

Press release: UK Public Health Rapid Support Team deploys to Nigeria

The UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST), a joint run effort of Public Health England and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, is deploying to Nigeria to help control an outbreak of Lassa fever.

Nigeria is currently experiencing an unusually severe epidemic of Lassa fever – a viral haemorrhagic illness that is normally present in the country but on a lower scale. The outbreak is most prevalent in the southern Nigerian states of Edo, Ondo and Ebonyi.

Given the size of the current outbreak and the risk of further spread locally, the government of Nigeria has requested support from the UK-PHRST team.

The UK-PHRST team deployment includes an expert in patient management, 2 epidemiologists (experts in tracking outbreaks) and a logistician.

The UK-PHRST will provide technical and analytical support for the public health response to control this outbreak, and will also assist with important research on Lassa fever that can provide insight for controlling the disease in the future.

The team will be working alongside the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and other experts in outbreak control to support the Nigerian government's response.

Professor Daniel Bausch, Director of the UK PHRST said:

The Lassa fever situation in Nigeria has been worsening and now requires an escalated level of response in order to help the Nigerian government slow transmission and save lives.

We are proud to be assisting the government of Nigeria by offering specialist support that will benefit the country both in the immediate and long term.

Public Health Minister Steve Brine MP, said:

Viruses like Lassa fever do not respect borders – and it is only right that we share our expertise with countries facing serious outbreaks around the world.

Our invaluable Rapid Support Team will provide help on the ground in Nigeria to manage the spread of the virus, and grow the country's ability to protect itself from other dangerous diseases.

Humans usually become infected with Lassa virus from exposure to urine or faeces of infected rodents that are unique to Africa. The virus may also be spread between humans through direct contact with the blood, urine, faeces, or other bodily secretions of an infected person, though this tends to be less common. Typical symptoms include fever, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain and diarrhoea, with bleeding and shock in severe cases. The public health risk to the UK is low.

The UK PHRST is funded by the UK government. It continually monitors infectious diseases and other hazards globally, identifying situations where the deployment of specialist expertise could prevent these threats from turning into a global outbreak. It also conducts outbreak-related research and focuses on building in-country capacity to prevent outbreaks with overseas partners.

Background

For latest case numbers of Lassa Fever in Nigeria, please refer to the WHO: <http://www.ncdc.gov.ng/reports/weekly>.

UK-PHRST

UK-PHRST consists of public health experts, scientists, academics and clinicians ready to respond to urgent requests from countries around the world within 48 hours to support them in preventing local disease outbreaks from becoming global epidemics.

Informed by surveillance data, the UK-PHRST deploys on behalf of UK government in response to requests from low- and middle-income countries, as well as with the WHO and the Global Outbreak and Response Network (GOARN).

The UK PHRST has previously deployed members to Ethiopia (outbreak of Acute Watery Diarrhoea), Nigeria (Meningitis outbreak), Sierra Leone (cholera risk), Madagascar (plague outbreak) and Bangladesh (Diphtheria outbreak).

The core team consists of:

- epidemiologists (experts in tracking and understanding disease transmission)
- microbiologists (diagnosing the cause of an outbreak)
- clinical researchers (developing the best patient management practices)
- social scientists (community engagement during outbreaks)
- data scientists (managing data and modelling outbreak trajectories)
- infection prevention and control experts (advising on preventing transmission)
- logisticians

The UK-PHRST consortium of research institutions includes the University of Oxford and King's College London as academic partners.

Public Health England

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

The [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#) is a world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health, with more than 4,000 students and 1,000 staff working in over 100 countries. The school is one of the highest-rated research institutions in the UK, is among the world's leading schools in public and global health, and was named University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards 2016. Our mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice.

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[Press release: Over £2 million paid to charity rebuilt by Commission inquiry](#)

Over £2.1 million has been recovered to a charitable trust after a Commission inquiry exposed and addressed misconduct and mismanagement in its administration.

The London based grant-making charity was established to further general charitable purposes. Despite lending £2 million the charity was not able to

evidence adequate attempts to protect the charity's assets or recover the loan. The Commission opened a statutory inquiry in May 2015 by which point the total due to the charity had risen to £2,236,401 as a result of interest accrued.

The Commission first engaged with The Reb Moische Foundation in 2014 regarding a loan it made to a private commercial company, Gladstar Ltd, which was connected to one of the trustees. The inquiry found that poor decision-making regarding the loan had placed the charity's funds at serious risk. The charity took no external investment advice before entering into the loan, and as Gladstar Ltd was based in Gibraltar, recovery of the funds would be challenging.

The Commission's inquiry also identified concerns about unmanaged conflicts of interest. One of the charity's trustees was secretary of the company at the time the loan was made, and subsequently became a Director. As a result of the Commission's intervention, the surviving trustee agreed to transfer the proceeds of the sale of six properties owned by Gladstar Ltd to the charity which resulted in £2,137,368.50 being vested in the bank account of the Official Custodian for Charities (the OCC).

The surviving trustee resigned from the charity and agreed not to take on any other charity trusteeships. Two new trustees were appointed by the settlor, and have opened a new bank account and adopted policies for grant making, investment and conflicts of interest. The Commission has since directed the OCC to transfer the recovered funds to the charity which, including interest, totalled £2,137,736.39. This happened on 7 October 2017.

The inquiry closed on 27 February with the publication of this report, however the Commission will continue to monitor the new trustees' application of the new policies and charitable funds.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

Failings of governance and financial management unfortunately put this charity's assets on the line. The good news is that, following our intervention, over £2 million can now be put towards important charitable causes.

This inquiry demonstrates that if not properly managed, conflicts of interest can seriously hamper trustees from acting in the best interests of their charity.

The Commission's full report of its inquiry is available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.

2. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](#).

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[News story: The Long View – a lifetime of work in optronics is recognised in annual award](#)

Richard Hollins Senior Fellow, Cyber & Information Systems Department at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to optronics.

At a special award ceremony earlier this month, Dr Hollins was presented with the lifetime achievement award from OPTRO – the international symposium on optronics for defence and security – which recognises a significant contribution in the field of optronics.

Optronics covers all the technologies that use light for information and processing – it includes lasers, detectors, cameras, sensors, optical communications.

Richard brought new insights to the search for protection measures against lasers of any wavelength – a requirement which becomes ever more important as the variety of available laser wavelengths continues to increase. Some of his work has contributed to the revision of international laser safety standards, which control the use of lasers in laboratories around the world.

It was the senior fellow's work in this and other areas which have contributed to innovation in optronics over several decades. Optronics provides what the eye can't see; imagery at a longer range than the eye can master, thermal images, infrared, radar, even camera images from low level light like star light – all vital for gathering information about an area or accurately identifying a target.

Richard said:

I'm very pleased to have the recognition of my career – I certainly didn't expect to get it – I expect I'll be retiring soon and I don't know how many more chances I'd have for an award like that. I've been fortunate to work with many colleagues at Dstl, in industry and academia, and in foreign government organisations, and I'm grateful for all their contributions to the work.

Things have changed a huge amount – in the days when I started, lasers were inefficient, we were trying to develop them into things that we could use, but they've needed to change considerably to the efficient compact devices we know today. I used to have to build 50,000 volt power supplies and today's devices use 10 volts or less.

Lasers have found their way into many much smaller devices. Cameras themselves have also become much better and smaller – I have recollections of when you saw a TV camera or a thermal imager, it was a big thing with scanning optics that had to be wheeled around, and today all that complexity has been replaced by a small hand-held camera, and costs have come down.

The future of optronics continues to evolve – as a communications channel, optics is starting to offer secure directional communications with much higher bandwidth to open up new possibilities. It's always been difficult communicating with submarines as most electromagnetic wavelengths don't go through sea water – but lasers are now sufficiently good that progress is being made in this direction.

Richard is still actively involved in physics at Dstl.

He said:

I don't get into the lab much these days but I still inspire people as a mentor and help to work out how we should address new challenges. I take a lot of interest from understanding new scientific challenges through simple calculations. I produce simple theoretical models that are written on a few pieces of paper, and which relate the inputs to the outputs via the underpinning physics – and to me that's a really powerful way of understanding. More complex computer-based models can be useful too, but everybody should try my simple approach first.

Dstl provides opportunities for a career with plenty of challenge: providing the science and technology required for our security and defence. We can't do all the work internally, but we select and work with the best partners. Our own work must be of the highest standard in order to understand the problem, to define the requirement and identify solutions, to manage the work as it proceeds, and to evaluate the products. My own career has enabled me to find ways to harness new developments in electro-optic

technology to meet new military challenges.
My award demonstrates the respect with which Dstl science is viewed within the scientific community.

Speech: The World Order Today: Is it fit for purpose?

When I first met my husband, in 2002, I was doing my Masters in international relations at the London School of Economics. He came to my housewarming party, and his chat up line, his opening gambit, was about Francis Fukuyama and the end of history: had liberal democracy really won the battle of ideology? To be honest I didn't know, I thought it quite odd as a chat up line – but I liked him anyway.

And when I think back to that time, there was a real sense of optimism about the world order. It was after the UK's successful intervention in Sierra Leone, after NATO's intervention in Kosovo – and before the misadventure in Iraq. Humanitarian interventionism was riding high; the Responsibility to Protect principle was gaining traction.

Yes – 9/11 had been a shock, a reminder of the threat posed by non-state actors – but there seemed to be a broad consensus amongst state actors on the direction of travel. And that was:

- greater democratisation,
- increasing globalisation, and
- a sense of universal values and rights that would and could be protected – even across borders.

Today that optimism has gone. The world feels more insecure and less stable and we are all – rightly – concerned: about resurgent nationalism, about whether “America First” signals a US retreat from the liberal world order; China's ambitions in the South China Sea, Russia's invasion of Crimea, hostile states using cyber to interfere in other countries' democracies. Terrorism, nuclear war, water security. Our collective failure to stop the devastating conflict in Syria. The worst migration crisis since the second world war; five famine alerts.

All suggest that the world order is not equipped to deal with the problems of the modern age.

But to assess whether that is really the case, we need to know what we mean by the world order.

I take it to comprise of three things. First, the architecture of the

international system. That is, international organisations with truly global representation: the UN, the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank; and also quasi-international organisations with sub-global representation: NATO, the EU, the Commonwealth, APEC; and so on.

Second, the laws, and rules that govern international affairs, sometimes, but not always, enforced by international courts like the ICJ, the ICC, the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

And third, but less easily defined, the shared values that underpin that international architecture and international law. They are, I suggest:

- A shared commitment to reward cooperation and negotiation and to punish aggression and hostility;
- A shared belief that human life should be protected and human dignity respected;
- a recognition that our mutual prosperity depends on our mutual engagement and mutual trade;
- AND a recognition that we live on a shared planet with finite, common resources that must be managed for the benefit of all.

So: architecture, law, values. It is a system which emerged from the aftermath of the Second World War and the horror of genocide. It is designed to prevent a third global war, and to reduce bloodshed from international conflicts. But it is also directed at raising living standards and enhancing life chances globally.

On those most basic indicators, it has been a resounding success.

There are proportionately fewer violent deaths today than there have ever been in history.

Levels of education are steadily increasing.

More and more countries are becoming democratic, and global extreme poverty tumbled from 44% in 1981, to less than 10% in 2015. Every day, 137,000 people come out of extreme poverty. No one tweets that, but it's an amazing statistic.

And that is the success of the world order: international architecture; international law; and shared values all contrive to prevent a Hobbesian state of nature, and instead encourage dialogue and co-operation for the better.

But that is – in large part – the success of the 20th century. What about the 21st?

In some respects, the challenges for the World Order in 2018 are the same as those in the 20th century:

- Hostile and belligerent states such as DPRK remain a threat to peace and stability.
- And the Rohingya crisis shows us how hard it is to respond, internationally, to sudden and systematic ethnic cleansing.

But there are also very real differences between the post-war world, and the world today.

First, there are new and emerging threats to the world order: from non-state actors like ISIS; from climate change; water scarcity; mass migration; cyber.

Secondly, the global balance of power is shifting. We are moving from a unipolar to a multipolar world: the singular dominance of the United States is diminishing; Russia is back as an assertive presence in what it considers its neighbourhood, including the Middle East; and China is gaining global reach in terms of economic and political influence, and is aiming at vastly increased military capability.

And thirdly, ideas that we thought were shared and settled are once again up for grabs. For instance, resurgent nationalism and populism challenge the assumption that globalisation and free trade, and the multilateral institutions that support them are necessarily good: the Brexit vote and the vote for President Trump had multiple roots. But they were as much votes for the nation state as they were against anything else.

And there are certainly signs to suggest that the World Order is no longer functioning as it should.

– In the UN, Russia's cynical use of the veto on Syria has undermined the most basic task of the UN system: the provision of humanitarian aid, and the investigation of the use of chemical weapons.

– And on global trade, the Doha round beyond stalled; and the US has withdrawn from TPP and wants to renegotiate NAFTA.

So is the world order broken?

We need to be careful not to add 2 and 2 to get 5. Just as Fukuyama was wrong to believe in a global narrative which irresistibly led to liberal democracy, it is also wrong to tell a story of decline or collapse of the world order today.

In addition to the peace and prosperity gains of the 20th century, there have been real, tangible successes of international co-operation of late.

In the security field, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran has made the world a safer place; and co-operation on aviation security since 9/11 has denied terrorists the grand spectacle they crave.

On climate change, the Paris Agreement has shown that the world's nations can come together to tackle its most pressing challenge. Importantly, the US withdrawal did not spell the collapse of the agreement; if anything it emboldened others to meet their commitments and show leadership.

So the world order is clearly not broken. But if it is to survive in an era of resurgent nationalism, and a shift in global power, it needs three things: reform of its architecture; an update to its law and rules; and a reinvigoration of the values that underpin it.

First, reform the architecture. The international architecture is

anachronistic – it reflects mid 20th century power structures, rather than the reality of the world today. So:

(1) the UN needs reform. The Security Council should be expanded – the UK supports permanent seats for Germany, Brazil, India and Japan, as well as permanent representation for Africa. And the existing P5 must agree to exercise veto restraint if the integrity of the UN system is to survive..

(2) NATO needs to reform. NATO members need to respond to President Trump's challenge by meeting the 2% spending target of the Defence Investment Pledge. Decades of unprecedented peace in Europe is testament to NATO's success; but it has also given rise to a complacency that the current security situation does not warrant.

(3) The international system of globalised free trade must also reform, from the WTO down. Trade is a global good – and not just in economic terms; it also enhances bilateral relations and ensures a level of cooperation and interdependence that reduces the risk of conflict. But we must not ignore the rise in populist parties across the Western world, and elections which have broken the traditional centrist consensus. Many feel uncomfortable with the pace of change, they feel left behind. There is a perception that free trade, open borders, and multilateralism work for the elite but no-one else. So: free trade agreements of the future must champion progressive principles; ensure adequate worker and environmental protections; and reflect the continuing relevance and needs of the nation state.

Other organisations also need to adapt and evolve. We need to reinvigorate the Commonwealth. And although the UK is leaving, I would argue that the EU, too, needs to reform. It needs to think carefully, reflecting on the Brexit vote, about how much more pooling of sovereignty its members and citizens will accept.

Moving now to international law, we must ensure that it keeps pace with change in international affairs. Two areas in particular are in need of clearer international law:

- a. Cyber. The UK wants to see the full application of existing international law – including the UN Charter – to cyberspace;
- b. The environment. The impacts of climate change, marine pollution and other environmental hazards all require urgent and collective action: and international law has a key role to play.

And, finally, our shared values.

The principles of that we hold dear -democratisation, multilateralism, and human rights – are under threat in the global system: in the west and elsewhere.

So we need to increase our efforts to make the case for the norms and values which underpin the international order. We should never assume consent.

First, in the face of growing protectionism, we need to make the case for International Trade, emphasising that our mutual prosperity depends on it –

while taking seriously the needs and concerns of those who feel left behind.

Secondly, we need to reemphasize our belief in human dignity and the importance of protecting our shared resources. The global goods as we see them – human rights, tackling climate change, protecting the taonga of our wildlife and natural resources, gender rights, tackling poverty, tackling modern slavery – are not just good things to do in an altruistic, fluffy kind of way: they make sense in terms of the economics, and national self-interest of a country. If you don't educate and empower women then – as Obama once said- you are leaving half your team on the bench. If we don't tackle climate change now, it will cost us far more in life and treasure to respond to it later down the track.

And finally, we need to reinvigorate a belief in multilateralism. International terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, cyber attacks all require global multilateral solutions. But those solutions will only be achieved if we can base them on shared values: and if we can demonstrate the benefits of such co-operation to our citizens.

To conclude: the international order has delivered peace and prosperity beyond the imaginings of my grandparents. But if it is to endure, it must adapt and evolve. And it is for countries like the UK and New Zealand – close friends with shared values, and a shared stake in the international system – to work together to make the case: for reform of the architecture, an updating of the law, and a reinvigoration of the values underpinning the world order.

Thank you.

Press release: PM welcomes Western Balkans Heads of Government to London

At a reception also attended by the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Minister for Europe and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster the Prime Minister briefed the visiting leaders on the UK's objectives for the upcoming Summit. She also sought their views on achieving our shared goals for the region.

Speaking at the reception the Prime Minister said:

Our relationship endures because all of us in this room share the same vision for the future of the Western Balkans. We want a peaceful, prosperous and democratic region – one anchored to European values and systems and contributing to European security.

The countries of the Western Balkans have tremendous potential. And it's the people here in this room tonight who have a crucial role in harnessing that potential. By putting in place the governance, rule of law and institutions to support prosperity and by building relations between your countries that shape a promising future for all.

The UK will support you in that. Your challenges are our challenges. European security, serious and organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism and extremism; these are all threats that go beyond borders. So I want to deepen further our security partnership to address these shared threats.

At the Summit we will take forward a bold agenda. One that promotes economic stability and fosters co-operation on the security and political challenges that the region continues to face.

We will continue the good work begun by previous Summits, taking forward initiatives countering corruption, serious and organised crime, and other issues that deter investment and economic growth.

I look forward to working with you to shape a positive, productive, prosperous future for the Western Balkans, for the UK and the whole of Europe.

Heads of Government from the region who attended included:

- Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania
- Denis Zvizdic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ramush Haradinaj, Prime Minister of Kosovo
- Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of Macedonia
- Dusko Markovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro
- Ana Brnabic, Prime Minister of Serbia