

Speech: Foreign Secretary sets out his vision to improve media freedom around the world

I'm delighted to be in Ethiopia, where under Prime Minister Abiy's leadership the new government has transformed political discourse by allowing the creation of hundreds of websites, blogs and newspapers.

Since the Prime Minister assumed office last year, Ethiopia has climbed the World Press Freedom Index faster than any other country, rising 40 places and showing just how much can be achieved when the political will exists.

In a world where 99 journalists were killed last year – and another 348 locked up by governments – some of the brightest spots are perhaps where some would least expect: right here in Africa.

Gambia, for example, has climbed 30 places in the Index. Namibia has moved up again to keep its place as the country with the freest media in Africa.

So as we mark World Press Freedom Day, I want to start by celebrating the best of African journalism.

Whether it is the courageous investigations of Anas Aremeyaw Anas, who I was privileged to meet in Ghana,

or Patrick Gathara's insights into Kenyan politics, Charles Onyango-Obbo's incisive commentary on Uganda,

or the cartoons of Gado in East Africa and Zapiro in South Africa which show that a skilful caricature is worth a thousand words.

Whether it is the editors who bring out independent newspapers against the odds; the journalists who brave threats and intimidation; or the bloggers who keep a vigilant eye on their leaders; all know better than anyone that a lively and free media provides the best possible safeguard against corruption and misrule.

I congratulate BBC Africa for their investigation in Cameroon last year, which established that the army murdered two women and two children in a massacre in 2015 that was repeatedly denied by the authorities.

As a result, soldiers have been arrested and face justice.

And I pay tribute to the memory of Mohammed Amin, the Kenyan photojournalist, who strove to make the suffering of Ethiopians in the 1980s known to the world.

A force for progress

Today, my argument is simple: media freedom is not a "Western" value, still

less a colonial-style imposition, but instead a force for progress from which everyone benefits.

The Indian Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, defined the “expansion of freedom” as what he called the “pre-eminent objective” of development.

Far from being in tension, he showed that freedom and development were one and the same, and a flourishing media should be seen as part of the broader progress of a nation.

Whatever we politicians claim during election campaigns, no single party or leader or philosophy has a monopoly on wisdom.

Instead the progress of humanity clearly shows that wisdom arises from the open competition between ideas when different viewpoints are given the oxygen to contend freely and fairly.

And by testing those ideas – including questioning authority – ordinary citizens achieve something else too: the precious dignity of being able to decide for themselves what they believe about their country’s future and then make informed decisions as to who their leaders should be.

When everyone is able to exchange ideas freely, a society benefits not just from the brains of the people at the top, but from the originality and creativity of the entire population.

That’s why half of the ten most inventive countries, as ranked by the Global Innovation Index, are also in the top 10 for media freedom.

That’s also why, however fashionable it may be becoming in some countries, the authoritarian model of development is ultimately flawed.

Because even if you reject the dignity of the human spirit as an end in itself and believe the only priority for a poor nation should be economic progress – that progress itself requires innovation, which in turn needs creativity, itself also requiring openness.

So the argument that a free press is a “luxury” which developing countries might “embrace when they are ready” fundamentally misunderstands the role it plays.

A free press is quite simply the first secure basis for prosperity in a world where innovation and technological advance are the central conditions for progress.

By their courage and determination, the people of Sudan have won the chance to reject the authoritarian model and achieve the democracy that is their right. No-one should stand in their way as they make this journey.

But progress – as we see regularly with the displacement of entire industries – is inherently disruptive, which brings me to the second key benefit of a free media.

Because it also provides a channel for people to voice discontent without resorting to violence.

If problems and tensions are bottled up then they are far more likely to boil over.

Stopping journalists from reporting a problem does not make it go away.

In February, The Citizen in Dar-es-Salaam reported a decline in the value of the Tanzanian shilling. How did the Government of Tanzania respond? By forcing the newspaper to close for a week.

This might have helped the Government to vent its frustration, but it did nothing to revalue the shilling.

The truth is that when governments start closing newspapers and suppressing the media, they are more likely to be storing up trouble for the future than preserving harmony.

And far from being a cause of instability, responsible journalism and free media should help to avoid it.

Corruption is one of the biggest sources of anger in many countries.

But far more effective than the crackdowns regularly launched by authoritarian regimes is the sunlight of transparency – just witness the striking overlap between the least corrupt countries in global indices and those with the freest media.

Indeed no fewer than seven of the top ten cleanest nations in the world, as ranked by Transparency International, are also in the top ten for Press Freedom.

And there is no mystery why. Powerful people care about their reputations. They are therefore far less likely to abuse their positions if there is a real risk of exposure.

But I make these arguments as someone who has grown up in a country with a free media. However I only timidly follow in the footsteps of many brave African writers, thinkers and journalists who have been fighting for the cause of media freedom at great personal risk.

Chinua Achebe, the late Nigerian author, said that his country needed a “flourishing free press that will exert checks and balances and put anti-corruption laws on a firm footing”.

And perhaps the greatest freedom fighter that Africa has known, Nelson Mandela, described a “critical, independent and investigative press” as the “lifeblood of any democracy”.

He added: “It is only such a free press that can temper the appetite of any government to amass power at the expense of the citizen...It is only such a free press that can have the capacity to relentlessly expose excesses and

corruption.”

Media Freedom Campaign

I want Britain too to play its part in championing media freedom.

So I've joined my Canadian counterpart, Chrystia Freeland, to launch a global campaign to protect journalists doing their job and promote the benefits of a free media. In July, we will host the world's first ministerial summit on media freedom in London.

Amal Clooney will serve as my Special Envoy, bringing to bear her expertise as a human rights lawyer. She will convene a panel of experts to recommend ways of strengthening the legal protection of journalists.

On this and other subjects, we want to work closely with the African Union and UNESCO, who I thank for hosting us today.

Our overriding aim is to shine a spotlight on abuses and raise the price for those who would murder, arrest or detain journalists just for doing their jobs.

At the same time, we shouldn't forget the international context

Channels like RT – better known as Russia Today – want their viewers to believe that truth is relative and the facts will always fit the Kremlin's official narrative.

Even when that narrative keeps changing. After the Russian state carried out a chemical attack in the British city of Salisbury last year, the Kremlin came up with over 40 separate narratives to explain that incident. Their weapons of disinformation tried to broadcast those narratives to the world. The best defence against those who deliberately sow lies are independent, trusted news outlets. So the British Government is taking practical steps to help media professionals improve their skills.

In Ethiopia, our Embassy has provided training from international experts for 100 journalists in the last two years.

And today I can announce two further elements of support.

Firstly, Britain will provide £15.5 million to support next year's election in Ethiopia, including by helping the National Election Board to run a free and fair contest.

Secondly, I am today inviting applications for a new Chevening Africa Media Freedom Fellowship.

This will create an opportunity for 60 exceptional African journalists over the next five years to gain experience in the newsrooms of Britain's leading media organisations. This year, applicants from 11 African countries will be eligible, including Ethiopia.

Conclusion

Let me close with the words of the South African novelist, A. C. Jordan, who wrote in the Xhosa tongue and whose books were only recently translated.

In his book *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, Jordan portrays “truth” as a formidable wrestler, locked in combat with “falsehood”.

He writes: “But truth there is, without doubt. And it is the greatest force of all. For however much you beat him with your sticks, however fast you chain him, I swear there will be a time when truth will escape from his chains and throw you to the ground, hurt and ashamed.”

That describes, quite simply, what the best journalism is all about. By helping truth to prevail, a free media ultimately helps us all to flourish.

[News story: APHA exhibition stands at industry shows in 2019](#)

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) will be exhibiting at a number of livestock, agricultural, horticultural, bee and veterinary shows in 2019.

Agricultural shows

APHA Veterinary staff will be attending the following livestock industry and agricultural shows:

These shows are an important way for us to meet livestock keepers and answer questions on their animal health and welfare concerns. We can also raise awareness of current disease threats, for example from [African Swine Fever](#), and discuss our [Surveillance](#) services and Field Operation work to help vets to detect, diagnose and control both endemic and exotic diseases in livestock.

Anyone can sign up for [free disease alerts](#) for exotic diseases.

Veterinary show

APHA will be exhibiting at the [London Vet Show](#) on 14 and 15 November at the Excel Centre in east London. We attend this annual event, alongside our colleagues from the [Veterinary Medicines Directorate](#), to raise awareness of the veterinary and para-veterinary careers across the [Government Veterinary Services](#) network. We also talk to attendees about the range of [APHA surveillance](#), diagnostic and veterinary services.

Horticultural shows

The APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate will be attending a wide range of plant/horticulture industry shows to raise awareness of new and emerging plant health threats, changes to legislation and biosecurity best practice.

The shows are as follows:

- 12 – 14 April 2019: [RHS Cardiff Flower Show](#) Bute Gardens, Cardiff
- 5 – 7 June 2019: [Fresh Produce Show](#) Grosvenor House in London
- 5 – 9 June 2019: [RHS Chatsworth Flower Show](#) Chatsworth House, Derbyshire
- 18 – 19 June 2019: [HTA National Plant Show](#) Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
- 17 July 2019: [Fruit Focus](#) East Malling Research, Kent
- 22 – 25 July 2019: [Royal Welsh Show](#) (in the Horticulture Pavilion) Builth Wells, Wales
- 31 July-4 August 2019: [RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show](#) RHS Hyde Hall Chelmsford, Essex
- 16 – 18 August 2019: [RHS Rosemoor](#) RHS Rosemoor, Torrington, Devon
- 3 – 4 September 2019: [Four Oaks Trade Show](#) Macclesfield, Cheshire
- 2 October 2019: [South West Growers Show](#) Matford Centre, Exeter, Devon
- 16 – 17 October 2019: [Aquatics Trade Show](#) Telford International Centre
- 7 November 2019: [GroSouth Horticultural Exhibition](#) Roundstone Nurseries, Chichester, West Sussex.
- 19 November 2019: [Futurescape](#) Sandown Park racecourse, Surrey
- 20 – 21 November 2019: [British Potato Show](#) Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate
- Date and venue to be confirmed: [ICL/HTA Horticultural Science Live](#) (Palmstead)

For further information on the shows page please view the shows websites (listed above) or contact APHA Corporate Communications by email apha.corporatecommunications@apha.gov.uk for other enquiries.

Bee shows

[News story: NHS patients to get faster access to pioneering treatments](#)

New improvements to the Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) will put the most promising medicines, diagnostic tools and digital services through the clinical development and regulatory approval process faster.

The [AAC was set up in 2018](#) to speed up the time it takes for patients to benefit from ground-breaking products for conditions such as cancer, dementia and diabetes.

It will now become the new umbrella organisation for UK health innovation. It will act as the 'front door' for innovators looking to get their products funded by the NHS and will provide support to overcome barriers that can prevent the best medical innovations from reaching patients.

To do this, a new unit in NHS England and NHS Improvement will be established, led by Dr Sam Roberts as chief executive.

The new AAC will:

- implement a system to identify the best new innovations and make sure the NHS is ready to make use of them
- set up a single point of call for innovators working inside or outside the NHS, so they can understand the system and where to go for support
- signal the needs of clinicians and patients, so innovators know which problems they need to solve
- establish a globally leading testing infrastructure, so innovators can generate the evidence they need to get their products into the NHS
- oversee a health innovation funding strategy that ensures public money is focused on the areas of greatest impact for the NHS and patients
- support the NHS to more quickly adopt clinically and cost-effective innovations, to ensure patients get access to the best new treatments and technologies faster than ever before

The AAC has already selected and supported 12 ['rapid uptake products'](#) to increase their use within the NHS. This includes a blood test for pre-eclampsia, which can diagnose the condition earlier in pregnancy and significantly reduce life-threatening complications.

Together the products have the potential to improve the lives of around 500,000 patients and save the NHS up to £30 million.

Health Minister Nicola Blackwood said:

I want the NHS to be at the forefront of cutting-edge treatments and medical innovations – but often it can take too long for products to get from the bench to the bedside.

The Accelerated Access Collaborative will speed up this process so patients and the NHS can be the first in the world to benefit from the most transformative technologies and treatments as part of our Long Term Plan.

Lord David Prior, chair of NHS England, said:

Our ambition is very clear: the NHS will be the most innovative health care system in the world with much easier access and much quicker uptake of new and innovative products. This applies to therapeutics, diagnostics, digital devices and our whole supply chain. It is a top priority for the NHS.

News story: Home Office seeks law change to give police more confidence to pursue suspects

The Home Office is seeking to change the law to ensure that highly trained police drivers, chasing suspected criminals on the roads, and driving to the very high standard required by their training, are better protected from the risk of lengthy investigation and potential prosecution.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid plans to introduce a new legal test aimed at giving police drivers greater confidence to pursue suspects, including those on mopeds.

Current laws do not recognise the training that police response drivers undertake and the tactics they may have to employ to respond to emergencies and pursue criminals.

Police drivers are currently held to the same standards as members of the public and have to rely on the discretion of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to avoid misconduct investigations and criminal prosecution.

Any changes will make it clear that officers should not be held accountable for the driving of a suspected criminal attempting to avoid arrest, providing the pursuit is justified and proportionate.

The move follows a [public consultation](#) which saw the overwhelming majority of respondents back the proposals. Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It's vital police officers feel confident and protected when pursuing suspects on the roads or responding to an emergency.

It's also crucial that we send a clear message that criminals – whether in cars or on mopeds – cannot escape arrest simply by driving recklessly.

These proposed changes will strike the right balance – giving trained officers the confidence they need to fight crime effectively and ensure our roads are safe.

In summary, the changes will seek to:

- introduce a new legal test so that an officer's driving is compared to that of a competent and careful police driver with the same level of training performing the same role, rather than a member of the public

- apply to all police officers trained to response driver level as well as advance driver level, therefore covering those pursuing criminals and also emergency police responders

In addition the government will look to review the various emergency service exemptions to traffic law to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

National Chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, John Apter, said:

We are pleased and reassured by this announcement, which means police officers will be able to spend more time serving their communities rather than facing lengthy court proceedings simply for doing their job.

Police officers are relied upon to respond to emergency and life-threatening situations.

Members of the public would expect police officers to use their skills and training to respond to calls for assistance and a much needed change in the law will enable officers to do that without fear of prosecution.

[News story: Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy welcomes the Committee on Climate Change 'Net Zero' report](#)

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy welcomes the Committee on Climate Change 'Net Zero' report – GOV.UK

Greg Clark welcomes the Committee on Climate Change 'Net Zero' report.



This government committed to legislating for a net zero emissions target in its [Clean Growth Strategy](#) and last year [wrote](#) to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) asking for advice on whether we should set a date.

Today the CCC published its advice recommending a 2050 net zero emissions target.

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark said:

Few subjects unite people across generations and borders like climate change and I share the passion of those wanting to halt its catastrophic effects.

One of our proudest achievements as a country is our position as a world-leader in tackling this global challenge, being the first country to raise the issue on the international stage, introduce long-term legally-binding climate reduction targets and cutting emissions further than all other G20 countries. Today's report recognises the work we've done to lay the foundations to build a net zero economy, from generating record levels of low carbon electricity to our ambitious plans to transition to electric vehicles.

To continue the UK's global leadership we asked the CCC to advise the Government on how and when we could achieve net zero. This report now sets us on a path to become the first major economy to legislate to end our contribution to global warming entirely.

Additional information

- We are convinced of the urgency of action on climate change, which is why we [asked](#) for this advice from the Committee on Climate Change last October.
- We are not immediately accepting the recommendations set out in the Committee on Climate Change's detailed report but will be responding in due course to ensure the UK continues to be a world leader in tackling climate change.
- The UK is committed to tackling climate change and we are a world leader

in cutting emissions while creating wealth. Between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40 per cent while growing the economy by more than two thirds.

- In October 2017, we published our [Clean Growth Strategy](#), setting out our plans for meeting our carbon targets and our ambition to legislate for a net zero emissions target. Since then we have continued to bring forward new policy and deliver on the strategy.
- We also put clean growth at the heart of our modern [Industrial Strategy](#) through making it one of four 'Grand Challenges', boosted by significant innovation funding.
- We've heard the urgent calls to protect our wildlife and habitats, and we are already acting to do so. Our ambitious [25 Year Environment Plan](#) outlines our commitment to supporting and protecting the world's most biodiverse forests, supporting sustainable agriculture and enhancing sustainability, and supporting zero-deforestation supply chains.
- As the Environment Secretary said, the transition to a clean economy "will require us to change the way in which our energy is generated, change the way in which our homes are built, change the way in which our land is managed and farming operates. But that change is absolutely necessary."
- We are playing a leading role internationally, at COP24 in Katowice, we reached global agreement on a robust and transparent rulebook to drive genuine climate action.
- As a world leader in clean growth, we recognise the need to ensure the momentum generated by the Paris Agreement is maintained. Everyone is feeling the impacts of climate change and we know that we need to work with other countries, civil society and businesses to drive ambitious action together.
- To energise the country we've set a date for this year's [Green GB Week](#). From 4 November all parts of society will be hosting events to showcase the challenge and the opportunities of moving to a greener, cleaner economy. More information can be found here.
- We have therefore offered to host [COP26](#) in 2020, and we are committed to ensuring it is a success.

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Thank you for your feedback