

Lord Ahmad: There is a 'moral imperative' to stop threat to media freedom

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, UK Minister for Human Rights, has said today that the current crackdown on journalists across the world is a deep-rooted problem, and a rebuke to the rule of law.

41 journalists and media workers have been reported killed so far in 2019, with 383 journalists and media workers imprisoned in countries like Turkey, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Eritrea.

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Lord Ahmad said that a free media is essential to any democracy, and the bedrock on which other freedoms are borne and built. He said that it is needed for free and open debate, to root out corruption and hold governments to account. He set out the UK's commitment to being a force for good in the world, and to championing media freedom and other key values in the face of those who want to undermine them.

Lord Ahmad made the remarks during an event he hosted on media freedom, alongside the UK's Special Envoy on Media Freedom Amal Clooney. He said that 32 countries will come together as the Media Freedom Coalition, and commit to lobby on individual cases, as well as wider abuses against the media.

The UK Minister for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, said:

"The UK is committed to being a good global citizen and we believe there is a moral imperative to stop the threat to media freedom, whether it's violence, unduly restrictive laws and regulations, imprisonment, detention or internet censorship.

"Securing the freedom of media around the world is no easy task. It cannot be accomplished with the will of the few. It must be tackled with the resolve of the many. Because those who put their lives on the line every day in pursuit of the truth deserve no less."

He also reaffirmed the UK's intention, after Brexit, to establish a UK global human rights sanctions regime to hold those who commit serious violations of human rights to account, including when journalists, whistleblowers and human rights defenders are targeted.

The UK is also taking steps to establish a National Committee on the Safety of Journalists, tasked with developing a National Action Plan to ensure that those who threaten journalists are held to account. And a new dedicated international Task Force, led by UNESCO, will assist governments around the world in developing their own plans, tailored to the needs of their own legal systems.

Further information

[27th Pontignano Conference: “Navigating the New World”](#)

The 27th edition of the [Pontignano Conference](#), the most important appointment on the British-Italian agenda, organised by the [British Council](#), the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, and the British Embassy in Italy, in collaboration with Siena University and St. Antony’s College, Oxford, will take place in Siena from 26 to 28 September.

Chaired for the second time by Carlo Calenda, alongside David Willetts, this year’s edition is entitled “Navigating the New World”. Experts in various fields and senior representatives of the British and Italian governments will be attending the event, including the Italian Minister for European Affairs Vincenzo Amendola, the Italian Vice-Minister for Education Anna Ascani, the Italian Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Marina Sereni, and the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, Christopher Pincher.

The official Conference data will be released and presented by John Peet, Political Editor at The Economist, and Alessandra Lanza, Senior Partner at Prometeia.

The British Ambassador to Italy, Jill Morris, said:

This edition will focus on the key global challenges we are both facing, in the name of centuries of friendship and partnership between Italy and the United Kingdom. Global strategic challenges and the role of the United Kingdom and Italy, including in the multilateral context. We are allies, and as such we work together on a daily basis in the UN, the G7, the G20, NATO. This conference will also be a great opportunity to develop solid foundations for a productive collaboration in view of COP26, which we are pleased to organise in cooperation with Italy.

We have to strenuously defend the rules, values and behaviours which have underpinned the success of our societies” – said Ciarán Devane, CEO British Council – “If we continue to nurture the foundations that provide us with the social capital required for further social and economic progress, we will be able to successfully overcome our problems.

The conference will start on Thursday, September 26th at 18:00 at the Aula Magna of the University of Siena. After the greetings from the co-chairs, Carlo Calenda and David Willetts, and from the Dean of the University of Siena, Prof. Francesco Frati, the proceedings will officially start with a presentation by Rino Rappuoli, Chief Scientist at GSK Vaccines, and Patrick Vallance, UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser.

The conference will continue on Friday and Saturday behind closed doors, in compliance with the Chatham House Rule*, at the Certosa di Pontignano, just outside Siena, articulating around four thematic areas that will allow participants to tackle some fundamental issues for the future of our countries and Europe.

“Strategic Threats – or Strategic Partners? How should Europe, the UK and Italy engage with rival powers in order to preserve the Rules Based International System?”

Panel:

- Simon Fraser, Deputy Chairman, Royal Institute of International Affairs
- Giampiero Massolo, President of ISPI and President of Fincantieri S.p.A
- Nathalie Tocci, Director, IAI (Istituto Affari Internazionali)

“Building the Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future”

Panel:

- Nick Bridge, Foreign Secretary’s Special Representative for Climate Change, UK
- Alyssa Gilbert, Director of Policy and Translation at the Grantham Institute – Climate change and the Environment, Imperial College London
- Enrico Giovannini, Professor of Economics, Tor Vergata and Sustainable Development, LUISS University

“Migration, Integration and Demographic Change”

Panel:

- Stefano Allievi, Professor of Sociology, University of Padua

- David Coleman, Professor of Demography, Oxford University
- Daniela di Capua, Immigration and Asylum policies expert
- Sara Thornton, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, UK

“Science and Society – Facts and Opinions”

Panel:

- Cristina Pozzi, CEO and co-founder Impactscool
- Rino Rappuoli, Chief Scientist, GSK Vaccines
- Patrick Vallance, UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser

The 2019 edition of the Pontignano Conference was made possible thanks to the generous support of: Algebris, AT&T, BP, Fincantieri, GSK, HSBC, Ipsos Mori, Jaguar, Leonardo, MBDA, Novamont, Shell, Snam, and the technical partnership of Antrox, AzzeroCO2, Tecnoconference.

- Chatham House Rule: when a meeting or part of it is held in compliance with the Chatham House Rule the participants are free to use the information received but are not allowed to reveal the identity or affiliation of the speaker or any other participant that provided them.

Concept note and links to materials and images can be found on the dedicated British Council [website pages](#).

Social media:

[Supporting Cumbria Pride](#)

Cumbria Pride is the original and biggest LGBT+ event in the county and attracts sponsors, volunteers and visitors from all over Cumbria and the wider North West region. This year the event is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

The event takes place in Carlisle on Saturday 28 September 2019. It includes a parade from the city centre. This is followed by a free event with live music and comedy performances in the grounds of Carlisle Castle.

We are of the main sponsors and will have a stall at the event, hosted by our employees.

Alan Rankin, the equality, diversity and inclusion lead for Sellafield Ltd, said:

As one of the largest employers in the county, we are once again delighted to support Cumbria Pride.

We know from attending last year and the feedback of those involved and who attend that it is an important date in the diary for the LGBT+ community and beyond.

Pam Eland from Cumbria Pride, said:

We thank Sellafield Ltd for continuing to support this important event. Pride is far more than a parade and festival – it is a chance for the LGBT+ community to come together to recognise and celebrate all that we achieve by working with each other.

Cumbria Pride's aim is to promote equality and diversity for the public benefits and counter discrimination against LGBT people across Cumbria.

It aims to be a strong voice for Cumbria's LGBT community and provide a safe environment to engage communities in the celebration of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

[Salisbury chosen to test temporary flood barriers](#)

The Environment Agency and emergency services are teaming up to test ways to protect Salisbury from flooding.

Exercise Touchpaper will last 3 days and is led by the Environment Agency, who will supply flood barriers, about 50 staff and all the necessary equipment for a pump.

The army's ability to set up barriers will be tested at Ashley Road on Tuesday 1 October 2019. It should take soldiers about 3 hours to set up 350m of defences, before they are taken down again. Access to properties won't be affected.

Guy Parker of the Environment Agency said:

This is an opportunity to test the speed and efficiency of the army in setting up temporary flood barriers at Ashley Road and Fisherton Recreation Ground to reduce flood risk to properties in Salisbury in times of need.

Practicing with the barriers now to get the alignment right and give valuable experience to the military is obviously preferable than during a flood.

The exercise will also trial:

- new equipment to allow firefighters' pumps and hoses to be connected to Environment Agency equipment
- a new way to capture water from hoses during firefighting to stop it from entering watercourses and be reused
- Community information officers – a new role for the Environment Agency to give face-to-face information and updates during an incident

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will be supporting the exercise by helping to set up the temporary flood barriers, and a high volume pump will be brought up from Christchurch on the third day (operational commitments allowing).

The Environment Agency has a world class flood forecasting service which provides people, businesses and the emergency services vital time to prepare in a flood. 1.4 million properties are signed up to our free flood warnings – an increase of 129,000 since last winter.

For more information on flood risk and to sign up to receive free flood warnings go to www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[Investment Minister reinforces support for trade in space sector](#)

- Minister for Investment delivers a keynote speech at UK Space Conference in Newport
- DIT announces support for £100m investment in Leicester Space Park that will create more than 2,500 jobs by 2020
- Australian-UK Space Bridge to unlock growth and increase innovation in both countries

On Tuesday, 24 September, the Department for International Trade's (DIT) Minister for Investment, Graham Stuart, delivered a keynote speech at the UK Space Conference 2019 in Newport, Wales to reinforce the government's

commitment to boosting investment and exports in the UK space sector.

UK space exports are set to grow to £25bn in the next decade, meeting the industry and government target for space exports to make up 60% of the sector's revenue by 2030.

In his speech, the Minister expressed his support for the £100m+ Space Park Leicester, an industry-academic cluster, announced last year. DIT has recognised this as a High Potential Opportunity to increase market penetration and exports by reducing the cost of satellite build and enabling better data-driven products, services and solutions in the rapidly growing space sector. The development will be delivered by the University of Leicester, working closely with a range of local, national and international partners.

The Space Park, opening in late 2020, will create more than 2,500 jobs and will include research and development across the entire space value chain, with plans now being finalised for a new open-access satellite manufacturing facility aimed at rapid, low cost access to space.

Space Park Leicester will be a hub for businesses in the sector to set up and grow and work with the largest space-related academic talent pool in the UK. In fact, Airbus announced its plans to re-locate their Leicestershire based Earth Observation expert team to the space park.

The Minister also reaffirmed the government's commitment to helping British companies in the space sector compete overseas by strengthening ties with our partners from around the world. This came as the UK Space Agency announced a new collaboration between the UK and Australian Space Agencies to unlock investment and share best practice across a common framework in both countries.

DIT is now also leading a mission focused on securing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by bringing 24 companies from seven different countries to the trade show and other parts of the UK.

Minister for Investment Graham Stuart at the Department for International Trade said:

Space is going mainstream. For communications, data, earth observation, climate change management, smart cities and transport, space technology is fundamental and growing in importance. With Europe's leading science base and continuing membership of the European Space Agency, the UK's commercial space industry is determined, with government support, to double its share of the growing global market.

That's why I was delighted to announce the Australian-UK Space Bridge yesterday at the UK Space Conference in Newport.

International collaboration is key to our success and DIT has a dedicated space team and trade advisors around the world ready to support businesses looking to trade in space expertise and technologies. This pioneering tie-up with Australia and the fantastic showcase event at the new International Conference Centre in Newport are just the start. With delegations attending from all over the world supported by DIT we are determined to do our part to make UK space a continuing success.

Grant Bourhill, CEO of Leicester Science Park said:

Space Park Leicester will be transformational for the UK. It will see the industry collaborating with the largest pool of space-related academic talent in the country and position us at the centre of the global shift to 'New Space'.

We will work with DIT to attract international partners to access the space park and expand their businesses. The DIT partnership and promotion has already strengthened the Space Park's position as a key piece of national strategic infrastructure in the UK's growing space ecosystem and the department is critical in our engagement with international companies.

At the conference, the Minister showed his support for the sector by visiting UK pioneers in space, including Airbus, Thales Alenia Space UK, Deimos Space UK, Space Park Leicester, Spaceport Cornwall and SatixFy.

Last year, Israeli high-tech company SatiXFY announced it will be carrying out the R&D development for chips resilient to harsh radiation in space within their Cheadle operation with support from DIT and the UK Space Agency.

Capital expenditure will equal £30m with 30 new jobs created. SatixFy (UK) estimate this investment will generate upwards of £50m in sales by 2021.

In a further boost for the sector, the Prime Minister has announced a £20m investment from government into research that can improve systems at the Met Office Space Weather Operations Centre to help predict severe space weather events.