on overall compliance with the Code.

I need suppliers to speak up and tell me about their experiences with these retailers so that I can pursue any specific issues. Email me at Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk or call 020 3738 6537. You can also speak to me at events I attend over coming months (details later in this newsletter). Any information I receive will be treated in full confidence. As with the original 10 designated retailers I encourage suppliers to raise issues with the relevant CCOs and you can find [details of how to contact the CCOs](#).

Following the progress made by the original 10 regulated retailers and the addition of two new ones I have decided to make a small change to my working so during 2019 I will hold three rather than four meetings with each CCO. Please continue to look out for the published record of those meetings.

The CMA will now consider designation on a yearly basis and I would encourage suppliers to contact the CMA directly if they believe there are other retailers that should come under the Code.

Meetings with audit chairs

I have just completed a round of meetings with the chairs of the audit committees of the original 10 regulated retailers. I view these as a significant part of my work because making progress on Code-related issues has meant securing culture change supported from the top. These meetings have proved very valuable and I am pleased with the level of support I have received from the audit chairs who recognise the risk to their businesses if they are not compliant with the Code.

During these meetings I also shared themes that emerged from the 2017/18 annual compliance reports which the retailers produce. I am pleased that retailers are doing more to capture potential Code issues within their businesses and I continue to encourage them to be more open and transparent about how they comply with the Code by putting more information in the public domain.

Training

As we are nearing the end of 2018, I want to ask suppliers to make a resolution for 2019 and that is to ensure they are fully trained in the Code. Becoming Code Confident by understanding the Code and how I interpret it is so important for grocery suppliers and yet there are still too many who have

not undertaken training. It could prove to be one of your best investments next year. I publish a list of all the training providers I am aware of on my website.

Warmest wishes for a successful holiday season.

Christine Tacon

Top Issues

The GCA continues to monitor the progress being made by the original ten designated retailers on the issues of delay in payments, forecasting and promotions.

Retailers have done a lot of work in this area but delay in payments was the most reported issue by suppliers in the last annual survey. The GCA has worked with them to implement the changes required following the investigation into Tesco plc as well as encouraging them to put in place systems and processes to minimise the risk of delay in payments arising from drop and drive. Other changes to systems and supply chain practices have been made based on anonymous feedback from suppliers that the GCA has received. The GCA needs to hear from suppliers whether these changes are making a difference or if they are experiencing any new issues.

In June this year the GCA published a revised best practice statement on forecasting; this also included the issue of promotions. The revisions reflected the GCA's previously stated view that there will almost always be some circumstances in which compensation for inaccurate forecasting is appropriate, so a blanket exclusion in a supply agreement would be unlikely to be compliant with the Code. The GCA has also made clear that the due care test is unlikely to have been met if a retailer did not provide a way for a supplier to contribute to the forecasting process and also encouraged retailers to consider the extent to which they might offer compensation for inaccurate forecasting. The points in relation to the issue of promotions largely reflect where retailers could improve their processes and are based on the practical experiences that suppliers have shared with the GCA. Again, please let the GCA know how this best practice statement is being followed by the retailers.

We will also be working with the two additional designated retailers on all the Top Issues which the GCA has considered.

Save the date

- 17 to 20 March 2019 – International Food & Drink Event at ExCel, London
The GCA will be attending the International Food and Drink Event at London's leading exhibition centre. Come and meet Christine Tacon and

the team and hear Christine speak on 19 March. Check out the programme on www.ife.co.uk.

- 20 to 21 March 2019 – TasteWales Conference in Newport Members of the GCA team will attend the TasteWales Conference held at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport between 20th and 21st March and will be happy to answer your questions about the Groceries Code.
- 24 June 2019 – GCA Annual Conference in London The GCA will present her annual report and new work programme at the 2019 conference at Church House in Westminster. As in previous years YouGov will also announce the results of the GCA's annual survey. Further details including a registration form will be published on the GCA website in spring 2019.

Invite the Adjudicator and her team to your event

The Adjudicator and her team are keen to attend as many supplier events as our diary allows. If your organisation is planning an event then please contact Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk to discuss whether we can attend. It would be helpful if you could provide full details of the event including timing and location as well as the audience involved.

New email address

The GCA's email has changed. Please make sure you use the new address that ends in @GroceriesCode.gov.uk. Enquiries should be directed to Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk. At the end of 2018, emails sent to the old address will no longer be forwarded.