

# Press release: Safeguarding Summit 2018: Global aid community to take action against sexual predators

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt today (Thursday 18 October) galvanised the support of more than 500 delegates from across the international aid community to commit to a “root to branch” change in the way the sector operates.

At the landmark International summit, Ms Mordaunt welcomed delegates from the United Nations, World Bank Group, international financial institutions, research organisations, survivors and NGOs who all agreed to sign up to tough global standards to stop sexual predators abusing vulnerable people around the world.

All the major international donors – covering 90 per cent of global aid – today committed to worldwide standards on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. These standards cover ethical behaviour, recruitment and complaints processes.

They will be backed up by stronger due diligence processes, better project monitoring, and tougher language in funding agreements.

Donors will also publish relevant information about allegations and confirmed cases and will be subject to regular independent review by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

[The commitments](#) announced by different groups representing the sector focused on four key themes:

- preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment from happening in the first place;
- pledging to listen to those who have been affected;
- removing and addressing barriers to reporting sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; and
- learning more quickly in future, as new evidence and opportunities emerge.

The Department for International Development (DFID) has today committed £20 million in research funding to improve understanding of the risks people affected by conflict face, including those subjected to sexual exploitation.

The research will make a valuable contribution in helping to determine what can be done to avoid and mitigate the risks associated with exploitation and harm and what we all can do to effectively safeguard people who are trusting us to care for them.

After the summit, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Let there be no doubt this international summit was not about gathering promises to tinker around the edges. This is about setting in place a fundamental rewrite, from root to branch, of the way the aid sector operates.

It is incredibly important that as we work to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector we put the voices of victims and survivors first. Which is why we dedicated the first half of the day to listening to their accounts and hearing from those on the frontline.

This is not the end of the process. There is still a huge amount of work to do but these commitments and the new tools we have outlined today send a message to perpetrators – your time is up, there is nowhere to hide.

The summit has also seen major commitments from the sector including:

- a new Disclosure of Misconduct Scheme which will prevent known perpetrators moving around undetected – at least 15 organisations have signed up to this so far, amounting to approximately 50,000 staff worldwide;
- the Disasters Emergency Committee announcing the launch of shared reporting hotlines for raising concerns in future emergencies, along with a review of how they respond to community feedback, including in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh; and
- all donors and other participants committing to having at least one named senior level champion accountable for work on safeguarding issues and to encourage annual discussions at board level.

DFID also announced a number of measures today.

- An Interpol pilot to improve background checks on staff who work in the aid sector and provide advice to employers on international vetting and identifying high-risk individuals. This will also lead to better information sharing across borders and help close the net on predators who are using the aid sector as a cover to abuse and exploit.
- Support for NGOs to test a new passport for aid workers to prove an individual's identity, provide background information and vetting status.
- DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be supporting the development of a statement of victims' rights. This statement will allow

people to understand their rights, and to have confidence that they can find help if those rights are threatened or violated.

ENDS

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## General media queries

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## [Press release: FC0 Statement on the attack at Kerch Polytechnic College in Crimea](#)



Following the attack at Kerch Polytechnic College in Crimea, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesperson said:

We are deeply saddened by the attack at Kerch Polytechnic College in Crimea, which killed and injured multiple people, many of whom

were children.

The UK offers its sincere condolences and sympathy to the families and friends of those who were killed, and wishes a swift recovery to the injured.

## **Further information**

Published 18 October 2018

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## **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## **Media enquiries**

For journalists

Email  
[newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)

## News story: Executive Formation & Exercise of Functions Bill introduced into Parliament

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, today introduced new legislation to facilitate her clear plan to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland.

The Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions Bill creates a period where an Executive can be formed at any time, during which there will be no duty to call an election.

This will provide an opportunity and the necessary time and space to restart political talks with the aim of restoring devolved government as soon as possible.

The Bill provides certainty for Northern Ireland departments to ensure the continued delivery of public services. It includes a requirement for the Secretary of State to issue guidance for Northern Ireland departments to support the decision making process in the absence of Ministers.

The Bill also addresses the urgent need for public appointments to certain bodies and offices that cannot be made in the absence of Northern Ireland Ministers.

The Secretary of State said:

At the heart of the Belfast Agreement is a devolved power-sharing Government in Northern Ireland. This Bill gives the best chance of delivering that.

In the meantime, it is imperative that Northern Ireland departments have clarity, so that decisions can be taken in the public interest to maintain delivery of Northern Ireland's public services in the absence of Ministers, and the guidance we have published today alongside the Bill will support civil servants in carrying out their duties.

Once this legislation is passed by Parliament, it will help the political parties to use the next few months to get around the table and come to an agreement , so that the people of Northern Ireland have locally-elected government to take important decisions on their behalf.

The Bill covers three areas:

### **Executive formation**

The Bill provides for a 5-month period during which an Executive may be formed at any point without further primary legislation or an Assembly election, and removes the duty to propose a date for an election during that period, providing a further opportunity to re-establish political dialogue and restore the Executive as soon as possible.

### **Departmental decision-making**

The Bill contains provisions to give greater clarity and certainty to enable Northern Ireland departments to continue to take decisions in Northern Ireland in the public interest, to ensure the continued delivery of public services. The Bill clarifies that a senior officer of a Northern Ireland department is not prevented from exercising functions of the department during the period for forming an Executive where it is in the public interest to do so, and in doing so to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This guidance will not identify or direct specific decisions but will set out principles to be taken into account when deciding whether or not it is in the public interest to exercise a function. A draft version of that guidance has also been published today.

### **Public appointments**

The Bill enables UK Government Ministers to make key public appointments specified on the face of the Bill, which would normally be made by Northern Ireland Ministers. These are the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission, Northern Ireland Policing Board (and approval of the Board's appointments of senior police officers), The Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

### **Notes to Editors**

The Bill has been introduced in the House of Commons today and will be debated on Wednesday 24 October.

The Bill, Explanatory Notes and guidance for the Northern Ireland Civil Servants is attached and are also available on [the Parliament website](#)