

Calling on Russia to return full control of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner: UK statement at UN Security Council

Thank you Mr President and thank you to Under-Secretary-General Di Carlo for this briefing.

The United Kingdom remains gravely concerned about the implications for nuclear safety, security and safeguards of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's invasion has disrupted the operation of nuclear facilities across Ukraine, posed a grave threat to operational safety, and prevented Ukrainian authorities from carrying out routine safeguards tasks.

Instead of calling yet another meeting on the crisis at Zaporizhzhia, Russia could resolve it immediately by withdrawing its forces from the plant, and all of Ukraine, and ceasing its senseless aggression. As well as causing untold suffering to the Ukrainian people, the simple fact is that Russia's invasion – and its efforts to seize by force Ukraine's nuclear plants – has jeopardised the safety of millions in the region who would be affected by a nuclear incident in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, important nuclear safety and safeguards activities at the site are needed more than ever. We welcome progress towards an IAEA technical visit. Any visit should take place in a manner that respects Ukraine's sovereignty over its territory. The Secretary General has been clear that the UN can facilitate a visit from the Ukrainian side, and we welcome his and the UN's engagement. We also welcome the efforts of the Ukrainian administration, and of IAEA staff to plan and support a mission, and call upon Russia to provide appropriate security guarantees.

We commend the heroic efforts of Ukrainian staff operating the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, despite the great pressure they are under. They must be allowed to carry out their duties without threats or further disruption. Cutting off a major supply of electricity to the people of Ukraine would cause further immense suffering. As USG Di Carlo said today, the electricity at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant belongs to Ukraine.

Russia's war is reckless and irresponsible. A nuclear disaster should be unthinkable, and no member of the United Nations – let alone a permanent member of this Council – should bring about that threat by seeking to take another country's nuclear facilities by force. Russia's actions are contrary to the principles of the Convention of Nuclear Safety and other international

nuclear safety conventions. So we call once more upon Russia to return full control of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner to ensure their safe and secure operation.

British Ambassador visits Huehuetenango and Quiche

In Huehuetenango, Ambassador Whittingham met with the Governor, Jose Juan De León, and the Major of Huehuetenango, Gustavo Cano, to address the economic portfolio in the Department. They discussed challenges and possible opportunities offered in services, tourism and other areas for UK companies wishing to invest in this region in the future.

Ambassador Whittingham invited local leaders to continue seizing the opportunities of the UK-Central American Association Agreement, which is now under its second year of implementation and has helped to increase Guatemalan exports to the UK. He also stressed the importance of continue improving transparency and rule of law to create a proper environment for investors to come.

While in Huehuetenango, the Ambassador also visited the local offices of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which has the objective of expanding attention to the population requesting refugee status, refugees, in transit, host communities and Guatemalan people in vulnerable situations.

In Quiche, the Ambassador met with the association of local journalists "Prensa Comunitaria", to highlight the UK's commitment to promoting media freedom and the importance of community and investigative journalism in real time from the different regions of the country. The Ambassador also held a meeting with the Governor of Quiche, Ervin Macz Hó.

While in Quiche, the Ambassador visited Bosques de Lemoa Reserve, a forest reserve in Quiche, which has approximately 30,000 trees and was one of the four initiatives recognised by the British Embassy and Prensa Libre in 2021 for its positive impact on environmental protection. Tackling climate change remain a global top UK priority and the Embassy wants to continue working with Guatemalan partners on this issue.

Ambassador Whittingham held meetings with indigenous leaders from both departments to understand more about the challenges and opportunities they seek to promote their participation, development and inclusion and how the British Embassy can support these efforts. The continuous coordination between the local government and the indigenous authorities is fundamental for the development of the communities and the prosperity of this region.

Platinum Jubilee Rug unveiled at Ulster Carpets

Dundonald Primary School pupil Emily McMullan (11), was announced as the winner of the competition by Minister of State Conor Burns in June, and met with Ulster Carpets designers to learn how her design was being turned into a special gift for Her Majesty the Queen.

Emily's design, featuring some of Northern Ireland's most iconic landmarks such as Samson and Goliath in Belfast and the North Coast's Giant's Causeway, was woven into a rug by Ulster Carpets' expert team, and unveiled by Emily and Minister of State Conor Burns at the manufacturing company's Portadown headquarters on Tuesday 23 August.

Emily's postcard to the Queen was chosen from over 2000 colourful and creative entries, with primary schools across Northern Ireland offered the opportunity to take part in a unique design competition as part of this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The specially designed Jubilee rug will be delivered to Her Majesty the Queen as a gift from the children of Northern Ireland in her Jubilee year and Emily will also receive her own copy of the rug as a lasting memory of the important role that she has played in helping Her Majesty celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

Speaking about seeing the rug, competition winner Emily McMullan said:

"It's amazing to see all of the places that remind me of home being made into a gift for Her Majesty the Queen. I still can't believe that something I designed in art class is now being delivered to the Queen!

"It has been great learning from the designers at Ulster Carpets about how they turn art into rugs and carpets. It is something that I will never forget and I think I would like to be a designer in the future."

Speaking after the visit, Minister of State Conor Burns said:

'It seems like only a few weeks ago when I was on the phone to Nick from a primary school in Bournemouth. I told him I'd had an idea and asked him to tell me honestly if it was crazy. Thankfully Nick and his team at Ulster Carpets are as open minded as they are creative. Nick said let's do it. So the Platinum Jubilee Rug Competition was conceived.

"Little did I imagine then that it would be embraced so wholeheartedly by Northern Ireland's young people. Yet the entries flooded in – over 2000 from schools of every kind in every county. Emily, her fellow finalists and indeed

every child who entered can be incredibly proud of their designs.

“They have captured the natural and built wonder of this amazing place. Today I have seen the finished product and it is beyond my wildest dreams. We asked the young people to design a rug on the theme ‘a postcard from Northern Ireland’. What they did and Ulster carpets have produced is literally a gift fit for the Queen.

“I am bursting with pride in what these wonderful young people – the future of Northern Ireland – have done and I thank them sincerely.”

Group Managing Director of Ulster Carpets Nick Coburn said:

“It has been a great privilege to be involved in the NIO’s Platinum Jubilee design competition and to have the honour of manufacturing a rug for Her Majesty the Queen, particularly in the same year as we received the Royal Warrant.

“The designs created by schoolchildren from across Northern Ireland demonstrate the immense artistic talent that we have in our country. As we look to the future, it is reassuring to know that Ulster Carpets can transform this potential into the carpet designers of the future.”

[Latest win for West Cumbrian firms with Sellafield partnership](#)

The North West Energy Coast Alliance was formed as a collaborative partnership between two Workington-based SMEs, McMenon Engineering Services and TIS Cumbria. Now the partnership has been successfully appointed to deliver fabricated and manufactured equipment packages for two major projects at Sellafield.

Duncan Elliott, head of the programme and project partners, said:

It’s fantastic to see two local SMEs collaborate, and I’d like to congratulate everyone involved in winning these two contracts on two flagship projects. The programme and project partners approach is all about collaboration, innovation, transformation and harnessing opportunities, and that’s exactly what we’re seeing with the partnership between McMenon Engineering Services and TIS Cumbria.

The contract awards follow the North West Energy Coast Alliance being announced as a long-term delivery partner back in January this year.

The programme and project partners approach allows the partnership between Sellafield Ltd, KBR, Jacobs, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure and Doosan to appoint key delivery partners and secure long-term goods and services agreements with suppliers and SMEs to support projects across the programme's 20-year pipeline.

The approach encourages long-term collaboration throughout the supply chain, enhanced project delivery outcomes, and paves the way for greater economic and social impact in the West Cumbria region.

Luke Richardson, programme and project partners head of social impact, added:

The combined businesses of McMenon and TIS presents a joint alliance able to deliver the works we need on site but equally brings together two responsible employers who can deliver further impacts because of these latest contract wins.

The alliance will provide process cabinets for the SIXEP Continuity Plant with a total contract value of £3.5 million. This will include the fabrication, assembly, testing and supply of wash and process cabinets to be used in the site's new-build facility that will ensure the existing Site Ion Exchange Effluent Plant facility, which has been running since 1985, can continue its vital work for decades to come.

Another contract is for 191 fabrications for the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant with a contract value of £813,939. This includes a manufacturing package for specialist trolleys, handling equipment, personnel access and machine operating and maintenance tooling.

McMenon chief executive officer, Anand Puthran, said:

We are delighted that McMenon, as part of North West Energy Coast Alliance, along with TIS Cumbria, has been awarded the F16 cabinet contract. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our engineering and manufacturing expertise and show what two SMEs, on the west coast of Cumbria, can achieve through collaborative working. Winning the 191 small fabrication contract for SRP is another ringing endorsement for the skills and quality of both companies.

The alliance's aim was always to help establish a long-term and sustainable legacy for the West Cumbrian economy through the provision of opportunities, skills, engagement and employment. And this contract win is a huge boost to our aims. We are all excited to get started. Our thanks go to Programme and Project Partners for the endorsement, and we look forward to developing our relationship with Sellafield Ltd moving forward.

TIS Cumbria managing director, Tony O'Pray, added:

We would like to thank the Programme and Project Partners for their confidence in awarding these contracts to the alliance. Both projects will be manufactured within West Cumbria using our own local skilled engineers, works teams and apprentices.

It is expected that these projects will generate new positions of employment in both companies from within our local community, in addition to generating much needed new skills. Our committed and dedicated team of engineers have achieved a milestone which many aspire to, showing that true collaboration between two SMEs can succeed in a very competitive world against much larger companies in the UK. We look forward to the manufacture, test and delivery of these projects and others to the Programme and Projects Partners team at Sellafield over the future months.

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- showcase the value of science and engineering across government

- provide everyone in government with access to science and engineering expertise
- upskill all of government on introductory science and engineering techniques

Our products

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