

Press release: DRC: UK provides urgent lifesaving aid to victims of escalating conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The International Development Secretary Priti Patel has called for the international community to act now and not forget the millions of people displaced by increasing levels of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Ms Patel's call came as she announced vital lifesaving support for hundreds of thousands of victims of political insecurity and increasing levels of violence in the DRC.

The crisis has forced 3.8 million people to flee their homes, resulting in widespread malnutrition, disease and suffering in many regions of the DRC.

Ms Patel also called on international partners and the UN system to follow the UK's lead and urgently step up support to this crisis, to prevent further unnecessary destruction and human suffering.

Over the next five years DFID's humanitarian support will provide:

- over 620,000 people with food assistance
- 220,000 children under the age of 5 with vital nutrition
- over 1.1 million people with access to clean drinking water
- 900,000 with essential health care such as drugs for pregnant mothers
- over 195,000 children with access to education
- 12,000 survivors of trauma including gender based violence with psychosocial support and counselling

The International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

Millions of innocent people are suffering from malnutrition and disease after being forced to flee their homes because of the horrific violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Families have been separated, homes destroyed and people are living in desperate conditions, in what is fast becoming one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The UK government has not hesitated to act and is leading the way by providing essential food, water and medicine, but it is vital the international community also urgently steps up to ensure the displaced people of the DRC are not forgotten.

- This support is an allocation of £175 million for humanitarian aid from the DRC budget.
 - The DRC has the highest number of internally displaced people in Africa with 3.8 million forced to flee malnutrition, disease, violence and insecurity to find safety in other parts of the country. In the first six months of 2017 the DRC had the greatest number of newly displaced people in the world.
 - 7.7 million people in the DRC don't have reliable access to their next meal, 1.9 million children are suffering from life threatening malnutrition, and outbreaks of cholera, measles and malaria are exacerbating the situation.
 - The UK is a major humanitarian donor in the DRC. Over the past five years (2012-2017) we have provided £168 million to the response, which has included:
 - Emergency food support for over 125,000 children under 5
 - Support for over 11,000 women and girls who have been victims of sexual or gender based violence, including psychosocial therapy
 - Income support for over 62,000 of the poorest households (360,000 people)
 - Access to safe water for over 2.1 million people
 - Education for 4,000 internally displaced children in DRC
 - Since the start of the crisis in the Kasais in 2016 DFID has supported displaced and affected people with household items, livelihood support, and provided support through the Humanitarian Fund for distribution of aid and protection monitoring.
 - DFID has also provided additional funding of £4.6 million for the Kasais in July of this year supporting UNICEF's Rapid Response to Movements of Population mechanism for the Kasais. This is allowing UNICEF and their partners to provide:
 - 50,000 people with items such as blankets, soap, buckets for fetching water and clothes plus access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and health care
 - 4,000 children with vital nutritional support
 - Protection and support for 7,000 children affected by violence
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[Press release: Pupils design new Flood Warden Logo](#)

Hundreds of creative youngsters across the north east have completed designs

in a competition to produce a new Flood Warden logo.

The Environment Agency's four community engagement officers— appointed to help north east communities be more flood resilient – have visited schools in the region to launch the competition.

They've received designs from more than 300 children, which will be looked at by an Environment Agency judging panel at the end of the month.

The winning design will be printed onto all Flood Warden jackets across the region.

Flood Wardens are community volunteers who support their communities during flooding incidents – including activating a community's flood action plan, ensuring the most vulnerable in their community are safe and working closely with the Environment Agency.

The winning youngster will also be presented with their own flood warden jacket as a thank you for their help.

Taryn Al-Mashgari, Community Engagement Officer who covers the Tyne and Wear area, said:

Community Engagement Officers are working closely with schools to educate children about what it means to be flood resilient and to help them understand the impact of flooding, ensuring our messages have a long-term impact for future generations.

We've talked to them about the importance of Flood Wardens and what they do and it's been fun for the children to come up with a new design.

The winning logo will be worn by wardens right across the north east so it's an important job for these youngsters!

The four new community engagement officers are funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC).

Emma Craig works in Northumberland, Taryn in Tyne and Wear, Anna Caygill in Durham and Darlington, and Sarah Pearce in Cleveland.

Their work includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

They're also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

[Press release: New fish pass opens up County Durham beck](#)

A new fish pass on a County Durham beck is giving fish access to an additional 6km of habitat.

The new rock ramp fish pass at Goodwell Ford in Brancepeth Beck is the latest in a number of fish passage improvements along the beck carried out over the past three years.

It's hoped that these improvements will increase fish numbers across the whole river catchment.

Habitat upstream of this previously impassable structure used to be almost completely devoid of fish but will now act as a nursery for juveniles as adult fish reach their natural spawning grounds.

It's the latest in a series of improvements to fish passage on the beck. Wear Rivers Trust have been working in partnership with Brancepeth Castle, Brancepeth Estate and Brancepeth Castle Golf Club on a project funded by the Environment Agency to modify structures such as culverts, weirs and bridge aprons which were proving to be obstacles to the movement of fish.

The project is already reaping rewards as it was announced last year that fish had been seen moving freely up the beck for the first time in over 150 years once a 3m high weir had been modified.



The newly constructed rock ramp at Brancepeth Beck

'Great to hear about fish returning'

Steve Hudson, Wear Rivers Trust, said:

The size and density of the structures along this beck made the project particularly challenging but we have had great support from local landowners and volunteers to enable us to deliver some great improvements.

Now most of the fish passage works are complete, it is great to hear about fish returning to previously inaccessible parts of the beck and we are very much looking forward to continuing the hard work with the help of our dedicated volunteers.

Goodwell Ford is the sixth structure to be improved following support by volunteers to identify barriers on the beck. Two remaining structures will be monitored with a view to work being carried out in the future.

[Brancepeth Beck fish pass construction](#)

Positive work

Paul Frear, Fisheries Technical Officer for the Environment Agency in the north east, added:

We've worked closely with partners to enable Wear Rivers Trust to carry out lots of positive work in this area to look at structures and issues impacting on fish migration.

This new fish pass opens up another 6km of watercourse for fish and make it far easier for them to travel upstream. The whole project is already reaping rewards. We've worked really hard together with our partners over the years to make dramatic improvements to water quality.

But there is always more we can do and projects such as this at Brancepeth is an example of the sort of work taking place across the region to enhance our rivers and streams.

Consultation outcome: Waste electrical and electronic equipment: amending the 2013 UK regulations

Updated: Summary of responses document replaced to correct some formatting issues within the document.

We want to know what you think about plans to amend the UK's 2013 regulations for waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). The changes will include:

- introducing "Open Scope" requirements, which extends the regulations to all electrical and electronic equipment unless specifically exempt
- making membership to the Producer Balancing Scheme compulsory
- changing how producer fees are allocated in the UK

We also want to know what you think of the 2013 WEEE Regulations. Have they improved the environment at a proportionate cost to business? We will use these views to inform the Post Implementation Review next year.

Press release: Welsh SMEs urged to

seize new UK government backed export finance opportunity

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will call on Welsh SMEs to capitalise on new UK Government backed finance to help gain access to global growth markets when he attends the Fast Growth 50 awards this evening (20 October 2017).

Mr Cairns will deliver a keynote speech at the 19th Fast Growth 50 gala dinner in Cardiff, where the best of Welsh entrepreneurship and the fastest growing businesses in Wales will be showcased.

The Secretary of State will highlight a new £2million UK Export Finance (UKEF) partnership with five High Street banks designed to enable SMEs in Wales to access support directly from their bank in seconds, without the need to apply separately.

The fund will help businesses like those on the Fast Growth 50 list, become part of major export contracts around the world.

Since its inception in 1999, the 551 companies that have featured on the Fast Growth 50 lists have so far created over 34,000 jobs and generated an estimated £18 billion for the Welsh economy.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The Fast Growth 50 ceremony is a key date in the Welsh business calendar. It presents a welcome opportunity to reflect over the year that has passed, and to celebrate the many successes that businesses have worked tirelessly to create.

So many of the companies that have decorated the FG50 rosters over the years are now delivering services and exporting their products right around the globe.

The UK Government wants to do more to ensure Welsh businesses take advantage of every opportunity available to them to grow and expand into new markets.

The support provided by UK Export Finance is a valuable resource for businesses throughout the whole of the UK, Wales included. Unleashing the potential of companies such as those we will celebrate this evening will be key to ensuring the Welsh economy continues to prosper.

Wales is already an exporting nation. There are currently more than 3,800 businesses in Wales that export, with a combined value of £13billion in the first quarter of 2017. Wales is also an attractive place for inward

investment, with latest figures showing that 85 foreign direct investment projects were secured in Wales, creating 2,581 new jobs and safeguarding almost 9,000 more.

The Secretary of State for Wales has recently written to over 26,000 Welsh businesses identified as potential exporters including a copy to the Wales Export Guide. The Wales specific guide sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully exporting. You can read the guide online [here](#).

Notes to editors

- For further information on the Fast Growth 50 awards, [visit their website](#)
- Read more about the UK Export Finance fund [here](#)