

Her Majesty The Queen and the Holy See

Your Excellency Archbishop Gallagher, Rev Sister Jane, Your Eminence, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us this evening as we celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's official birthday in the 70th year of her reign. As we saw in the media over last weekend, this Platinum Jubilee has brought the people of the United Kingdom together in an extraordinary way, in a celebration of Her Majesty's dedication to her people, and in tribute to the longest reign in British history – second only to that of the longest reigning monarch in recorded history, Louis XIV, who reigned a little over 72 years. The Queen's extraordinary reign has seen her travel more widely than any other monarch, undertaking over 260 official visits overseas, including nearly 100 state visits – which is perhaps why these celebrations have echoed so widely across every part of the world.

It is a particular honour for me to be marking this occasion as Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See, given the strong personal relationships she has built with five successive popes, starting as a young princess in 1951 with a meeting with Pius XII here in Rome. Also given the central role her faith has played in the performance of her duties. From her first recorded broadcast, on her 21st birthday, when she dedicated her whole life in that now famous phrase, 'whether it be short or long', to the service of her people and called on God to help her make good her vow. And we have seen over the years how, clearly, she meant this. Including through numerous Christmas broadcasts, for example in 2002:

'I know just how much I rely on my own faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning, I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God.'

Importantly, however, as Head of the Nation and Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty also recognises and celebrates other faiths in the UK and throughout the world. I quote from a speech she made at an interfaith meeting in Lambeth Palace during her Diamond Jubilee in 2012:

'Faith plays a key role in the identity of millions of people, providing not only a system of belief but also a sense of belonging. It can act as a spur for social action. Indeed, religious groups have a proud track record of helping those in the greatest need, including the sick, the elderly, the lonely and the disadvantaged. They remind us of the responsibilities we have beyond ourselves.'

Those of you watching the Pageant on Sunday will have seen a wonderfully colourful presentation called 'Have Faith', with the six principle faiths in Britain represented in lantern sculptures. It is hard to think of a better way to showcase the importance of her faith to Her Majesty. It also reminded me of the importance of multi-faith work, including on global issues such as climate change. I am very pleased that my first big official meeting as ambassador here was the faith leaders meeting on climate last October,

organised with the Vatican and the Embassy of Italy at which Pope Francis himself handed an appeal to world leaders to our COP President in advance of the meeting in Glasgow. An excellent example of the impact of our collaboration.

This year, we have been celebrating the 40th Anniversary of ambassadorial relations between the UK and the Holy See. Her Majesty herself played a critical role in establishing our current flourishing relationship when she came on a state visit to the Vatican in 1980, with an invitation for Pope St John Paul II to visit Buckingham Palace during his upcoming pastoral visit to the UK. The first by a reigning pope. And she spoke of a 'new and constructive era' unfolding between the Church of England and the Catholic Church.

In November 2015, in an address to the Church of England, the Queen highlighted how she saw the role of the church when she said: 'St Paul reminds us that all Christians, as ambassadors for Christ, are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. Spreading God's word and the onerous but rewarding task of peace-making and conflict resolution are important parts of that ministry. So, too, is the Church of England's vocation to work in partnership with those of other faiths and none, to serve the common good in this land.'

Before I close today, there are a couple of logistical announcements to make. I hope you have all found the different foods being served in different corners of this lovely garden. I am grateful to those who have worked so hard to prepare them, and in particular to identify the wide range of edible variations of purple on the menu today! I am grateful to the Embassy Choir for leading us in the National Anthems, and to our bag-piper who welcomed us all this evening.

In a moment, the archbishop and I will be planting a tree in this garden as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative – an initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, which invited people from across the United Kingdom and around the world to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". We were thrilled to hear that Pope Francis had donated a Cedar of Lebanon as part of this campaign. And we will now be planting an olive tree as a symbol of peace in a conflict-afflicted world. Remembering Ukraine, and other parts of the world at war, including the last place I hosted a Queen's Birthday Party, pre-COVID, in Juba, South Sudan. Later, we will be serving the Jubilee pudding – chosen by Mary Berry (an icon of British baking) from hundreds of other recipes to be the flag-carrier for this year's jubilee. I would also like to thank Sister Jane and the Congregation of Jesus for letting us use this wonderful garden. And finally, I would like to thank you all for coming.

I will close with what I believe is one of the most revealing statements Her Majesty has made about her system of beliefs in 2015: 'Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love,' she said, quoting a favourite saying of Mother St Teresa of Calcutta. The Queen continued: 'On our own, we cannot end wars or wipe out injustice, but the cumulative impact of thousands of small acts of goodness can be bigger than we imagine.'

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Inclusive, peaceful and credible political processes are critical for building and sustaining peace in Central Africa

Thank you, President. Let me start by thanking all of our briefers for their valuable contributions this morning. I also welcome the written contribution from the Peacebuilding Commission, which has an important role to play in the region. And, I'd like to express the United Kingdom's appreciation for former Special Representative Fall for his dedicated service over the past five years.

President, Central Africa, today, faces significant political, economic, humanitarian and security challenges. I want to make five points in response to what we have heard so far.

First, the ongoing crisis in North West and South West regions of Cameroon requires urgent attention. Over the last five years, the United Kingdom has given \$25 million of humanitarian aid to support those profoundly affected by the crisis. The United Kingdom calls on all parties to enable safe access to schools and humanitarian assistance.

Second, inclusive, peaceful and credible political processes are critical for building and sustaining peace in the sub-region. UNOCA and its partners have an important role to play in supporting these processes, but it is up to Member States to draw on that support and deliver democratic elections and inclusive transitional processes.

In this respect, President, the United Kingdom reiterates our support to Chad as it undergoes its transition to civilian and constitutional rule. While the pre-dialogue between transitional authorities and political-military groups is welcome, a date should be set as soon as possible for an inclusive national dialogue to progress Chad's transitional roadmap.

Third, I want to reiterate our concern over the ongoing violence in the Central African Republic, including documented human rights abuses committed by Wagner mercenaries. This continues to compound an already acute humanitarian situation. The activities of all security actors operating in

the country should be co-ordinated by the CAR government, and held to international human rights standards. We welcome the March republican dialogue between stakeholders and encourage further progress on this.

Fourth, the United Kingdom welcomes UNOCA's implementation of climate security projects in Central Africa. Meeting the challenges posed by water shortages, floods and threats to the Congo basin forest requires a joint effort to accelerate progress. It is critical that UNOCA's work on climate security in the region continue and for this Council to support efforts to mitigate the challenges posed by climate change.

Finally, President, Russia's illegal and unjustified war in Ukraine is exacerbating economic pressures and food security in Central Africa and beyond. The United Kingdom calls on Russia to end the violence and enable safe exports of Ukrainian wheat to help address food and energy crises across the African continent.

Thank you.

[Separation Agreement Joint Committee between the UK and EEA EFTA states: joint statement from the third meeting](#)

News story

This statement follows the June 2022 meeting of the Separation Agreement Joint Committee between the governments of the UK and Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Norway.



Separation Agreement Joint Committee statement, 8 June 2022:

The third meeting of the Separation Agreement Joint Committee was

held in London today, chaired by officials from the Principality of Liechtenstein, with representatives from Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway and the United Kingdom (UK) in attendance.

[The Committee](#) was established by the Separation Agreement to monitor its implementation and application. The Separation Agreement ensures that nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway ('the EEA EFTA States') already living in the UK, or UK nationals living in the EEA EFTA States at the end of the transition period, have largely the same rights as before the UK left the EU. In addition to the right of residence, these include entitlements to social security and the recognition of professional qualifications.

During the meeting, representatives from the EEA EFTA States and the UK updated each other about their implementation and application of the Separation Agreement, focusing on the provisions relating to citizens' rights. Representatives of the EFTA Surveillance Authority and the Independent Monitoring Authority also attended, presenting information on the monitoring of the implementation and application of the Separation Agreement.

The EEA EFTA States and the UK adopted a Decision amending Part I of Annex I to the Separation Agreement, in order to include recent relevant Decisions of the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems.

The EEA EFTA States and the UK continue to work together to ensure the correct implementation and application of the Separation Agreement, to provide certainty to citizens.

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[Chevening Alumni share their views on the war on Ukraine](#)

Chevening Alumnus from Ukraine, Andrii Shuran, and Guatemalan Alumni Association attended the virtual discussion. Nick Whittingham, British Ambassador in Guatemala, opened the event.

The Ambassador shared the Prime Minister's words on the war, saying it is a war of choice from the Russian Government against a completely innocent country.

Nick Whittingham, British Ambassador in Guatemala, said:

I am shocked of seeing what is happening in Europe. This is an international response, both from sanctions to Russia and strengthening on providing weapons to Ukraine. Putin cannot win this war.

Andrii Shuran started describing the historic perspective of the war and the longstanding tensions and threats the Ukrainian nation has suffered. The Ukrainian alumnus also shared the appalling consequences of the war. Students themselves suffered from displacement, destructions of their homes and deaths of friends and family. The war has not only affected them physically but also destroyed their hopes for a better future.

Nevertheless, they have found the support of the Chevening Alumni, a worldwide network that has provided moral support, logistical contacts and helpful advice to people in distress during these difficult times.

Shuran said:

People are gathering money, supporting each other. Many people stood in Ukraine and we do what we can to defend our country. We do not say 'when the war ends... We say when we win'.

Ukrainian students call on their friends in Guatemala and around the world to keep pushing Russia politically and economically to end this senseless war, and those responsible, to be held to account.

Guatemalan participants in the discussion asked some questions regarding the future of this conflict and appreciated the position of the British Government on defending Ukraine and taking actions for weakening the Russian government to stop the war.

Diana Recinos, a Ukraine-born Guatemalan shared her experience and motivation on participating in Guate X Ucraina initiative. The event collected donations for the orphanages in which she and other 21 children were born and later adopted by Guatemalan families.

Diana said:

We did this because we and our families do not believe in war. War brings only sadness and death. I want to say to Ukrainian youth that you are not alone, we are giving our support and help.

Finally, Ambassador Nick Whittingham added that Putin has lost this war already. He explained that Finland and Sweden are heading to join NATO, Russia's economy has been damaged and the international system has been impressive in responding to the war. He stressed that the UK will continue to

support Ukraine in supplying weapons and sanctioning Russia.

[Defence Secretary meets European counterparts for talks in Iceland](#)

News story

Ministers from the Northern Group discussed the security of northern Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine



Ben Wallace speaks at the Northern Group meeting

The twelve Northern Group nations met in Reykjavik this week (8 June) to discuss the security challenges for Northern Europe following Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

The ministers of defence issued a [joint statement](#) condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, committing to support Ukraine both militarily and politically, and welcoming the sovereign decisions of Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace MP said:

At these uncertain times, our international partnerships are our strength.

The joint statement issued by the Northern Group today reinforces our unequivocal condemnation of Putin's barbaric invasion and our determination that Ukraine succeeds.

I look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with the Northern Group which, alongside NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force, helps ensure our mutual safety.

The Northern Group is a multilateral grouping of likeminded nations which collaborates on security issues in Northern Europe. There are twelve member nations: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the UK.

While in Iceland, the Defence Secretary also signed a new Framework Agreement with Finland as both countries look to deepen their bilateral relationship with each other. The agreement commits both countries to enhancing defence co-operation in areas such as intelligence sharing, countering hybrid threats, improving interoperability and developing the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

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