

[PM call with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman: 15 March 2020](#)

The Prime Minister spoke to Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman this afternoon about the coronavirus pandemic.

The Prime Minister updated the Crown Prince on the steps the UK is taking, driven by scientific advice, to tackle the spread of the virus.

Both leaders agreed on the need for an internationally coordinated response to the outbreak, particularly on developing a vaccine and limiting the economic disruption caused by the pandemic. They resolved to work closely on this, including through the G20 Presidency which Saudi Arabia holds this year.

[Joint Statement on the Ninth Anniversary of the Syrian Uprising](#)

Nine years ago today, tens of thousands of Syrians peacefully took to the streets calling for respect for human rights and the end of government corruption. Instead of heeding the Syrian people's legitimate demands, the Assad regime responded with a ruthless campaign of arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, and violence. As the Syrian conflict enters its 10th year, the Assad regime's brutal pursuit of a military victory has displaced over 11 million people – nearly half of Syria's pre-war population – and killed more than 500,000 Syrians.

The Assad regime must accept the will of the Syrian people who demand and deserve to live in peace and free of shelling, chemical weapons attacks, barrel bombs, airstrikes, arbitrary detention, torture, and starvation.

We express our satisfaction at the liberation by the Global Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces of all territory once held by Daesh. However, the threat from Daesh remains, and we are resolved to continue our joint effort through the Coalition to ensure their lasting defeat. We are fighting terrorism with determination and are on the front lines of the fight.

But fighting terrorism cannot and must not justify massive violations of international humanitarian law or continued violence. The reckless military offensive by Assad, Russia, and Iran in Idlib only causes further suffering and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, as medical and humanitarian infrastructures and workers, as well as civilians, are killed. In its latest bloody assault on Idlib, the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran, has

displaced nearly one million civilians since December alone, the fastest displacement since the start of the conflict. For the latest ceasefire in northwest Syria to endure, a nationwide ceasefire must be established as called for in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254.

Despite significant efforts by the international community, life-saving assistance is still not reaching large numbers of those in desperate need. As major donors since the beginning of the war, we will continue to support humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, including through cross-border assistance which is a vital necessity, and we demand that all parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies, allow safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all people in need in Syria. Yet, we will not consider providing or supporting any reconstruction assistance until a credible, substantive, and genuine political process is irreversibly underway. Absent such a process, reconstruction assistance for Syria would only entrench a deeply flawed and abusive government, increase corruption, reinforce the war economy and further aggravate the root causes of the conflict.

We encourage the international community to continue to provide assistance to Syria's neighbors to share the costs of Syria's refugee crisis. Displaced Syrians must be allowed to return voluntarily and safely to their homes, without fear of arbitrary detention, violation of rights and forced conscription. Yet, the Syrian regime continues to prevent them from doing so.

We will continue to demand accountability for the atrocities committed by the Assad regime and we will continue our efforts to make sure that those who are responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations and abuses are identified and held accountable. The international community must come together to support the collection and release of documentation of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including the critical work of the UN Commission of Inquiry; the UN International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism for Syria; and the UN Secretary General's Board of Inquiry.

The military solution the Syrian regime hopes to achieve, with backing from Russia and Iran, will not bring peace. We reiterate our strong support for the UN-led process in Geneva and UNSCR 2254 to bring about a peaceful and stable Syria.

We – France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States – demand that the Assad regime stop the ruthless killing and engage meaningfully in all aspects of UNSCR 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire, a reformed constitution, release of arbitrarily detained persons, as well as free and fair elections. A credible political process cannot be limited to attempts at convening a constitutional committee. All Syrian citizens, including citizens who are displaced persons and refugees, should be allowed to participate in free and fair elections, under UN supervision.

[Travel advice for the USA](#)

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[PM call with Prime Minister Abe: 15 March 2020](#)

The Prime Minister spoke to Japanese Prime Minister Abe about the coronavirus pandemic.

The leaders updated each other on their countries' efforts to curb the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister stressed the importance the UK is placing on taking a science-led approach when deciding what measures to implement.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Abe agreed on the importance of international coordination to tackle the virus and its wider impact, particularly on the global economy, and they looked forward to the call between G7 leaders to discuss this.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Abe also discussed the UK and Japan's efforts to combat climate change ahead of COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

[Health Secretary Matt Hancock's Sunday Telegraph Op-Ed](#)

The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation.

It calls for dramatic action, at home and abroad, of the kind not normally seen in peacetime.

Our goal is clear. The over-riding objective is to protect life. Sadly 21 people have already died in the UK, and the fact that most had underlying health conditions does not make the grief of their families any lesser, nor our compassion for their family and friends any weaker. We must all do everything in our power to tackle this virus.

We have a plan, based on the expertise of world-leading scientists. Herd immunity is not a part of it. That is a scientific concept, not a goal or a strategy. Our goal is to protect life from this virus, our strategy is to protect the most vulnerable and protect the NHS through contain, delay, research and mitigate.

We are working through our clear action plan. Like all our decisions, the plan is based on the bedrock of the science, with maximum transparency. We will do the right thing at the right time, based on the best available science.

To protect life, we must protect the vulnerable, and protect the NHS and flatten the curve.

From the moment coronavirus emerged, we have followed those goals.

We have acted to contain the spread of the virus so far. We have carried out some of the highest number of tests in Europe, our surveillance testing is among the most sophisticated in the world and the UK's plans for the rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic are ranked number one above any other country by the Global Health Security Index.

Most importantly of all, thanks to our record levels of tracing the number of people who came into contact with the first people who caught the virus, the initial growth was slowed significantly, and the growth of the virus in the UK has been slower than many major European countries. This action has already prevented the NHS being put under greater pressure in its hardest season of the year. We have bought valuable time to prepare.

Last week we stepped into the next phase of our response. We took action to advise anyone with symptoms, however mild, to stay at home. This advice from the Chief Medical Officer will be reinforced with a national communications campaign so everyone knows what they can do: how you can play your part.

The new campaign will set out the latest clinical advice, for people to stay at home for seven days if they develop a high temperature or new continuous cough. We can all keep doing our bit by continuing to wash our hands more often, for 20 seconds or more and having plenty of tissues around to 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. Following this new advice may sound simple, but it could be lifesaving for others around us, especially the most vulnerable.

Today, we take further action, with a call to arms for a drive to build the ventilators and other equipment the NHS will need. We are better equipped thanks to the NHS than most other countries, but we will need many more. We

now need any manufacturers to transform their production lines to make ventilators. We cannot make too many.

In the near future we will take further steps. SAGE has advised the next planned effective interventions will need to be instituted soon, including measures to 'shield' older and medically vulnerable people from the virus.

Everyone will need to help to ensure they get the support they need to stay at home, and to protect them from the consequences of isolation: loneliness, and a lack of support. Government, local councils, charities, friends and neighbours will need to be part of the national effort to support the shielded. We will provide expert advice and support as soon as we progress to this phase.

Next week we will publish our emergency bill, to give the Government the temporary powers we will need to help everyone get through this. The measures in it allow for the worst case scenario. I hope many of them won't be needed. But we will ask Parliament for these powers in case they are.

Our generation has never been tested like this. Our grandparents were, during the Second World War, when our cities were bombed during the Blitz. Despite the pounding every night, the rationing, the loss of life, they pulled together in one gigantic national effort.

Today our generation is facing its own test, fighting a very real and new disease. We must fight the disease to protect life. Everyone will be asked to make sacrifices, to protect themselves and others, especially those most vulnerable to this disease.

With our clear action plan, listening to the advice of the best science, and taking the action we all must, I am sure we will rise to this challenge.