

Press release: PM meeting with Amir of Qatar: 24 July 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held bilateral talks earlier today with the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at Downing Street, covering mutual prosperity, defence and security cooperation, regional stability, and wider foreign policy issues.

They agreed that the trade and investment relationship between the UK and Qatar was already strong, welcoming the fact that half of Qatar's 2017 £5 billion investment commitment had already been allocated to projects in the UK. They agreed a shared desire to see investment flows both ways continuing to grow, noting the significant commercial opportunities on offer for both countries across a wide range of sectors. The Prime Minister welcomed Qatar's commitment to continue to invest not just in London but across the country.

They agreed the bilateral defence and security relationship was also strong and growing, noting the recent £6 billion Typhoon deal. They discussed how the UK could continue to support Qatar to deliver a safe and successful World Cup 2022, with the Prime Minister highlighting our particular expertise in this area. They agreed to intensify joint counter-terrorism work, recognising the importance of tackling the root causes of terrorism including the ideology that underpins it.

They discussed a range of regional security issues and the Prime Minister reiterated our strong desire to see Gulf Cooperation Council unity restored at the earliest possible opportunity, observing that Gulf security is our security.

They also discussed Russia, agreeing on the importance of continuing to approach Russia from a position of strength and unity. They noted the particular importance of the international community continuing to work together to stand firm against malign

activity, and to protect the global rules and norms.

Statement to Parliament: Home Secretary statement on immigration detention and Shaw report

With permission Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on immigration detention.

As the House knows, our immigration system is made up of many different and interconnected parts. Immigration detention is an important part of that system. It encourages compliance with our immigration rules, protects the public from the consequences of illegal migration and ensures that people who are here illegally or are foreign criminals can be removed from this country when all else fails.

Detention is not a decision that is taken lightly. And when we do make the decision to detain someone, their welfare is an absolute priority.

The Windrush revelations have shown that our immigration system as a whole is not perfect and that there are some elements that need much closer attention, and that there are lessons we must learn.

That's why I welcome the [second independent review by Stephen Shaw into immigration detention](#), commissioned by this government, which I am laying before the House today. Copies are available from the Vote Office and on GOV.UK.

I am very grateful to Mr Shaw for his comprehensive and thoughtful report. It recognises the progress this government has made in reforming immigration detention since his last report in 2016. But it also challenges us to go even further.

As the review notes, we have made significant changes to detention in the UK in recent years:

Over the past 3 years, we have reduced the number of places in removal centres by a quarter.

We detained 8% fewer people last year than the year before.

Last year, 64% of those detained left detention within a month, and 91% left within 4.

And 95% of people liable for removal at any one time are not in detention at

all, but carefully risk assessed and managed in the community instead.

In his report, Stephen Shaw commends the “energetic way” in which his 2016 recommendations have been taken forward. He notes that conditions across immigration removal centres have “improved” since his last review 3 years ago.

We now have in place the adults at risk in immigration detention policy to identify vulnerable adults more effectively and make better balanced decisions about the appropriateness of their detention.

We’ve also strengthened the checks and balances in the system. Setting up a team of special detention gatekeepers to ensure decisions to detain are reviewed. We’ve also created panels to challenge the progress on detainees’ cases and their continuing detention. We’ve taken steps to improve mental health care in immigration removal centres.

And we’ve also changed the rules on bail hearings. Anyone can apply for bail at any time during detention. And in January, we further changed the rules, so that detainees are also automatically referred for a bail hearing once they’ve been detained for 4 months.

All of this Mr Speaker is good work.

However, I do agree with Stephen Shaw that these reforms are still bedding in, and that there have been cases and processes that we haven’t always got right.

Now I want to pick up the pace of reform and commit today to four priorities going forward.

First, let me be absolutely clear that the government’s starting point, as always, is that immigration detention is only for those whom we are confident that other approaches to removal will not work.

Encouraging and supporting people to leave voluntarily is of course preferable. I have asked the Home Office to do more to explore alternatives to detention with faith groups, NGOs and within communities.

As a first step, I can announce today that we intend to pilot a scheme to manage vulnerable women in the community who would otherwise be detained at Yarl’s Wood.

My officials have been working with the UNHCR to develop this pilot which will mean that rather than receiving support and care in an immigration removal centre the women will get a programme of support and care in the community instead.

Second, Mr Speaker, the Shaw Review recommends how this government can improve the support available for vulnerable detainees. Mr Shaw describes the adults at risk policy as “work in progress”. We will continue that progress, ensuring that the most vulnerable and the complex cases get the attention they need.

We will look again at how we can improve the consideration of Rule 35 reports on possible cases of torture, while avoiding abuse of these processes. And we will pilot an additional bail referral at the 2-month point. Halving the time in detention before a first bail referral.

We will also look at staff training and support to make sure that people working in our immigration system are well equipped to work with vulnerable detainees. And we will increase the number of Home Office staff in immigration removal centres.

Third, in his report, Stephen Shaw also rightly focuses on the need for greater transparency around immigration detention. I will publish more data on immigration detention. And, today I have commissioned the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to report each year on whether and how the Adults at Risk policy is making a difference.

Fourth and finally, I also want to see a new drive on dignity in detention.

I want to see an improvement to the basic provision available to detainees. The practice in some immigration removal centres of having three detainees in rooms designed for two will stop immediately.

I have also commissioned an urgent action plan for modernising toilet facilities. We will also pilot the use of Skype so that detainees can contact their families overseas.

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the arguments made on time limits for immigration detention. However, as Mr Shaw's review finds, the debate on this issue currently rests more on slogans than on evidence. That's why I have asked my officials to review how time limits work in other countries. How they relate to any other protections within their detention systems. So that we can all have a better informed debate. And ensure our detention policy is based on what works to tackle illegal migration, but is also one that is humane for those who are detained.

Once this review is complete, I will further consider the issue of time limits on immigration detention.

Mr Speaker, the Shaw Review confirms that we are on the right track with our reforms to immigration detention and that we should maintain a steady course. But Stephen Shaw also identifies areas where we could and should do better.

My goal is to ensure that our immigration system, including our approach to immigration detention, is fair and is humane. This is rightly what the public rightly expects. They want rules which are firmly enforced. But in a way which treats people with the dignity that they deserve.

The changes I have announced today will help make sure this is the case. I commend this statement to the House.

Press release: Global Disability Summit sparks 170 commitments to tackle stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities

- The Global Disability Summit has resulted in 170 ambitious commitments from all over the world to take action on stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities
- The commitments follow the call to “move from rhetoric to action” from the International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, in the build up to the Summit
- 301 organisations and governments have signed the Charter for Change – an action plan to implement the UN International Convention on Disability

The UK Government’s first ever Global Disability Summit has yielded ambitious commitments from a host of governments and other organisations to tackle discrimination and stigma against people with disabilities.

This comes after Penny Mordaunt, International Development Secretary, called on other governments and donors before the summit to follow the UK’s lead and “stand alongside people with disabilities in their country, commit to ending stigma, and fully value the contribution they can make to the success of their nations”.

Among the most significant pledges made were commitments to pass transformative new laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities, as well as assurances to help those affected by humanitarian crises. There were also commitments to help people with disabilities to access vital technology and work with the private sector around the world to reduce their prices.

- Nine national governments have committed to passing or formulating new or revised laws to give people with disabilities greater rights in the countries in which they live
- 18 governments and other organisations have committed to new action plans on disability inclusion
- 33 governments and other organisations have pledged to specifically support more people with disabilities affected by humanitarian crises – this includes the Australian government who will give \$17m to support disability inclusive action in response to the Syria crisis
- Nine organisations and governments, including USAID, The World Health Organisation and UNICEF, have, along with the UK, joined the Global

Partnership on assistive technology, aimed at transforming access to, and the affordability of, life changing devices and basic technology, like wheelchairs and glasses

Seven UN agencies attended the Summit, and they committed to change the way they include people with disabilities into their work.

For example:

- UNICEF will help an additional 30 million children with disabilities gain a high quality education by 2030 through programmes in more than 140 countries; and 18 governments have committed to improve the way children with disabilities learn and invest in teacher training
- by 2021, 80% of UN Women's country programmes will include a focus on women and girls with disabilities
- this year, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women will spend \$3m on 9 programmes which will reach 8,000 women and girls

And crucially, nine African governments have committed to creating safety nets to ensure that people with disabilities are not forgotten about in their societies. 19 governments, businesses and other organisations have also pledged to develop the skills of people with disabilities and help them access decent work.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

It is fantastic to see such ambitious commitments made from countries and organisations from around the world at today's Global Disability Summit.

But, if we are going to help people with disabilities to fulfil their true potential, today cannot just be about words – it has to be about action.

That's why we need to hold ourselves and our partners to account and make sure these commitments produce genuinely transformative results for people with disabilities worldwide.

Notes to editors

You can see a [full list of the commitments made at the Summit here](#).

For images and videos of the stories of people with disabilities around the world [go to this link](#). If used, please credit DFID.

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News story: New commitments to tackling vulnerability in immigration detention announced

The announcement comes in response to Stephen Shaw's second review of the government's approach to vulnerable people in immigration detention which looks at progress the government has made since his first report in 2016.

The measures announced include commitments to work with charities, faith groups, communities and other stakeholders to develop alternatives to detention, strengthening support for vulnerable detainees and increasing transparency around immigration detention.

In addition, the reforms will improve facilities in immigration removal centres. These include an immediate stop to the practice of three detainees occupying rooms originally designed for 2, piloting the use of Skype, and reviewing the training and support for staff in immigration removal centres so that they can work with detainees more closely.

The Home Secretary also announced that he would review how time limited detention works in other countries, to build an evidence base to better inform the debate in the UK. And while currently detainees have an automatic bail hearing every 4 months, the government will pilot an additional bail referral after 2 months.

Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Detention is an important part of the immigration system – but it must be fair, dignified and protect the most vulnerable.

We have made significant improvements to our approach in recent years, but it is clear we can go further.

Under these reforms, we will work with our partners to develop alternatives to detention. We will also improve support for the most vulnerable, introduce a new drive on dignity in detention and be more transparent.

My ultimate goal is to ensure that our immigration system –

including our approach to detention – is effective and humane.

The Home Office has already started working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to develop new pilot schemes, including an initial one to allow vulnerable women to be managed in the community, where they would otherwise be liable for detention.

Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UK Representative said:

UNHCR appreciates the increased efforts to review detention use in the UK, including the work of Stephen Shaw on the treatment of vulnerable detainees.

We welcome the recent reduction in the use of immigration detention, and encourage the Government to continue this trend. Community-based, case management alternatives provide an effective means of resolving immigration and asylum cases without detention.

UNHCR is grateful for the Home Office's commitment to introducing alternatives to detention and will seek to intensify collaboration in this area. This work should help further reduce the use of detention, and provide better support and outcomes for those stuck in the immigration system.

To increase support for vulnerable detainees, the Home Office will amend the Adults at Risk policy so it differentiates more strongly between cases to make sure those with the most complex needs receive the right attention and care.

Finally, the Home Secretary has committed to publish more data on the immigration system. Alongside this, he is commissioning a new annual report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to assess progress on the adults at risk policy.

[Press release: Government confirms detail on new Bill that will put Withdrawal Agreement into law](#)

Less than two weeks after the Government confirmed its comprehensive plans for the UK's future relationship with the EU, it has published a further White Paper explaining how the UK's Withdrawal Agreement will be put into law.

The EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill – formerly known as the Withdrawal Agreement and Implementation Bill – will legislate for the major elements of the Withdrawal Agreement we reach with the EU, including issues such as the agreement on citizens’ rights, the financial settlement and the details of a time-limited implementation period.

The precise details of the Bill will be subject to the ongoing negotiations with the EU but today’s White Paper provides yet more legal certainty as we prepare to leave the EU in March next year.

It confirms that the Bill will:

- be the primary means by which the rights of EU citizens will be implemented and protected in UK law;
- amend some parts of the EU (Withdrawal) Act to ensure that our statute book functions correctly during the time-limited implementation period; and
- create a financial authority to manage the specific payments to be made under the financial settlement, with appropriate Parliamentary oversight.

With UK and EU negotiators continuing to work through outstanding parts of the Withdrawal Agreement, including on Northern Ireland and other separation issues, more detail on how they will be legislated for will be provided in due course.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Dominic Raab said:

“This White Paper on the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill explains the pragmatic approach we are taking to legislating for our Withdrawal Agreement, including the time-limited implementation period that we agreed with the EU in March.

“It also provides further certainty at home and in the negotiations that the UK is getting on with the job of delivering a smooth and orderly Brexit while giving Parliamentarians an opportunity to consider the detail of the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill before it is introduced.

“We look forward to working with MPs and peers on this crucial piece of legislation which will give effect to our exit Treaty in law.”

The Bill was announced in November last year, but this is the first time that the Government has presented detail on how key parts of the Withdrawal Agreement will be made reality in UK law.

It follows the EU (Withdrawal) Act which received Royal Assent on 26 June 2018 and will ensure that our statute book functions when we leave,

regardless of the outcome of the negotiations.