

## **Foreign Secretary statement on Iranian actions in the Strait of Hormuz**

I had a fairly long conversation with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif, this afternoon. And it's clear from talking to him and also statements made by Iran that they see this as a tit-for-tat situation, following Grace1 being detained in Gibraltar. Nothing could be further from the truth. Grace1 was detained legally in Gibraltar waters because it was carrying oil against EU sanctions, to Syria, and that's why Gibraltar authorities acted totally with respect to due process and totally within the law.

The Stena Impero was seized in Omani waters in clear contravention of international law. It was then forced to sail into Iran. This is totally and utterly unacceptable.

It raises very serious questions about the security of British shipping and indeed international shipping in the Straits of Hormuz. And so, we spent a long time this afternoon in COBR discussing how we can guarantee the security of British and international shipping. A statement will be made to Parliament on Monday to update the House of Commons and the country on the measures that we are going to take, the further measures. But already this weekend we have raised the threat level to level three – that was a decision made by the Transport Secretary. But we will take further measures and announce those measures going forward on Monday.

Our priority continues to be to find a way to de-escalate the situation. That's why I reached out to the Iranian Foreign Minister, that's why due process in Gibraltar continues. But, we need to see due process happening in Iran as well. We need to see the illegal seizing of a British-flagged vessel reversed, we need that ship released, and we continue to be very concerned about the safety and welfare of the 23 crew members.

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## **£750,000 awarded to support victims of sexual abuse**

Six groups supporting victims and survivors of sexual abuse have received £750,000 from the Home Office to set up support lines, counselling services and specialist tailored support.

The funding, awarded through the Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (SVSCSA) and the National Sexual Violence Support Fund (NSVSF) will be invested in UK-wide projects to support victims and survivors as they rebuild their lives.

Projects being funded through the SVSCSA are:

- National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) to fund a support line for adults who suffered abuse in childhood
- NSPCC's Letting the Future in programme to support children with learning difficulties who have been sexually abused
- Safeline's specialised telephone and online counselling service for adult survivors of sexual abuse

Projects to receive funding through the NSVSF are:

- Rape Crisis England and Wales's services, including specialist website, to support victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence
- The Survivors Trust's services to work directly with survivors of sexual violence
- Survivors Manchester's Male Survivor Partnership, to increase awareness of and support to male victims and survivors of sexual violence

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Sexual violence and sexual abuse are horrific crimes, which shatter the lives of victims.

The work of these organisations in supporting survivors is important and will provide people a lifeline and hope when they need it.

This funding will make a real difference in ensuring that any victim of sexual violence or abuse – adult or child, man or woman – receives the support they need as they rebuild their life.

National Association for People Abused in Childhood chief executive Gabrielle Shaw said:

Over the past year, NAPAC has doubled the capacity of its support line, helping more survivors than ever before. This funding will

help us to support around twelve thousand survivors who call our support line in the coming year.

We also plan to double the number of survivors accessing in-depth support through our support group programme, which uses innovative and proven approaches to trauma recovery, based on the latest research.

NSPCC head of development and impact Jon Brown said:

We are delighted to be awarded this funding from the Home Office which will enable the NSPCC to further develop and assess the impact of our therapeutic work specifically tailored to meet the needs of children and young people with learning difficulties who have been sexually abused.

Safeline chief executive Neil Henderson said:

Many survivors of childhood sexual abuse find it very hard to speak face to face about their experiences and so the telephone online counselling service is a very effective alternative.

Safeline is one of the few specialist support agencies in the UK who have this capability and can offer this type of support and we feel very proud that the Home Office have recognized the value of this service.

Survivors Manchester chief executive & co-founder of Male Survivors Partnership Duncan Craig said:

We are delighted that the Home Office is committed to investing in the Male Survivors Partnership through the NSVS Fund, which will allow us to build on the foundations we have already laid in supporting organisations to deliver quality assured services to boys and men affected by sexual violence.

This grant, which follows the historic position statement on male victims affected by crimes recognised in the VAWG strategy, will develop our workforce; increase our offer to support organisations, and help us build a wider evidence base to identify the changing and specific needs of male victims and survivors.

Rape Crisis England & Wales chief executive Dr C Quinn said:

This grant will help Rape Crisis England & Wales to continue improving the lives of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, rape and all forms of sexual violence, and representing and promoting their needs and rights. It will contribute to both our direct support work with victims and survivors, and to the support and resources we provide our member Rape Crisis Centres and their specialist services.

Survivor's Trust chief executive Fay Maxted OBE said:

Rape and sexual abuse can devastate lives and leave a lifelong impact on all aspects of someone's life. This funding will allow the Survivors Trust to continue to provide strategic support and representation for the specialist voluntary sector services that fulfil such a crucial role in helping victims and survivors to recover and seek justice.

Demand for support is at an all time high, and our role is even more important in ensuring that the voices of survivors and specialist voluntary sector services are included in policy and service delivery plans.

The SVSCSA funding is part of a wider package of funding to support victims of child sexual abuse. In each of the last three years the government has provided £7 million in funding for charities supporting victims and survivors, including £1.7 million for rape support centres and £4.7 million for police and crime commissioners to support organisations working locally with victims and survivors.

In addition, the Home Office has provided funding for the establishment of 'The Lighthouse' a pioneering service for victims of child sexual abuse offering medical, investigative and emotional support all under one roof. It is the first facility of its kind in the UK

The NSVSF funding has been provided through open competition since 2018. Before this, the Home Office provided core funding to organisations to support victims of rape and sexual violence from 2011.

Alongside supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse, the government has committed to tackling these crimes head on.

The Home Secretary has made tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse his personal mission. Last month he announced the government would be publishing a Child Sexual Abuse strategy to drive improvements in tackling offenders and supporting victims, both online and offline.

In April this year, the government launched its Online Harms White Paper which sets out ways to keep children safe online, including imposing a statutory duty of care on tech companies, enforced by an independent regulator.

In addition, the government is committed to supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence. Earlier this year, the Home Office published a refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy which sets out additional measures to tackling this issue including an end-to-end review into how rape and sexual violence cases are handled in the criminal justice system and commissioning research into the connection between pornography and violence against women.

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## **BROKESHIRE UNVEILS NEW MEASURES TO STAMP OUT 'POOR DOORS'**

- Measures will tackle segregation and help put a stop to so-called 'poor doors' and playgrounds that keep children apart
- Announcement comes as Communities Secretary unveils new plans for a 'national conversation' after Brexit
- Research reveals extent of stigma towards social housing

New measures to tackle stigma and help end the segregation of social housing residents in mixed-tenure developments have been unveiled by Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP.

The move aims to stamp out so-called "poor doors" – where entrances for social housing residents stigmatise and divide them from other residents in the development – and other forms of segregation, such as restrictions on access to playgrounds.

This month marks 100 years since the advent of social housing, but a new survey today reveals nearly a quarter of people would "feel uncomfortable" living close to council and housing association properties.

Under the measures, planning guidance will be toughened up and a new Design Manual will promote best practice in inclusive design.

They form a part of the Government's new Communities Framework, which lays out a vision for building communities with a stronger sense of belonging and shared prosperity.

It also commits the Government to leading a 'national conversation' with communities across the country after Brexit about the type of country we want to be.

## **Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:**

I've been appalled by stories of segregation and tenants being denied access to certain shared facilities such as playgrounds.

Social housing has transformed the lives of millions of people over the past 100 years. It has the power to continually shape lives for the better, but we need to see residents being treated with the respect they deserve.

We want to end that real sense of stigma social housing residents have experienced, and today's new measures show our commitment to stamping it out, before it can begin.

In March, it was reported that social housing residents at the Baylis Old School site in Lambeth, south London, were prevented from accessing a communal playground which could only be used by their wealthier neighbours.

The new Design Manual will set clear expectations for the inclusivity of future developments and help ensure planning decisions promote social interaction in communities.

The new survey, the first-ever detailed research on public attitudes to social housing, shows a generational divide in attitudes, with older people less likely to feel comfortable living close to council and housing association properties. 38 per cent of over 65s reported feeling comfortable, compared to 53 per cent of 18 to 25-year-olds.

As part of the Government's engagement with social housing residents before and after publication of the Social Housing Green Paper, residents raised stigma as a key issue facing them. The new measures follow the publication of this Green Paper, which made clear our commitment to tackling this issue.

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## **Environmental checks around Grenfell Tower**

### **Grenfell – Stage 1 environmental checks**

Environmental checks in and around the Grenfell Tower site were announced last October and have been carried out over the spring and summer of 2019.

This is a two-stage process and the laboratory analysis of Stage 1 by the independent specialist AECOM is now complete and the preliminary data is now available. This information will let us know if the soil has been

contaminated by the Grenfell Tower fire and whether there are any health risks as a result.

The initial findings are:

- At this point, the levels of substances found in samples are typical of those generally found in London and other urban areas across England.
- At the moment there is nothing to suggest anyone needs to take any immediate action or that we need to change the investigation strategy or update the existing health advice from Public Health England.
- Substances tested for in the soil do not appear to be present at high enough concentrations to lead to what is legally defined as a 'significant possibility of significant harm'.
- Some levels of substances were above what are known as 'soil screening levels'. This does not mean they necessarily pose a risk to health – the levels are similar to those found in other urban areas. If this were purely a legal and regulation matter, findings at these levels would not require any action, but we intend to continue to investigate them.
- Stage 2, which involves further sampling, will proceed as planned so we can be more certain of the findings.

There is more work we need to do to analyse the data and the full report is being worked on. This will be published in September, but we wanted to share any findings as early as possible, which is why we are updating the community today.

## **Stage 1 testing**

In total, AECOM took 93 samples from 20 areas within a 1km radius of the Tower and within the Grenfell Tower site cordon itself.

The sampling sites were decided with help from the community who identified where debris had been found and combined with scientific data from the Met Office about the smoke plume resulting from the fire.

The aim of Stage 1 was to collect background information including through research, a site walkover and exploratory samples from selected publicly accessible areas. The results from Stage 1 will help us to agree where to test and what to test for in the next stage.

Stage 2 will involve more detailed sampling and analysis leading to a report which will provide conclusions and recommendations.

We expect to receive the full Stage 1 report, including the design for Stage

2, from AECOM in September. This will be published in full online and the community will be updated on the findings.

## **Health advice**

The results of this stage did not show levels requiring any action or any change to the investigation strategy and means our health advice to the public remains the same. Until we have full results of all the testing, we should continue to take a precautionary approach.

If any members of the community around Grenfell are concerned about their health, they can contact their GP and ask about the enhanced health check available to them.

These health checks are designed to find the early signs of health problems or underlying health conditions that might have been exacerbated by the fire itself. Their GP will either do these or refer them to another GP practice which does. They are also available at various clinics in North Kensington via our community provider Enhance whom you can call on 020 3434 2500.

Further health information and advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-advice-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>

## **Independent oversight of the testing**

These results are being independently reviewed by the Suitably Qualified Person (SQP), Dr Paul Nathanail of Land Quality Management Ltd, who is checking the specialists' work at each stage.

The testing process has been overseen by an independent group of scientific experts – the Science Advisory Group (SAG). They have released the following statement on the results:

Following a review of technical documents and a meeting with AECOM and the SQP, the SAG has concluded that the programme of environmental checks for Stage 1 was scientifically rigorous and that the SAG has confidence in the measurement data.

## **Next steps**

Stage 2 testing will continue as planned.

We appreciate the community's continued involvement and help as this work continues and we will communicate further details about the next stage of testing as soon as we can. As before, any decisions about the next stage of testing will be taken with the involvement of the community.

Further information about the soil and environmental checks process can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/eu.cas.ms/guidance/soil-and-environmental-checks>



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# Brokenshire unveils new plan for building stronger communities

Communities Secretary Rt Hon. James Brokenshire today (20 July 2019) laid out the government's vision for building a stronger sense of belonging and shared prosperity within local communities.

The new Community Framework: 'By deeds and their results: how we will strengthen our communities and nation', published today, sets out how the government will work with local and national partners such as businesses, faith institutions, local authorities and volunteer groups to help build stronger, more empowered and integrated communities across England.

'By deeds and their results' commits to:

- Holding a national conversation with communities across England after Brexit, about their view of who we are as a nation, their vision for the future of their community and our country, and what local and national government can do to support their communities to thrive.
- Establishing a series of Civic Deal pilots to test the principles of this Framework in local areas, by putting communities more in control of decisions and by strengthening local partnerships and civic infrastructure.
- Publishing a Communities White Paper to renew the government's focus on building stronger communities across England.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon. James Brokenshire said:

We're committed to creating stronger, more confident and integrated communities, where people have a real say over the decisions that matter most to them locally.

Our new framework will help ensure that community voices are heard, valued and produce change so that no community is left behind.

Going forward, we will promote and strengthen the common themes that bind places and people together, promote opportunity and celebrate the great neighbourhoods we live and work in.