

## **Strait of Hormuz incident: UK government letter to UN Security Council President**

Writing to the President of the United Nations Security Council, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Charge d’Affaires Jonathan Allen outlined the facts about what happened on 19 July.

The letter explains how the Stena Impero was exercising the lawful right of transit passage in an international strait, as provided for under international law. It also calls for the Islamic Republic of Iran to release the vessel.

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## **New business start-up training for refugees in the UK**

A pilot to encourage refugee entrepreneur programmes across the UK has been launched with the Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE) with funding from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, the Immigration Minister announced today (Sunday 21 July).

The 1 year pilot jointly funded by the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, will identify established local business support organisations to deliver tailored start-up programmes that will take refugees from idea stage to business launch.

Immigration minister Caroline Nokes said:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those that need it and we are committed to making sure that refugees can successfully integrate to life in the UK.

This exciting new programme gives refugees the opportunity to build businesses, leading to further independence as they rebuild their lives in the UK.

We will continue to collaborate with civil society and businesses to ensure that we deliver the best possible support to those who choose to make this country their home.

Centre for Entrepreneurs chairman Oliver Pawle said:

We are grateful for support from the Home Office and the National Lottery Community Fund in helping us realise the vision we set out in our report last year.

This pilot is the first step in helping many more refugees rebuild their lives through entrepreneurship.

England Director at The National Lottery Community Fund, James Harcourt, said:

By putting people in the lead and championing entrepreneurship, this project, made possible by National Lottery players, will support refugees to fulfil their potential and thrive.

Former refugee and co-founder of Firezza Pizza Edin Bašić said:

Back in 1992 when I received asylum in the UK, no support like this was available. Starting Firezza Pizza took me years of hard work, but others in my situation were not as fortunate.

With programmes like this, stories like mine can stop being the exception to the rule.

The pilot will be launched at an event in London on Monday 22 July. The 1 day summit will convene business support organisations to explore the entrepreneurial potential of refugees. Organisations will share insight from refugee-focused development programmes, carried out in the UK and overseas, which provide training and mentoring space to help grow the business.

The new start-up training model follows last year's CFE publication of 'Starting afresh: How entrepreneurship is transforming the lives of resettled refugees'. The CFE report detailed the level of experience and interest in entrepreneurship among refugees and highlighted the profound role self-employment can play in helping refugees retake control of their lives.

The report called on the business community, philanthropists and the government to work together in rolling out refugee entrepreneurship programmes nationwide – a model that has been adopted in over 130 cities around the world in recent years. The report also puts forward a compelling case about why refugees make great entrepreneurs, how they can contribute to the UK as business-creators, and how guiding them towards entrepreneurship can reduce public spending and strengthen social integration.

The programme will be overseen by CFE and a national expert steering group including representatives from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, refugee entrepreneurs, and experts from the academic and voluntary sectors.

Refugees in the UK have access to mainstream benefits and services to enable their integration and departments across government are working to ensure services meet their needs. This new pilot will allow refugees to move forward with the process of integration, which was the focus of the government's integrated communities action plan published in February 2019. In the action plan the government committed to increase integration support for all refugees in the UK, with one of the key focuses being employment.

As part of that commitment, the Home Office, in partnership with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration, Business in the Community and the Department for Work and Pensions recently launched 'Tapping Potential' – guidelines for British businesses on employing refugees. The government is also committed to continuing support for the refugee employment network, whose vision is to enable every refugee in the UK to gain appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.

The pilot will cost over £300,000 which will be split between the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund. The centre is working with academic partners to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot so that, if successful, it can be implemented more widely in the future.

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## **£2 million Future News Fund to boost local public interest journalism**

Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright has announced a new £2 million pilot innovation fund to support public interest journalism in the UK, following recommendations in the Cairncross Review.

With the digital revolution giving rise to a pressing need for news publishers to develop new approaches and tools, Dame Frances Cairncross recommended government funding for innovative approaches to improve the supply of public interest news.

She described the different types of news which could be categorised as 'public interest' in her review – including investigative journalism and reporting on the activities of public institutions.

DCMS Secretary of State Jeremy Wright said:

A strong and independent press is vital for a healthy democracy to thrive and the Government is committed to securing its sustainability.

While we are still developing our full response to the Cairncross Review, our plans to open a pilot fund now will help papers explore

innovative ways of providing the public service journalism that citizens need and deserve.

Dame Frances Cairncross said:

I am delighted that the innovation fund suggested in my review is being piloted. Innovation is important if news organisations, and especially small and local providers of news, are to survive and to provide accessible public-interest news for the widest possible audience.

Nesta will administer the pilot Future News Fund, which will have a particular focus on helping providers of local and regional news. It will be used to fund a number of different initiatives, allowing publishers to test or expand new ways of providing sustainable public interest news.

The Government hopes these publishers will benefit from the fund's testing of new business models and greater use of data, which can be adopted across the industry.

The pilot could also be used to fund a Future News Prize, to encourage wider thinking about how to address the challenges in the sector.

Valerie Mocker, director of the Future News Fund Pilot, Nesta said:

Reliable, accurate and high quality news at local level has been under threat for some time now, eroding an essential mechanism for citizens to engage in their communities, exercise their democratic rights and hold institutions to account.

We are delighted that Nesta will be able to play a part in addressing this problem with The Future News Fund – backing promising technologies, models and ideas so communities across the UK have access to reliable and accurate news about the issues that matter most to them.

It will launch in Autumn 2019 and run until the end of the financial year. Its outcomes will be used to shape decisions about whether to run a full, expanded fund in the future.

The Government will publish its full response to the Cairncross Review later this year.

ENDS

## **Notes to Editors**

In March 2018 the Government commissioned former journalist Dame Frances Cairncross to deliver an [independent review of the challenges facing high](#)

[quality journalism in the UK](#), putting forward recommendations to help secure its future.

The review looked at the overall state of the news media market, the threats to the financial sustainability of publishers, the impact of search engines and social media platforms, and the role of digital advertising. Some of the report's key findings include:

- Half of UK adults worry about “fake news” or disinformation. A quarter do not know how to verify sources of information they find online. So users need to get the right skills to spot fake news, and platforms must identify and quickly remove the deliberate spread of misinformation on their services.
- Although news can be found on television and radio, written journalism (whether in print or online) originates the largest quantity of original journalism and is most at risk – particularly investigative journalism and democracy reporting.

An [Overview of recent market dynamics in the UK press](#) commissioned by DCMS as the part of the Cairncross Review found:

- Print advertising revenues have dropped by more than two-thirds in the ten years to 2017;
- Print circulation of national papers fell from 11.5 million daily copies in 2008 to 5.8 million in 2018 and for local papers from 63.4 million weekly in 2007 to 31.4 million weekly in 2017;
- Sales of both national and local printed papers fell by roughly half between 2007 and 2017, and are still declining;
- The number of full-time frontline journalists in the UK has dropped from an estimated 23,000 in 2007, to just 17,000 today, and the numbers are still declining.

A report ‘Online Advertising in the UK’ commissioned by DCMS as the part of the Cairncross Review (and available as an annex to the Review) found:

- UK internet advertising expenditure increased from £3.5 billion in 2008 to £11.5 billion in 2017, a compound annual growth rate of 14%.
  - Publishers rely on display advertising for their revenue online – which in the last decade has transformed into a complex, automated system known as programmatic advertising.
  - An estimated average of £0.62 of every £1 spent on programmatic advertising goes to the publisher – though this can range from £0.43 to £0.72.
  - Collectively, Facebook and Google were estimated to have accounted for over half (54%) of all UK online advertising revenues in 2017.
  - The major online platforms collect multiple first-party datasets from large numbers of logged-in users. They generally do not share data with third-parties, including publishers.
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# Brokenshire orders house builders to protect wildlife

- 'Hedgehog highways' recommended for new housing estates for the first time
- Swifts and other wildlife to coexist with new homes during building
- Rules recommend ways developers can identify new habitat for wildlife

Developers have been ordered to do more to protect Britain's cherished wildlife, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP announced today (Sunday 21 July).

For the first time the government has set out its expectations on how developers can protect specific species, including using 'hedgehog highways' and hollow swift bricks – which are installed into the walls of new build homes, allowing the birds to nest safely. This follows public interest for protecting these much-loved animals, with one petition receiving support from over half a million people.

From submitting proposals to councils to then building new homes, house builders should think about the long-term impact of their developments on the local ecosystem, both during and after construction.

This includes greater emphasis on using innovative ways to allow nature to thrive – such as drainage areas to create attractive wetlands for birds and amphibians to live alongside people.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Building the new homes this country needs must not come at the detriment of our natural heritage.

It's right that as we deliver houses for people, we must also provide homes for wildlife too – whether that's for hedgehogs, frogs, newts or birds.

The public have told us that protecting wildlife is important to them – so my message to house builders is to harness this support and get building in a way that protects the environment for the next generation.

The Communities Secretary has also called for developers to plant more trees and green meadows – giving vital insects such as the British honey bee a safe haven to thrive.

The [guidance](#) published today builds on the government's planning rulebook adopted last year, which set out the bold new principle of environmental net gain, where developers have to ensure space for wildlife is provided in

addition to the new homes they wish to build.

A 'hedgehog highway' can be created by making space for hedgehogs to roam through back gardens, allowing them to seek food and habitat to nest. This can range from making small holes in the base of garden fences to removing the fences entirely, creating a free-flowing green space.

Swift bricks are installed into the outer wall of a new home during the construction process, allowing the birds to nest peacefully throughout the year once the home is completed.

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## Crack down on misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements in the workplace

- clarity for victims on disclosing wrongdoing to the police, regulated health and care professionals, and legal professionals
- "We will not tolerate the use of NDAs to silence and intimidate victims to prevent them speaking out", said Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst
- new legislation through the government's Good Work Plan to create a fairer workplace for all

NDAs can be used by businesses for a number of legitimate reasons but in a minority of cases they are being abused and those that sign them not made aware of their rights.

Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst today (Sunday 21 July 2019) announced plans for new legislation which will, for the first time, prohibit NDAs being used to prevent individuals from disclosing information to the police, regulated health and care professionals, or legal professionals, such as a doctor, lawyer, or social worker.

The updated legislation will also:

- ensure employers make clear the limitations of a confidentiality clause, in plain English, within a settlement agreement and in a written statement for an employee, so individuals signing them fully understand what they are signing and their rights
- extend current legislation so that individuals signing NDAs will get independent legal advice on the limitations of a confidentiality clause – including making clear that information can still be disclosed to police, regulated health and care professionals, or legal professionals regardless of an NDA
- introduce new enforcement measures to deal with confidentiality clauses that do not comply with legal requirements – for example, an NDA in a settlement agreement that does not follow new legislative requirements

will be legally void

Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

The vast majority of businesses comply with the law and use NDAs legitimately – from protecting commercially sensitive information to preventing information being shared with competitors.

As we have seen in the news recently, there are a handful of employers using NDAs to cover-up criminal acts in the workplace, including sexual harassment, assault and racist discrimination.

We will not tolerate the use of NDAs to silence and intimidate victims from speaking out. The new legislation will stamp out misuse, tackle unacceptable workplace cultures, protect individuals and create a level playing field for businesses that comply with the law.

Women and Equalities Minister, Penny Mordaunt, said:

Sexual harassment is illegal, yet individuals are still reporting abhorrent ordeals in the workplace.

Today's announcement will work alongside the consultation I launched earlier this month setting out further protections for workers against this type of vile behaviour.

Chief Executive of the Equality & Human Rights Commission Rebecca Hilsenrath said:

Harassment and discrimination should never go unanswered and unchallenged just because victims are prevented from speaking out. This new legislation will help to end ambiguity about employees' rights and stop the misuse of NDAs to protect corporate and personal reputations and obstruct justice.

The use of NDAs is only part of the problem of workplace harassment and discrimination, and employers must step up to protect their employees from this appalling behaviour before it happens. We are developing new guidance on NDAs and tackling harassment which will provide further clarity for employers and help them create safe and supportive working environments.

Currently, confidentiality clauses, or NDAs, cannot prevent an individual from reporting wrongdoing in the public interest, known as making a protected disclosure or 'whistleblowing'. These could include a criminal offence, danger to health and safety, or failing to comply with a legal obligation. Confidentiality clauses and NDAs can also not prevent an individual from



taking a matter to an employment tribunal.

The current law:

- Confidentiality clauses are provisions which seek to prohibit the disclosure of information. They can serve a useful and legitimate purpose in the workplace in protecting trade secrets and other confidential information pertaining to an employer such as intellectual property, information about how a company operates or its clients.
- In many cases it is a normal part of accepting a role in a company to sign an agreement, usually an employment agreement, which contains a confidentiality clause. Case law has also established that all employment contracts contain an implicit expectation of confidentiality. However, this only extends to information which has a necessary quality of confidence and cannot be used to cloak immoral or grossly unfair behaviour.
- Settlement agreements can be used to help resolve workplace disputes without the need to escalate matters to an Employment Tribunal. They can cover matters other than harassment and discrimination and can also be used in situations where an employee is leaving a business without acrimony.
- Settlement agreements can bind both parties in a dispute to confidentiality, and help them move on with a clean break, assured that neither party will be able to talk about the circumstances leading to the agreement. Stakeholder organisations say that this confidentiality can help people to gain future employment.

In March 2019, the government launched a [consultation](#) to seek evidence and views of the use of confidentiality clauses in the employment context. This included consulting on a number of proposals to limit the misuse of confidentiality clauses and enhance clarity for individuals on what they should and should not cover.

The reforms to NDAs, or confidentiality clauses, form part of a wider response to sexual harassment in the workplace.

The [government's response to the Women and Equalities Committee's 2018 report on sexual harassment in the workplace](#) sets out our plans to further tackle the issue of sexual harassment.

The government recently launched a [consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace](#), to ensure that laws are operating effectively and that we have the right laws and processes in place to keep people safe.

The Women and Equalities Committee published their inquiry report into the use of confidentiality clauses in June 2019. A number of the Committee's recommendations have been addressed in this consultation response. We will fully respond to the WESC's recommendations in due course.

The [Good Work Plan](#) was announced in December 2018 and formed the government response to the independent [Taylor Review of impact modern working practices](#) (2017). The review found that the strength of the UK's labour market is built

on flexibility but that a clearer focus was needed on quality of work as well as the quantity of jobs.