

[Press release: Attorney General appoints new Senior Treasury Counsel](#)

The Attorney General, Rt Hon Geoffrey Cox QC MP, has appointed 2 new members to his Senior Treasury Counsel.

Alison Morgan QC and William Emlyn Jones have been appointed for 3 years. Alison Morgan was appointed Junior Treasury Counsel in July 2012, while William Emlyn Jones was appointed as Junior Treasury Counsel in July 2014.

The Treasury Counsel prosecutes some of the most serious criminal cases in the country.

The title 'Treasury Counsel' derives from when the Crown Counsel was instructed by the Treasury Solicitor at the Central Criminal Court. That procedure changed in 1908 and since then the Director of Public Prosecutions has instructed the Permanent Counsel there.

Treasury Counsel is appointed by the Attorney General and is divided into 2 groups: Senior Treasury Counsel and Junior Treasury Counsel.

[News story: HS2 reaches 9,000 jobs](#)

- 9,000 jobs around the UK are now supported by the delivery of HS2, as work is well underway across 250 work sites
- Over 30,000 jobs will be supported by the programme at peak construction
- Over 320 of the 2,000 expected apprentices are already on board
- 2,000 business have provided work for HS2, 98% of which are British

The news comes as work on the route from London to Birmingham continues to gather pace, with activity on over 250 work sites.

Over 2,000 firms across the UK now have contracts with HS2, 70% of them SMEs and 98% of them British. At peak construction, over 30,000 people will be needed to design and build the railway. Since Royal Assent in 2017, there have been 324 apprenticeships within HS2 Ltd and the supply chain.

Activity across the first phase of the route is part of HS2's enabling works. These are designed to prepare the way for viaducts, embankments, stations and ultimately the railway line itself. Works include land clearance, demolitions, tree planting, archaeology, utility diversions, and environmental mitigations, and much of this is centred around HS2's new station sites in Birmingham, Old Oak Common and Euston.

Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, said:

Delivering HS2 is a manifesto commitment. Today's announcement shows HS2 is happening and is yet another example of how this government is making sure Britain works for everyone, delivering jobs and growth across the country.

And this is just the beginning. At its peak HS2 will directly provide 30,000 jobs not only on the route but across the UK and when ready will deliver the vital extra capacity – both new intercity capacity and in the space it releases for freight and intra-urban commuter services on existing lines – and connections needed to not only drive productivity growth but to deliver regeneration across the Midlands, North of England and beyond.

Mark Thurston, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, said:

HS2 is more than a railway, it's also an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy for the country. The jobs and skills that we will create in every corner of the country will give us an industry to be proud of, and one that we can export to other countries.

As work gathers pace on the project, the jobs and opportunities for British businesses to get involved mean the benefits are here and now. Britain once led the world in railway engineering, and it can once again be at its forefront through HS2.

Matthew Fell, Chief UK Policy Director at CBI, said:

HS2 is a critical piece of national infrastructure, central to the country's future prosperity. It offers a golden opportunity to boost economies across the North and Midlands, creating thousands of new jobs – both during construction and for years to come – by attracting investment from home and abroad.

The Curzon Street site in Birmingham

This site, which will be the home of the city's new landmark station, is spearheading multi-million pound investment and regeneration proposals as a result of HS2's arrival. The station site, and surrounding Eastside district, which offers the first glimpse of the city for millions of passengers arriving by train, is filled with cranes and plant operatives preparing the way for its new lease of life.

- Curzon Street site has transformed the area in preparation for Birmingham's brand new HS2 station.
- The site spans 25,000 square metres, and 20,000 tonnes of concrete have

been broken up, crushed and ready to be re-used on site.

- The crushed concrete has been levelled to provide a working platform for archaeological investigations and remediation. It will be left as such until the site is developed at a later date.
- Two buildings are being demolished at the site of the former Unite student accommodation which covers an area of 3,000 square metres. This will yield around 30,000 tonnes of material, with works being undertaken by the Birmingham-based demolitions firm, DSM.

Washwood Heath in Birmingham

Signs that Birmingham is getting HS2-ready continue 2.5 miles away in Washwood Heath, as another Midlands firm Total Reclaims Demolition makes way for HS2's new train maintenance depot.

- The immense old site of the Alstom Rail Depot is 110,282 square metres – the size of 15 football pitches – and will yield 412,000 tonnes of material that will be recycled.
- With 50,000 hours of labour required to clear the site, the team is now 75% of the way through the work programme.
- Situated in the heart of one of Birmingham's most deprived wards and constituencies, the site has been neglected for almost 15 years.
- The new depot will play a pivotal role in regenerating the area, and once complete over 500 jobs will provide opportunities for local people.
- Through HS2 Ltd's supply chain, 12 local residents have already been supported into jobs through early works contractor LM-JV and security firm Servest.

Euston station

Across the capital, more than two thirds of demolitions have now been completed, with more than 1,000 people at work on the project.

- In Euston, the area surrounding the existing station is transforming at a pace, with 2 high rise towers which dominated the area in front of the station currently being demolished, ready for the extensive remodelling of the station.
- The 6 month demolition of the former Ibis hotel on Cardington Street has been completed, removing almost 9,000 tonnes of material with 95% set to be recycled or reused on site.
- The clearance of the nearby disused National Temperance Hospital buildings was delivered in 2 stages, with the second half, the Insull wing, now also complete.
- Both projects were delivered by HS2's enabling works contractor, a Costain and Skanska joint venture (CSjv), working with subcontractors Keltbray.

Old Oak Common

Demolition of the former railway sheds at Old Oak Common is now well underway, alongside earth remediation and general clearance of the 1 kilometre long site, ready for the construction of HS2's West London super-

hub.

- The site of our future London Rail Logistics Hub at Willesden, West London, has now been completely cleared.
- The vast 150,000 metre squared rail hub is expected to process more than 6 million tonnes of excavated material from the London tunnels – taking the equivalent of 300,000 HGVs off the roads.
- At nearby Victoria Road, a 42,000 square metre site has been cleared, a space equivalent to the size of 6 football pitches, in order to begin the build of the Victoria Road Crossover Box, a huge underground structure designed to allow trains passing through the London tunnels to switch tracks.
- The government has already awarded £250 million to kick start further development of the area. The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation is driving a regeneration programme on the back of the HS2 and Elizabeth line hub that will see 65,000 jobs and 25,000 homes on the 650ha development site.

[Speech: Progress towards political, economic and security reforms in Somalia](#)

Thank you very much, Mr President and a huge thank you to our briefers, Mr Zenega and Mr Madeira and to the Assistant Secretary-General. It's very good to have this. It's the first briefings we've had since UNSOM's mandate was renewed.

I think the first thing to say, Mr President, is that when we had the last meeting many of us noted that 2019 would be a very important year for Somalia – and I might even go as far as to say it would set the trend of Somalia's development for years to come. I think an important signifier of that is the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and we hope he can be in post soon. And we hope in turn that that becomes an opportunity to reset the UN-Somalia relationship and to find a way forward on the Panel of Experts. Restoration of cooperation with the UN and the international community is very important. I know the Somali Government has been thinking about this as well and that's very welcome. I think the ASG's last points show quite why this is so critical. Somalia needs the guidance and technical capability of the UN to help it with some of the detailed issues that the ASG was mentioning.

I just wanted to thank Mr Onanga for standing in and holding the fort in the interregnum between the two SRSGs. I think it's important on an occasion like this, Mr President to say something about the bravery of AMISOM in Somalia and also the great efforts made by the African Union, which we appreciate.

The UN, Somalia and international partners there need to work in tandem to deliver the transition plan. I think that in tandem, in cooperation, working coherently together is a really vital part of the prospects for success. We all want to get to a stage where Somalia leads on providing security for its people. So for the United Kingdom we really welcome efforts to build the impetus in the AMISOM mandate renewal currently ongoing. But I would just stress, Mr President, that in my experience, these things work best when troop numbers are allied to the tasks that the troops have to do and not the other way round.

As I said, 2019 is important. In fact probably the next 12 months are going to be critical to making progress on political, economic and security reforms ahead of the elections in 2020/2021. And we all know that political agreements between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States are going to be at the heart of Somalia's stability and prosperity. I think in order to bring that about it's very important that there's regular and constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States, particularly on the constitutional review, the electoral laws, the implementation of the security pact and the delivery of the transition plan. And I was interested to see about the prospects for the Somalia Partnership Forum which will meet this Summer.

I think the Council, Mr President would find it useful to have regular meetings and briefings so that we can help chart progress. I think it's important that we think about how we can support all sides being able to fulfil the agreed partnership principles in that forum. And it be very good to have a sense of where the UN sees the key priorities there and how they relate to the National Development Plan.

I just wanted to say something about the humanitarian situation. We wanted to have a humanitarian brief because of the deterioration – as a result of the drought. In some ways the early warning indicators we see are worse than those we witnessed two years ago. We are about to announce additional support. We hope others might be able to do likewise. I think we all know there's a real opportunity here to help Somalia get back on track, but it has very many components, one of which is cooperation with the UN. Obviously, the transition plan is important and in fact critical and anything AMISOM can do to support transition priorities is also very critical.

Thank you.

[Press release: Cyber innovation at the forefront of UK's approach to modern](#)

warfare

Speaking this evening at the NATO Cyber Defence Pledge Conference in London, Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt will address the need for the UK and NATO members to recognise offensive cyber as central to modern warfare. As the UK has already demonstrated against Daesh in the Middle East, it can be a vital tool to keep people in the UK and overseas safe from virtual and physical threats.

The military continues to develop its cyber capabilities as part of the £1.9 billion investment into the National Cyber Security Strategy, focused on boosting the UK's cyber security. Recent UK innovations have included the creation of the National Cyber Security Centre which brings together government, intelligence agencies and the private sector into one organisation. The state-of-the-art Defence Cyber School, which marked its first anniversary in March this year, is also training the next generation of cyber experts.

The Defence Secretary will today expand that commitment, announcing £22 million in funding to stand up new Army cyber operations centres across the UK.

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt will say:

We know all about the dangers. Whether the attacks come from Russia, China or North Korea. Whether they come from hacktivists, criminals or extremists. Whether its malware or fake news. Cyber can bring down our national infrastructure and undermine our democracy.

It's time to pay more than lip service to cyber. We must convince our adversaries their advances simply aren't worth the cost. Cyber enemies think they can act with impunity. We must show them they can't. That we are ready to respond at a time and place of our choosing in any domain, not just the virtual world.

We need coherent cyber offense as well as defence. So today I can announce we will be investing £22m to create new cyber operations centres.

Putting the Army at the forefront of information warfare, the centres will draw together cyber capability from a range of sources – including both national intelligence and open source data – to give the Army the competitive edge across all environments.

The cyber centres will provide the Army with 24/7 information and analysis, dispel misinformation and give the UK Armed Forces and our allies the upper hand on emerging digital threats. The centres are likely to be used to support overseas operations, humanitarian missions, and efforts to protect UK

digital communications on home soil.

The centres will work with existing Army capabilities, such as 77 Brigade – a modern and information-focused British Army unit – but will also have regular contact with joint and other national security organisations.

Major General Tom Copinger-Symes, General Officer Commanding Force Troops Command:

These new cyber centres will allow the Army and Defence to transform the way we use data, at speed, so that we can compete with our adversaries in a way fit for the 21st Century.

Combining artificial intelligence with our military analysts will help us better understand threats and exploit opportunities, in turn enabling us to get the truth out much more rapidly, quashing the noise of disinformation from our enemies.

While details on locations are yet to be confirmed, building in support of the centres is due to begin next year, with operations expected to commence in the early 2020s.

The MOD is embracing transformation at an ever-faster rate and investments in truly high-tech innovation, such as in the provision of cutting-edge cyber centres, that will develop the Armed Forces of the future.

[Speech: Resolution on the British Indian Ocean Territories](#)

Thank you very much indeed, Madam President.

In a moment, I'd like to set out why the United Kingdom opposes this resolution tabled by Senegal on behalf of the Africa Group.

First, I would like to place on record – and I'm very sorry he is not yet at his seat to hear it – I'd like to place on record the United Kingdom's warm and deep respect, regard and friendship for Mauritius. It was very good to see the Prime Minister here today even though I might wish it was a more cooperative venture that had enticed him to New York.

The United Kingdom is a key trade and investment partner of Mauritius and we are committed to building a partnership that will see Mauritius thrive economically with a focus on financial services, innovation and education. My Prime Minister and Prime Minister Jugnauth discussed this when they met in London on 18 March.

I repeat this gladly today: for the United Kingdom, Mauritius is a friend and ally in an important part of the world. Maintenance of the security and stability of the Indian Ocean region is vital to the maintenance of international and regional peace and security. To the east lie the Malacca Straits, transited by cargo vessels over 84,000 times in 2017. To the west lies the Gulf of Aden, through which one eighth of world trade passes annually.

In this important part of the world, the joint United Kingdom and United States defence facility on the British Indian Ocean Territory plays a vital role in our efforts to keep our allies and friends, including Mauritius, in the region, and beyond, safe and secure.

Madam President, the world is a dangerous and an uncertain place. This facility does keep people and countries safe and secure. It is vital to efforts to combat conflict, terrorism, drugs, crime, and piracy.

It supports partners in the Combined Maritime Forces, a multi-national naval partnership comprised of 33 UN Member States, from Latin America to Asia Pacific, whose areas of operation cover 3.2 million square miles and include some of the most strategically important shipping lanes in the world including the Gulf of Aden, Bab al-Mandeb, the Suez Canal, and the Straits of Hormuz.

It is the site of one of the world's four GPS stations, used widely for military and civilian navigation.

It hosts seismic monitoring capabilities that support the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

And the facility stands ready to assist in times of humanitarian crisis. In recent years it has contributed heavily to international humanitarian responses to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami; the 2011 earthquake and tsunami affecting Japan; and the 2013 typhoon affecting the Philippines. The facility also supported search and rescue missions in support of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370.

Madam President, the United Kingdom is not in doubt about our sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory. It has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Contrary to what has been said today, it has never been part of the Republic of Mauritius.

In 1965, the Mauritian Council of Ministers freely entered into an agreement to detach the British Indian Ocean Territory in return for a range benefits including fishing rights and natural and marine resources. The agreement also included a commitment by the United Kingdom to cede the Territory – I use the word “cede” here deliberately, not “give back” – to cede the territory when it is no longer needed for defence purposes. And I've just outlined those defence purposes.

Madam President, the United Kingdom stands by our commitments made in the 1965 agreement. We disagree with the earlier characterisation of the

agreement. The Mauritian government reaffirmed the 1965 agreement on many occasions since its independence in 1968, including through its own laws and constitution.

It is worth noting here that this 1965 agreement, including the commitment to cede when no longer needed for defence purposes, was held to be legally binding by the 2015 UNCLoS Tribunal Arbitration Award.

I want to turn, if I may Madam President, to the issue of the Chagos Islands themselves. And I want to use this opportunity to state again, as the current UK Government and its predecessors have done before, the United Kingdom's sincere regret about the manner in which Chagossians were removed from the British Indian Ocean Territory in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The resolution before us calls for the resettlement of Mauritian nationals, including those of Chagossian origin, on the Territory. Let me reassure you that the United Kingdom has looked very closely at the question of Chagossian resettlement. We commissioned an independent feasibility study and undertook a public consultation with Chagossians and other stakeholders. It was only after having considered carefully all of the available information that the United Kingdom decided not to support resettlement on the grounds of feasibility, defence, security interests and cost. While we have ruled out resettlement, we are determined to improve the livelihoods of Chagossians in the communities where they now live. So we are currently working with Chagossian communities not just in Mauritius, but also in the Seychelles and the United Kingdom itself to implement a \$50 million support package. As part of the package, we run heritage visits which allow Chagossians to spend time on the Territory.

Madam President, I need to take a moment to reject unconditionally the allegations that the United Kingdom was engaged in crimes against humanity. This is a very serious allegation Madam President; it's not to be used lightly. It is a gross mischaracterisation of the United Kingdom's position and once again, I rejected without qualification and I hope it won't be repeated.

Madam President, if I may I would like to turn now to the question of the Resolution and the issue before us.

The United Kingdom will vote no on this Resolution. We invite others to join us.

This is not because of a lack of respect for the issue of decolonisation, nor of the UN's role in that process. As I have been saying to regional groups, we are very conscious of our own history. As this Assembly knows, the United Kingdom's own history of working in partnership with many countries as they developed their governance and judicial structures post-independence is well-documented. We are proud now to have many partners across the world based on equality and respect.

Madam President, we would have been happy in principle to work on a joint resolution but the gap between our positions was too great to allow this to

happen.

So let me set out the reasons why we oppose the Resolution. Colleagues will be familiar with the detail of our position from the briefings and from my letter of 14 May. The resolution has been revised since that time, but we remain of the view that the majority of problems with it remain. And I would like to emphasise some specific points:

Madam President, we do not challenge the authority of the General Assembly, let alone the authority of the International Court of Justice. Once again I reject this characterisation of the UK position and I look to Member States not to repeat it. It simply isn't true. But Madam President there is a difficulty with the resolution and with the way we have got to where we are.

Firstly and crucially, the issue between Mauritius and the UK surrounding the Chagos Archipelago is a bilateral sovereignty dispute. The title of the resolution and of the advisory opinion revolves around "decolonisation" but the issue is fundamentally one of disputed sovereignty between two countries. And we heard that as the resolution was introduced today.

Therefore, in giving its advisory opinion the ICJ has allowed the principle, as enshrined in the ICJ's own Statute, that it should not hear bilateral disputes without the consent of both States. It has allowed that principle to be circumvented. This has wider and profound implications for all Member States with bilateral disputes and if the resolution is passed, it will create a difficult precedent in the General Assembly. It would imply that any bilateral dispute between two States could be referred for an advisory opinion to the ICJ and then pronounced on by the General Assembly, whether or not the States involved have consented. I invite colleagues to reflect carefully on that point. If today you are a country which has a bilateral dispute with another Member State, you risk throwing open the door for that dispute to be subject to an advisory opinion of the ICJ and a vote of the General Assembly.

Secondly, the resolution before us still goes beyond the advisory opinion. The resolution sets a six month deadline for the UK. The resolution calls on States, international organisations and institutions, including the United Nations and its Agencies, to take action that could have wide-ranging potential implications for the effective operation of the joint defence facility on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

I set out earlier, Madam President exactly what contribution that facility makes to international peace and security and regional peace and security in the Indian Ocean. These elements are not what the advisory opinion specified and they regrettably represent a clear attempt to extend the scope of the advisory opinion.

Thirdly Madame President, advisory opinions may indeed, from time to time, can carry weight in international law but that does not change the fact that they are not legally binding. They are advice provided to the General Assembly by the ICJ at the General Assembly's request. The UN Charter specifically distinguishes between advisory and contentious proceedings,

drawing a clear line between the binding decisions and the advisory opinions of the ICJ. This specific advisory opinion before us does not, we believe, give sufficient regard to a number of legal and material factual issues, which I have detailed in my letter of 14 May.

Allow me to summarize these. It does not take into account the 2015 legally binding UNCTLOS Tribunal Arbitration Award that held that the 1965 agreement between the United Kingdom and Mauritius was legally binding. This is the agreement in which Mauritius agreed to the detachment of the British Indian Ocean Territory in return for the access and benefits around resources that I outlined earlier. We remain committed to implement of that agreement. And there is additionally a binding treaty obligation between the United Kingdom and the United States to maintain UK sovereignty of British Indian Ocean Territory until at least 2036. The United States Government, most recently Secretary Pompeo and most recently the letter from Ambassador Jonathan Cohen, have made clear that the status of British Indian Ocean Territory as a UK territory is "essential" to the value of the joint facility and our shared interests – an arrangement that cannot be replicated. Further, when advisory opinions have a number of issues within them, as the by it ICJ opinion does, we risk creating an unhelpful precedent institutionally if we treat them as if they were legally binding. This isn't an issue of colonialization, Madam President. This is about using advisory opinions for the purpose for which they were intended.

In conclusion, Madam President, we believe that this binding UNCTLOS Tribunal Arbitration Award is important and we believe the bilateral sovereignty dispute should remain a bilateral matter as a matter of principle both in respect of the case of British Indian Ocean Territory and for wider reasons of concern to Member States. And we believe that the Resolution before us seeks to set an unwelcome precedent in several areas that should be of concern to Member States.

For this reason, Madam President, we will vote no and ask others to join us. For those Member States who do not wish to vote against, we draw your attention to the difficult precedents created by this resolution, which justify abstention.

Thank you, Madam President.

Explanation of vote by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the General Assembly on Resolution A/RES/L.84/Rev.1 Wednesday, 22 May

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom regrets that the General Assembly has today voted to adopt this resolution.

The United Kingdom fully recognises the importance of the issue of decolonisation and the UN's role in that. The United Kingdom, as I said earlier in my statement, sincerely regrets the manner in which Chagossians were removed from British Indian Ocean territory in the 1960s and the 1970s

and we are determined to improve their lives where they have resettled.

Madam President, a grave accusation was made against the United Kingdom this morning. It is without foundation and I repeat that we reject it in full.

Madam President, the United Kingdom has no doubt about our sovereignty over British Indian Ocean Territory. The issue put today before the General Assembly remains at heart a bilateral sovereignty dispute between Mauritius and the UK and we continue to believe that it remains an important principle that bilateral sovereignty disputes should be resolved by the parties themselves. This vote was setting a precedent that should be of concern not only to the United Kingdom but to all Member States in this chamber today that have sovereignty disputes of their own.

I would like to acknowledge, Madam President that the result of today's vote shows that a significant number of Member States share these concerns as witnessed by the high number of abstentions and absences. And I am particularly grateful to those States who voted with the United Kingdom against today's resolution.

I'd like finally Madam President to turn to a point that was made in the debate. I should state that the UK's well-known position on the Falkland Islands remains unchanged. We welcome the principle and the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination as enshrined in the UN charter and this means there can be no dialogue on sovereignty unless and until the Falkland Islanders so wish.

Thank you Madam President.