

Peaceful Presidential elections in Colombia signal a commitment to sustained and durable peace

Thank you, President. And I'd like to start by thanking Special Representative Massieu for your briefing and for the work of your team. I'd also like to appreciate and pay tribute to our briefers Father de Roux and Ms Piamba, and to welcome Foreign Minister Ramirez to our meeting today. Foreign Minister, we appreciate your dedicated engagement with this Council throughout your tenure.

President, I'd like to make three points today:

First, I would like to congratulate the people of Colombia for making their voices heard in last month's Presidential election. We commend political stakeholders, officials, and volunteers for their dedication and for helping to ensure that the election was fair, inclusive, and recognised by all parties.

We commend President-elect Petro's commitment to comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement and to addressing the challenges that remain. Foremost among these challenges, as we've heard, will be ensuring security for vulnerable communities affected by violence, displacement and confinement. We welcome the incoming administration's commitment to creating the conditions for sustained and durable peace in Colombia, and hope a resumption of talks with the ELN will contribute to this.

Second, the UK welcomes the publication of the Truth Commission's final report, a vital milestone in Colombia's reconciliation process. We pay tribute to the Commissioners' hard work in this vast undertaking, and to the thousands of victims who gave evidence for their courage.

The UK is committed to helping all parties implement the Commission's recommendations, and to supporting the follow-up committee that will supervise their implementation.

Third, we continue to encourage the acceleration of rural reform. Whilst significant steps have been taken so far, accelerated progress on the Territorially Focused Development Plans and the multipurpose cadastre should help build confidence in the commitment to peace and advance rural development to support the transformation of conflict-affected regions.

Mr President, in conclusion, the UK remains fully committed to supporting Colombia on its path to lasting peace, and to helping the people of Colombia to overcome the challenges that remain.

I thank you.

We have to act now to put the world on the path to a more sustainable future

Excellencies, colleagues, friends.

It is an absolute pleasure to be joining you today.

When we met last year, the UK co-convened a constructive discussion on effective climate adaptation, and a green and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.

Today is another important milestone.

Yes, much has changed in the last year.

We meet against the backdrop of multiple global crises, much precipitated by the Putin regime's illegal, brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

And many now recognise that climate and environmental security are completely interlinked with energy and national security.

And whilst countries must deal with their immediate energy needs, many have understood that our shared long-term energy futures do not lie in fossil fuels.

But even as we deal with these challenges, the central premise of last year's session – that we must deliver a just and sustainable recovery – holds true.

Because just as the global economic situation is perilous, the science is clear that the chronic threat of climate change is getting worse.

Now, I am very pleased that the UK is at the forefront of the efforts to tackle global warming.

And last year's G7, convened in Carbis Bay, delivered a step change in infrastructure investment, in pursuit of clean, green growth.

We have continued to lead through our "British Investment Partnerships," and the "Clean Green Initiative," mobilising billions, and our financial expertise, to drive clean growth around the world.

And for me it has been an incredible honour to drive this agenda forward as COP26 President.

The Glasgow Climate Pact, forged amongst nearly 200 countries, was historic.

And based on the commitments made in that Pact, and indeed outside the negotiating rooms,

I believe that we were able to say with credibility that we kept alive the prospect of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels; and that we had supported the most vulnerable.

We got important commitments on mitigation, particularly the call for countries to revisit and strengthen their NDCs by the end of this year.

The Glasgow Sharm-el Sheikh work programme underlined the imperative for all countries to prepare and respond to climate risks.

And, for the first time ever in these processes, the Pact recognised the need to address the issue of loss and damage substantively, and systematically.

Countries, companies and financial institutions pledged to clean up vital sectors, to end deforestation, and to accelerate the move to clean technologies.

And we did important work to scale-up climate finance, with the \$100 billion Delivery Plan, the commitment to at least double adaptation finance by 2025, and work to ensure that finance flows to national and local adaptation priorities.

Financial institutions with over \$130 trillion of assets on their balance sheets committed to a net zero future.

And I was delighted that we were able to announce the first "Just Energy Transition Partnership," the South Africa JETP.

Now many of these commitments ensured we pushed forward across several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as well, from "Life Below Water" to "Life On Land."

What we achieved together in Glasgow was significant.

And I am pleased that we have seen some progress since November.

We've got 16 new, revised NDCs.

We've got a handful of new long-term strategies.

Over 2.5 billion people now covered by adaptation plans.

And extensive work to scale up and improve access to finance is continuing.

But, collectively, friends, the progress has been too limited, and just too slow.

Many of the commitments we heard in Glasgow remain just that, commitments.

Words on a page.

And all the while the evidence tells us that time is running out.

From the science of the IPCC reports, to the wildfires, droughts and floods

to which the world is sadly too often witness.

So, across all the commitments we made in Glasgow, we simply must quicken the pace.

If we don't, next year's Global Stocktake will make clear that we are not delivering on the Paris Goals, that 1.5 degrees is moving further, and frankly irreversibly, out of reach, and that we risk going beyond our limits to adapt.

The consequences of that would be grave, for every sector, and for every country.

This, my friends, is about the immediate impact on the lives and livelihoods of many millions around the world.

So, I will continue to urge countries and companies to redouble their efforts, to ensure that their emissions targets represent the highest possible ambition, and to implement the commitments that they have made.

And I am going to convene the second Climate and Development Ministerial in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

And we will of course continue to engage with our friends in Egypt.

In all this work, my message is a consistent one.

We do have an opportunity to build back better and greener, and to put the world on the path to a more sustainable future.

But we are running out of time.

We have to act.

And we have to act now.

Thank you.

[New call for UK public to stop using heated hairbrush and dryer model](#)

News story

OPSS issues further product safety warning to the public.



The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has issued a further warning to the public to stop using a heated hairbrush and dryer which can catch fire during normal use.

The product, originally branded 'One Step model SM-5250', was initially subject to a Safety Gate alert notified by the UK in 2020. However, OPSS has since identified it is again being sold through online marketplaces. OPSS Recall alerts have now been posted on our ['Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls' page](#) where you can check the details.

However, OPSS is also warning that unscrupulous sellers may be badging these dangerous products under a variety of brand names.

As a result, the public are being asked to be extra vigilant and check the design of any heated hairbrushes in their home, coloured black and pink (see image). The easiest step is to check if the manufacturer's name and address is on the product itself. If it is not, then consumers must stop using them immediately and contact the seller.

This urgent warning to the public has been issued by OPSS following its own tests of models it purchased through online marketplaces in recent weeks. All were found to be non-compliant, and a number caught fire during testing. Since issuing the warning on July 9, OPSS has uncovered further examples of this unsafe product on sale and taken action to have them removed from sale.

OPSS Chief Executive Graham Russell said:

"OPSS is issuing this further warning to the public because we believe there is real danger that these products will cause serious harm if used. OPSS has been working around the clock to take down these products since they were first identified but the multiple brand names under which they are sold means we need the public to take extra care."

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Yorkshire Water civil sanctions see wildlife charity get funding boost

The company breached its environmental permit with an unauthorised sewage discharge from Bellhouse Way Sewage Pumping Station, which polluted Holgate Beck in York, and two unauthorised sewage discharges from a rising main at Hemsworth Water Park, Hoyle Mill Lane Sewage Pumping Station, causing pollution at Hoyle Mill Stream at Wakefield.

It submitted two Enforcement Undertakings to the Environment Agency, which have now been accepted – £150,000 for the Holgate Beck incident and £250,000 for Hoyle Mill Stream.

An Enforcement Undertaking is a voluntary offer made by companies and individuals to make amends for their offending, and usually includes a donation to a wildlife charity to carry out environmental improvements in the local area.

Bellhouse Way Sewage Pumping Station has an environmental permit to discharge sewage into Holgate Beck in emergencies, which does not include storm conditions and heavy rain. At the start of April 2018 it discharged sewage intermittently due to an electrical failure in the main pump and blockage of the standby pump.

The alarm on the pumping station was activated, but as this coincided with a period of heavy rain it was not differentiated from other assets which are allowed to discharge during storm conditions.

As part of the Enforcement Undertaking requirements Yorkshire Water has improved its monitoring systems so that assets which are permitted to discharge in an emergency only are allocated a code to ensure they are always investigated. This code has been allocated to 670 assets across the county.

At Hoyle Mill Road Sewage Pumping Station a rising main burst in July 2020, discharging raw sewage into Hoyle Mill Stream, visibly polluting the beck for 2.75km and having a detrimental impact on water quality.

On 3 August a repair that had been made to the rising main failed and more raw sewage was discharged into the beck. Further investigation revealed the pipe was severely corroded and the repair was not sufficient to sustain the pressure. As part of the Enforcement Undertaking, Yorkshire Water replaced the whole rising main at the end of last year.

Martin Christmas, Environment Agency Area Environment Manager, said:

We are holding water companies to account like never before and while we will always take forward prosecutions in the most serious cases, Enforcement Undertakings are an effective enforcement tool to allow companies to put things right and contribute to

environmental improvements.

They allow polluters to correct and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents by improving their procedures, helping ensure future compliance with environmental requirements.

As well as donations totalling £400,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust that will bring great benefits to the environment, Yorkshire Water has made significant improvements to its monitoring system and completed repairs to its assets as part of the civil sanction.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will use the donations on environmental improvements such as its Askham Bog, River Foss and Living Went projects.

Water companies were handed record fines last year totalling more than £100million following Environment Agency prosecutions, making clear that polluters will pay for damage to the environment.

Most recently, Yorkshire Water was fined £233,000 at Leeds Crown Court on 28 January 2022 for a pollution incident at Tong Beck which happened in November 2017; and on 8 September 2021 they were fined £150,000 at Sheffield Magistrates' Court for a pollution incident at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve. In February this year, they paid £300,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in an Enforcement Undertaking after it breached its environmental permit due to an unauthorised discharge from its Garforth Storm Tanks.

Russia's war in Ukraine: UK statement on OSCE's second Moscow Mechanism expert report

Thank you very much Mr Chair,

I wish to make a statement in my national capacity, to supplement the statement just delivered by Ambassador Gjermeni from Albania on behalf of the 45 States which, with the support of Ukraine, invoked the Moscow Mechanism for a second time.

I would like to welcome back Professor Veronika Bilkova, and welcome Professors Laura Guercio and Vasilka Sancin to the Permanent Council today. Thank you. We greatly appreciate that we have, collectively, been able to call on your expertise, and independence, in preparing this extensive and important report.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom strongly supported the invocation of both the first and second Moscow Mechanism on Ukraine due to our grave and ongoing concern about the humanitarian impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine; and the potential for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. As with the [first report](#), the second has demonstrated that we are right to remain concerned and that we must remain vigilant in our support for human rights, international humanitarian law and for impartial fact finding during the conflict.

The report is a real life horror story. Due to the actions of the Russian government – a government of an OSCE participating State – this horror is an everyday reality for the people across Ukraine.

Reports of torture. The execution of civilians. Unlawful detention. Enforced disappearances. Targeting civilians on their streets, in their cars, on their bicycles, on their balconies and in their homes. Victim activated booby traps. The rape of women. The rape of children. Violence towards men. The killing of journalists. Targeting of hospitals, of schools. The use of cluster munitions. Shallow graves. The threat of cholera. This is an affront to humanity. It is depravity itself.

I recall with shock, alarm and dismay some of the accounts documented from Bucha in this report. I simply cannot imagine what it is like to have lived through the reality on the ground.

In Vorzel, west of Bucha, where a woman and her 14-year-old child were killed after smoke grenades were thrown into the basement in which they were hiding.

The summer camp in Bucha, repurposed for torture. With bullet holes in the walls, instruments of torture and the corpses of five dead men – burned, bruised, and lacerated.

In Zabuchchya, a village in Bucha district, where 18 bodies of murdered men, women and children were discovered. Some with their ears cut off, some with their teeth pulled out.

Kyiv's regional police force have reported that 900 civilian bodies were discovered after the Russian withdrawal, 350 of them in Bucha. According to police reports, nearly 95% were "simply executed."

It comes as no surprise that after visiting, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor referred to Bucha as a "crime scene."

The value of the second report is demonstrated in its identification of two new and extremely concerning phenomena:

Firstly, the report documents the Russian government's sickening use of 'filtration centres.' Centres where Ukrainian civilians undergo harsh interrogations, humiliating body searches and are often transferred, with or without their consent, to Russian territory or to the so-called "People's Republics."

Secondly, the report documents the Russian government's attempt to bypass international obligations through the use of so-called "People's Republics." Mr Chair, in so doing, the report rightly raises serious concerns about the treatment of Prisoners of War by Russia and Russia's proxies and references the trials and sentencing of Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin. As both this report and the Office of the UNHCR confirm – Mr Pinner and Mr Aslin are members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and should be treated as Prisoners of War. They are not mercenaries.

The report makes clear that, despite Russia's best efforts to portray them as independent, the so-called "People's Republics", are controlled by Russia. As such, the UK calls on Russia to take note of these findings, treat Prisoners of War and civilian detainees in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and end the use the "People's Republics" to conduct sham trials and issue capital charges for propaganda purposes. We are fully supportive of the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to secure the release of British Nationals held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine.

Mr Chair, today we may hear from the Russian Delegation. Sadly, I am sure they will have been instructed to tell more lies and defend the indefensible.

Allow me to take this opportunity to assure them that the United Kingdom remains resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its international recognised borders. We remain firm in our support for accountability measures at the national and international level. Be assured that we are watching, we are documenting, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that those who are responsible will be held accountable for their actions.

Thank you, Mr Chair.