

# RAF flights to take UK aid-funded supplies to Africa to tackle coronavirus

News story

The first of a series of Royal Air Force flights taking medical supplies to Africa to help fight the coronavirus pandemic departed today (Saturday, June 27).



A Royal Air Force C-17 Globemaster flies overhead

The RAF C-17 took off from RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire on a journey funded by the Department For International Development. The transport aircraft was carrying a field hospital, which will be used as a backup facility for frontline aid workers in the region. Aid workers from around the world are playing a crucial role in West Africa working to improve health systems, prevent the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

It comes after the UK responded to a request by the United Nations (UN) to NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre. The UN is leading global logistics efforts to make sure medical supplies reach those who need them most during the pandemic.

With commercial flights disrupted and the cost of cargo flights having escalated, the UK's support is crucial.

The UK-aid funded field hospital has been organised by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and will have the capacity to care for up to 92 people.

The UK has previously announced £15 million of support to the WFP to support its coronavirus response.

**International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:**

This field hospital will play an important role in the global battle against coronavirus.

Aid workers are on the frontline of the coronavirus response, and it is critical they are protected so they can continue their life-saving work.

This is the best of British – the UK military and UK aid – working together to solve a global problem for the benefit of all of us. No one is safe until we are all safe.

The field hospital, which weighs approximately 130 tonnes, the equivalent of seven buses, will be transported to Accra in up to five flights. It will then be built to support the coronavirus response where the need is greatest.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

The RAF and NATO are always here to help our Allies, friends and those in need around the world. I'm proud that while dealing with coronavirus we are able to provide such support to Ghana and other countries.

**The World Food Programme's Executive Director, David Beasley, said:**

WFP is incredibly grateful for this support from the UK Government in transporting essential humanitarian infrastructure and medical supplies to Africa. Commercial transport is massively disrupted.

This kind of action allows humanitarian and health staff to stay and deliver at their duty stations on the frontline to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Personnel load an aid cargo pack into the back of a C-17 aircraft,

**NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said:**

NATO Allies are working together to address the COVID-19 pandemic and to support our partners. Last month, NATO agreed to support the UN's global call for airlift assistance. I warmly welcome that the United Kingdom is the first NATO Ally to come forward with an aid flight, delivering supplies to build a field hospital in Ghana. This is a concrete demonstration of solidarity in action – NATO Allies stepping up to save lives.

Cargo sits waiting to be loaded onto a C-17 aircraft.

## Notes to editors

- Up to £1.2 million of UK aid money has been made available to cover the costs of the military flights.
- The Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence have offered support to WFP, which is setting up the logistical infrastructure on behalf of the UN, so the international health and humanitarian response can continue during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is NATO's principal civil emergency response mechanism in the Euro-Atlantic area. It is active all year round, operational on a 24/7 basis, and involves all NATO Allies and partner countries. The Centre functions as a clearing-house system for coordinating both requests and offers of assistance mainly in case of natural and man-made disasters.

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# [Minister Adams statement on clearance operations in Rakhine State, Myanmar](#)

Press release

Minister for Asia Nigel Adams has made a statement on the concerning events unfolding in Rakhine State.



The Minister for Asia, Nigel Adams, said:

We are deeply concerned by the reports of ongoing clearance operations by the Myanmar military in Rakhine State, which have caused thousands of civilians to flee their homes.

These operations have a disproportionate impact on civilian populations, endangering lives and causing lasting damage to property and livelihoods.

We urge the Myanmar military to uphold its obligations to protect civilian populations, and respect the order issued earlier this year by the International Court of Justice.

## Further information

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# [Joint statement on Pride Month 2020](#)

World news story

'Five Eyes' partnership calls upon the Russian government to adhere to its commitment to protect the rights of all citizens, including the LGBTI community



We, the undersigned Ambassadors and Chargés d’Affaires of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, affirm the inherent dignity of each individual as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and call upon the government of the Russian Federation to adhere to its stated commitment to protecting the rights of all citizens, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. Unfortunately, LGBTI individuals throughout the world continue to face violence, harassment, and discrimination simply because of who they are, and law enforcement authorities often turn a blind eye to the hate speech and hate crimes that are still prevalent in many countries.

This June, we celebrate Pride Month by applauding LGBTI activists and their allies, who are working to ensure that every individual, regardless of sexual

orientation or gender identity, receives the full protection of the law. Human rights are universal. Everyone is entitled to their full enjoyment.

Ambassador Graeme Meehan Australia

Ambassador Alison LeClaire Canada

Chargé d’Affaires Kelsie Wilkinson New Zealand

Ambassador Deborah Bronnert United Kingdom

Ambassador John Sullivan United States of America

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## [£100 million rescue package for England’s zoos and aquariums](#)

Zoos and aquariums in England are set to receive up to £100 million to help mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith announced today (27 June).

This is a major expansion of a £14 million initial relief fund [announced in May](#) and will run until the end of March 2021 to ensure the necessary long-term support is in place to help with severe financial difficulties.

In England, zoos and aquariums have been able to reopen outdoor areas since 15 June, subject to social distancing measures being in place. From 4 July indoor areas such as cafés and exhibits will be able to follow suit. Allowing these businesses to fully reopen is a vital step towards enabling them to cover some of the cost of animal care.

Throughout the pandemic zoos have continued to ensure animal welfare standards are upheld and animals’ health needs are met. This funding will help zoos cover costs relating to animal keeping such as feed, heating and security.

Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

We have a world-leading zoo and conservation sector, and I know how hard zoos have been working to safeguard the welfare of their animals in the face of real financial hardship and uncertainty.

Allowing zoos to reopen has taken off some of the pressure, but the coronavirus pandemic has left them facing long-term financial

problems. This funding will therefore be a lifeline for our zoos and aquariums and ensure the quality of animal care continues over the coming months.

I will continue to work with the zoo and conservation community to ensure they get the support they need.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

Whilst zoos and aquariums are now able to reopen their doors, we know how difficult the past few months have been. That's why we've been doing everything we can to support them.

This extra £100 million of funding will ensure those affected by the outbreak can continue to care for their animals as well as the important conservation and educational work.

Dr Simon Girling, Chair of the Zoo Experts Committee, said:

The Zoo Experts Committee is pleased that the UK Government has listened to the scientific advice of the Committee and not only provided an animal welfare fund at the start of the pandemic for zoos in financial difficulties associated with the lockdown, but they have now made the move to open all parts of zoos from 4 July with appropriate social distancing for public and animal safety.

ZEC welcomes these moves and believes this funding will ensure zoos are able to generate much-needed income to fund the ongoing care of their animals and much of their valuable conservation work at this challenging time for everyone.

Establishments covered by the Zoo Licensing Act will be able to bid for a portion of the £100 million that has been made available. There are already a number of support schemes already available to zoos, including the Job Retention Scheme, VAT deferral, Business Rates Relief, the Business Interruption Loan schemes, the option to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay and grant funding of up to £25,000 available through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

The measures will help the sector recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and follow an unprecedented package of financial support already announced by the government.

Further details on the scheme and how to apply will be provided to the sector in due course.

**Notes to editors:**

- As with all government grants, applications will need to demonstrate

that they adhere to strict requirements on delivering value for public money.

- For further enquiries please contact the Defra group press office on 0330 0416560 or 0345 051 8486 out of hours.

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## Government unveils £200 million package to help innovative businesses bounce back

- Almost £200 million boost to help businesses across the UK drive forward cutting-edge new tech and recover from the impacts of coronavirus
- government investment to support innovations ranging from AI systems managing city traffic flows to the latest reusable packaging materials
- research and development (R&D) intensive businesses urged to apply for funding to turn ingenious ideas into new technologies

Innovative ideas and projects led by companies recovering from the impact of coronavirus will not be lost, thanks to a new £200 million fund launched today (Saturday 27 June).

The government's Sustainable Innovation Fund will be open to companies across all parts of the UK who need urgent financial support to keep their cutting-edge projects and ideas alive.

Funding totalling almost £200 million could go towards developing new technologies focused on making homes and offices more energy efficient to cut bills, creating ground-breaking medical technologies to treat infections and diseases, or reducing the carbon footprint of public transport in our towns and cities.

In a move to support people across the country to establish more 'climate-positive' behaviours, businesses and start-ups could also make use of the fund to develop smart sustainability-focused projects – from apps encouraging people to cut down their food waste to sustainable biodegradable packaging.

The Sustainable Innovation Fund will help power the UK's economic recovery and develop new sustainable opportunities for businesses in any sector following the coronavirus pandemic, while helping the UK meet its ambitions to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Our country is home to some of the world's most cutting-edge businesses that turn ingenious ideas into new technologies every

day. That's why we're backing our innovators and risk-takers with new investment so they can recover and grow out of the coronavirus pandemic.

Today I am urging businesses in all parts of the UK to come forward and pitch their state-of-the-art ideas to us, so we can work together to power the UK's economic recovery.

Kemi Badenoch, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Our ability to innovate will be key to tackling this crisis, driving economic growth and supporting jobs.

This funding, on top of our existing support for innovation, will back businesses in a wide range of sectors including technology, health, transport and clean growth.

Dr Ian Campbell, Executive Chair, Innovate UK said:

Many businesses have successfully, and innovatively, responded to the challenges posed by the coronavirus. Organisations will recover from the pandemic, and as the situation stabilises, we will help businesses build an innovative economy that is viable and resilient. Today we issue the call for more innovators to put forward proposals to help the UK build a sustainable and productive future.

This funding, delivered through Innovate UK, forms part of a wider £750 million package of grants and loans announced in April to support innovative firms. This sits alongside the new £500 million [Future Fund](#), which provides match-funding to private investors, and has already received over 500 applications since its launch on 20 May.

Businesses can apply for support through the Sustainable Innovation Fund by [visiting the Innovate UK website](#) from Monday 29 June.