

[Press release: Michael Gove announces new funding to protect bees](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today (25 October) launched a £60,000 fund to develop and test pollinator habitat mapping – identifying where new habitats will provide the greatest benefit for bees and other pollinators.

This will help to boost the number of pollinator-friendly landscapes and protect the health of our bees, wasps, beetles, butterflies, moths and hoverflies, as set out in the [Government's 25 Year Environment Plan](#).

These species are critical to our countryside and the food industry through the work they do to pollinate plants and crops.

The project will involve partnering with organisations such as Natural England, Buglife, The Wildlife Trusts and other bodies working on habitat mapping and the conservation of pollinators.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Bees and other pollinators are vital contributors to the beauty of our landscapes, our economy and our £100 billion food industry.

Today's announcement to fund pollinator mapping shows our clear commitment to help these wonderful creatures to thrive by creating wildflower rich areas around our towns and countryside.

Ben Bradley MP has run a brilliant campaign to better protect our pollinators and to leave our environment in a better state for future generations. He deserves all our thanks.

The government is also announcing today investment in two projects to create pollinator-friendly landscapes:

- The Bumblebee Conservation Trust's "West Country Buzz" project in North Devon which seeks to grow a partnership of land managers, farmers and NGOs to improve and connect habitats for bees.
- The Martin Down farmer "Super Cluster" in Hampshire, led by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, farmers and landowners. This will provide training and advice to enable three farmer clusters to protect and enhance wildlife, including pollinators.

The value of the UK's 1,500 species of pollinators to crops is estimated to be £400 – 680 million per year due to improved productivity. Past losses of flower-rich habitats are known to have driven a loss of diversity in our pollinators, which is why this funding is vital to help protect their future.

Ben Bradley MP, who has been campaigning on pollinator habitat mapping, said:

I am pleased that the government is taking action to support pollinators and that they have incorporated ideas from my Pollinator Bill within their plans. Providing funding for pollinator mapping and supporting the creation of wildflower rich habitat will help protect our bees and other insects including butterflies and moths.

This announcement is great news for our environment, and it shows the Secretary of State's commitment to protecting our pollinators and the Government's commitment to a greener future.

Craig Macadam, Conservation Director at Buglife, said:

Buglife welcomes the funding promised by the Environment Secretary as a great first step towards securing the future of our precious pollinators.

Once mapping is completed more resource will clearly be needed to deliver the on-the-ground change that is needed. Coupled with the ban on neonicotinoids this is real affirmative action in the battle to arrest the decline of bees and other pollinators and preserve the buzz of life.

Joan Edwards, Director of Public Affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, says:

The investment in spatial planning to support our pollinators is a welcome start in the essential exercise of mapping the nature we have – and the nature we need. We need to see this approach scaled-up across the country and for all of our wildlife to give our natural world a chance to recover and to make sure that everyone benefits from a thriving environment.

In April 2018, the government voted in favour of further restrictions on the use of three neonicotinoids due to their harmful effects on bees and other pollinators. The measures will come into force at the end of the year.

[The National Pollinator Strategy](#) is a 10 year plan which sets out how government, beekeepers, conservation groups, farmers and researchers can work together to improve the status of the pollinating insects in England.

The government has also committed to bringing forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years, set to be introduced in 2019.

Speech: Security Council briefing on the UN Fact-Finding Mission in Burma

Statement ahead of Procedural Vote

I would like to make a statement on behalf of the United Kingdom, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, and the United States of America.

We have read carefully the letter that was sent on the 18th of October from you and colleagues Mr President.

We have requested the Chair of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar to brief us today. The report produced by the Mission is the most authoritative and comprehensive account of the human rights violations that have occurred in the country since 2011. It details, in particular, the events that took place in Rakhine State on and around 25 August 2017 and led to the forcible displacement of over 725,000 refugees across an international border into Bangladesh.

As we will hear, the Fact-Finding Mission's findings are of the gravest nature.

The report concludes that "gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law have been committed in Myanmar since 2011 and that many of these violations undoubtedly amount to the gravest crimes under international law".

It makes a specific recommendation to the Security Council to "ensure accountability for crimes under international law committed in Myanmar".

Ensuring the prevention of such crimes – genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity – is one of the reasons that the United Nations and the Security Council were established in the first place.

As members of the Security Council we are today faced with a situation that clearly endangers international peace and security, and also a specific request for this Council to act.

It is therefore absolutely without doubt the Security Council's responsibility to hear these allegations concerning the gravest crimes under international law related to this situation and to deliberate on how to proceed, and so Mr President, we will vote in favour of this meeting.

Statement during Security Council meeting

Thank you Mr President to the Chairman for that compelling, and shocking and moving briefing.

As I said on behalf of the nine Council members that called for this meeting,

the briefing we have heard today concerns allegations of the gravest crimes against international law – genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

On this day in 1945, the UN came into being. We agree with you Mr Chairman; What is the United Nations for – What is the Security Council for if it cannot deal with some of the worst things that a government can do to its own people?

The Security Council has a solemn responsibility to consider these matters and decide how to proceed.

Despite the objections of Council members here today, we believe it is right that this meeting is taking place. I will come in my remarks to what should happen in our view after this meeting.

Mr President, I wanted to draw out two points from the Mission's report and Mr Darusman's briefing today.

The first concerns the situation in Rakhine which is an "enduring catastrophe".

Human rights violations against the people of Rakhine – ethnic Rakhine as well as Rohingya – continue to this day. The Rohingya in particular continue to face daily intimidation, restrictions on their freedom of movement, access to markets, education and healthcare, continued discrimination and denial of their right to citizenship. As the Chairman said; the Rohingya Muslims who are left behind in Rakhine are not safe and cannot be safe and the Rohingya who are in the camps in Bangladesh cannot go home until these matters are addressed.

Although the Burmese authorities have previously claimed that 81 out of 88 of the Annan Commission recommendations have been implemented, there is in fact, Mr. President, very little evidence that sincere efforts have been made to address the acute deprivation of human rights that lies at the root cause of this crisis.

And although we have previously welcomed the signing of the MoU between the government, UNHCR, and UNDP, those UN agencies continue to be denied access to large parts of Rakhine.

The conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation are manifestly not in place. Any calls for immediate repatriation in the current circumstances are deeply irresponsible. We need first to see the Burmese government cooperate fully with the United Nations and make genuine progress to change the situation, in line with the Annan Commission recommendations.

In the meantime, the UK commends the government and people of Bangladesh for continuing to show great generosity in continuing to host the refugee population and cooperate in good faith with the Burmese government. The needs of the refugees continue to be great – including protection, legal status, assistance – and we call on the international community to intensify its support through the UN's Joint Response Plan.

My second point Mr President; Rakhine is the most egregious example of the Burmese military's conduct. But it is not the only one. The report makes clear the Burmese military is conducting human rights violations across the country against other ethnic communities, most notably in Kachin and Shan states.

Accountability is vital to get justice for the Rohingya and others who have suffered. It is necessary to give the Rohingya confidence that they can return to Myanmar/Burma. But, fundamentally, it is necessary in order to prevent the Burmese military from committing these same crimes again and again against the people of Myanmar.

It is vital Mr President that this Council acts to uphold the Charter. I take very seriously what the Chairman said about the need to send a signal from this Council to other countries around the world who's governments may be tempted to take a leaf out of the Burmese military's horrific playbook and execute such crimes on their own people.

Myanmar/Burma has established a domestic Commission of Inquiry. We note the Fact Finding Mission's conclusion that this Commission "cannot provide a real avenue for accountability".

We note also the six Generals who the report mentions with Command Responsibility starting with the senior General.

We note too that previous commissions of inquiries have been a whitewash and they have preserved the military's long-standing impunity. The government has repeatedly denied the crimes described to us today. It has locked up journalists who have exposed government wrongdoing, most notably the two Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo – I repeat the UK's call for their immediate release.

If there is to be any faith in this latest Commission of Inquiry, it should be independent and report transparently on its progress. It should operate according to international standards – as the Fact Finding Mission itself did – and it should cooperate with other bodies gathering evidence such as the Fact Finding Mission and the ongoing Independent Mechanism established by the Human Rights Council earlier this month. We have repeatedly asked the Burmese government to work closely with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the findings of the Commission of Inquiry should lead to an independent judicial process where all – including the military – are equal before the law.

Otherwise, if there is not going to be domestic accountability in Burma, then the UK believes that we must consider all options including ICC referral or an ad-hoc tribunal.

Mr President, I never thought in my diplomatic career that I would hear a briefing to the Security Council a briefing as compelling but detailing such awful treatment of a people as we have heard today.

The crimes we have heard echo those committed in Rwanda and Srebrenica some

twenty years ago. The Security Council acted in those two situations. It acted too late to prevent them which is all to our lasting shame but it did act to ensure accountability was brought to bear on those responsible. As you have said Mr Chairman, national sovereignty is not a licence to commit crimes against humanity. It is not a licence to wreak such havoc on the livelihoods and lives of your own people.

The UK now plans to work with our partners to press for progress in creating conditions so that the refugees can return but also so that we can have accountability that genuinely ends the Burmese military's impunity.

In the face of the acts we have heard described today, we believe this is a responsibility that the Security Council owes not just to the Rohingya, not just to peoples of Burma but it owes them to people everywhere around the world.

Thank you

[Press release: Foreign Secretary in first bilateral visit to Switzerland for more than 20 years](#)



Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has arrived in Switzerland for the first bilateral visit by the UK's most senior diplomat since 1996.

Both the UK and Switzerland are renegotiating their relations with the EU, with both seeking to protect national sovereignty whilst holding high ambitions for close co-operation with the EU across a broad range of areas.

The UK and Switzerland enjoy close ties through trade, culture and shared values, and work closely together to tackle many global challenges of the present day.

The Foreign Secretary said:

Both the UK and Switzerland are proud, independently-minded nations, but we both understand the value of having a deep and close relationship with the EU.

While our own EU exit negotiations progress, we are also working hard with our friends in Switzerland to ensure our bilateral relations continue to flourish for many years to come.

Trade between our two countries is worth more than £30 billion a year; together we host all of the 'top 10' universities in Europe; and we continue to unite in tackling many global issues, including modern slavery and cyber crime.

This visit will allow me to continue important discussions with the President and Foreign Minister on the huge potential for greater co-operation between two great European nations.

Further information

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Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy_Hunt](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[Press release: Latest ONS figures show exports in services continue to grow](#)

Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show demand for British services continues to grow, as exports swelled to £286 billion in the year to 2018 Q2.

The data indicates UK service exports to the world rose by almost £19 billion – an increase of 6.9% compared to the same time last year.

Figures released today (24 October 2018) reflect an increase in exports to

important trading partners including USA, Australia and South Korea.

The latest services surplus in the year to 2018 Q2 has also reached a new high, increasing to £117 billion – up 11.3% on last year. Other main points from today's release include:

- Service exports to Non-EU countries have increased by 4.5% to 167 billion. A fast-growing contributor was South Korea where the total value of exports in services increased to £2.4 billion.
- The USA remains the UK's top services destination, with exports increasing to £59 billion, accounting for 20.6% of total exports.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Today's trade figures show demand for UK services overseas continues to soar. Overall services exports have risen to £286 billion – up 6.9% on this time last year, while the trade services surplus has also increased to £117 billion.

There is clear appetite for British services further afield, as the US and Far East offer some of the greatest growth prospects of the 21st century. As we formulate an independent trade policy for the first time in more than 4 decades, my international economic department will continue to make sure British companies are not only seizing these opportunities, but also thriving from them.

The news comes after the launch of the government's [Export Strategy](#), which sets out a new ambition to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%, making the UK one of the G7's most successful exporters.