

The Reopening of the British Embassy in Tripoli

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you all for attending our Queen's Birthday Party this evening – the first we have held in Tripoli for eight years. And a special thank you to our sponsors: UK Solar Power, Velichor Risk, AI Security Print, BACB and Petrofac.

We are gathered today to celebrate an historic occasion. On the 6 of February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking seventy years of service to the people of the United Kingdom and her Commonwealth. Her remarkable reign began in 1952, only a year and two months after the formation of the United Kingdom of Libya.

Since then she has undertaken more than 260 official visits overseas. Her second-ever state visit was to Tobruk, where she met King Idris, who invested upon her the Order of Idris the First. Truly, throughout her entire reign, the Queen has borne witness to the vibrant enduring relationship between our two countries.

The relationship is deep and enduring. Our armed forces have fought together – in the Second World War and more recently against Daesh in Sirte. Since 2000, 166 Libyans have won Chevening Scholarships to study in the UK. Our cultural ties are strong, and continue to grow.

That is the past. In the present, it is my job – our job – to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the UK and Libya, and to support Libya's people.

That is why I am delighted to announce this evening that the UK is today officially reopening our British Embassy here in Libya.

Although the Embassy is based in Tripoli, this is a demonstration of our commitment to the whole of Libya. I am proud that our work touches the lives of Libyans across the whole country already. For example:

- Law enforcement training in Benghazi, Sabha, Misrata and Tripoli;
- Mine Action projects in Sirte;
- Helping Libya's English teachers through the British Council,
- Peacebuilding programmes in Ajdibaya, Tobruk and Zliten; and
- Our support for the High National Elections Commission throughout the country.

I am especially proud that British businesses are collaborating with Libyan companies and having a meaningful impact upon Libya's economic development. Many of those businesses are represented here tonight, including UK Solar Power represented by Serag Elalam, who are leading the charge to increase solar energy in Libya.

But I would like to acknowledge that many friends and colleagues from across the country are unable to be here with us tonight, because of the ongoing political and security challenges Libya faces. I ask that you hold our absent friends from across Libya in your thoughts this evening.

If Libya is to fulfil her political and economic potential, Libya's leaders must continue to implement the October Ceasefire Agreement, work together, and pursue compromise, cooperation and concord.

The people of Libya deserve this.

The Queen is our best example of such leadership. Throughout her 70-year reign, the Queen has devoted her life to public service, transcended politics and geography, and been a source of continuity and strength.

So please would you all raise a glass to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee. Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. The Queen.

And now I am delighted to officially reopen the British Embassy in Libya through the raising of our Union Flag.

[Offenders to face toughest test yet for open prison moves](#)

- tough three-step test to cut crime and make streets safer
- important changes follow landmark reforms to restore confidence in Parole Board

Serious offenders will face the toughest test yet to prove they have turned their backs on crime for good and are eligible for a move to open prison, following a tightening up of the rules by the Deputy Prime Minister.

From tomorrow (6 June 2022), all indeterminate sentence offenders – those who have committed the most serious crimes, including murder and rape – will face much stricter criteria to move from closed to open prison.

The stringent new rules will mean the Deputy Prime Minister can block any such prisoner moving to an open prison unless they can demonstrably pass a tough three-step test, including proving they are highly unlikely to abscond; that the move is essential for them to work towards future release; and the move would not undermine public confidence in the wider criminal justice system.

Earlier this year, the Deputy Prime Minister announced a package of landmark reforms designed to restore public confidence in the parole system. These

included proposed changes to the Parole Board release test to ensure public protection is always the overriding consideration and a new power for Ministers to block the release of the most dangerous offenders in the interests of public safety.

Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor, Dominic Raab, said:

Keeping the public safe is government's first duty. That's why I'm toughening up the test the most dangerous criminals must pass before they can move into open prisons.

We are also going to introduce a ministerial check on parole decisions to release the most serious offenders – to protect the public and make our streets safer.

Until today, the Deputy Prime Minister could only block a Parole Board recommendation to move an offender to an open prison if it went against the recommendations of the expert risk assessment without explaining why; was based on inaccurate information or where there was not a wholly persuasive case for the move.

In the last 2 months the Deputy Prime Minister has already blocked the Parole Board's recommendations to move several dangerous offenders to open prison including murderers Steven Ling, Stephen Wynne and Adam Swellings, rapist and leader of Derby grooming gang Abid Siddique and serial rapist, Lee Hill.

[Ukraine has shown the world it will prevail in its battle for freedom](#)

The UK's steadfast support for Ukraine will never waver, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has said.

For 100 days Putin's barbaric and unprovoked war has brought death and destruction to Ukraine on a scale not seen in Europe since WW2, but he has failed to make the headway he expected in the face of heroic resistance.

Tens of thousands have died and more than 6.6 million refugees have fled the country. While 8 million Ukrainians are internally displaced, almost 13 million are stranded in conflict zones and almost 16 million require humanitarian support.

Russia's theft of grain and its destruction and blockading of key ports has also significantly exacerbated one of the most severe food crises in recent history, which now threatens many countries and is putting the world's most

vulnerable at risk.

The Foreign Secretary said this grim anniversary was a day to honour the resolve of the Ukrainian people, who have shown Putin cannot win as long as they receive the international support they need and deserve.

The Foreign Secretary said the UK would remain steadfast in its support to ensure Ukraine wins its battle for self-determination and Russian forces withdraw.

On Friday, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

“Today marks 100 dark days since Putin launched his unjustified and illegal war against Ukraine. He expected the invasion to be over in days, but significantly underestimated the resolve of brave Ukrainians, who have valiantly defended their country.

“Putin’s invasion has brought death and destruction on a scale not seen in Europe since WW2. This war has huge ramifications for global peace, prosperity and food security. It matters to us all.

“Today is a moment to pay our respects to the thousands of innocent civilians murdered since the invasion, and reaffirm our steadfast support for Ukraine’s heroic defence, to ensure they succeed and Putin fails.”

Since Putin started massing his forces on Ukraine’s borders the UK has played a vital role galvanising and leading the international response.

- Sanctions: Together with our allies, we continue to impose crippling economic sanctions, cutting off funding for Putin’s war machine. The UK has sanctioned over 1,000 individuals and 100 entities, including oligarchs with a net worth of more £117 billion. We have targeted Russian trade, with import tariffs covering £1.4 billion worth of goods. Russia’s economy is set to take a £256 billion hit, with its GDP expected to shrink up to 15 per cent this year – the deepest recession since the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Military support: We were among the first to provide military support to Ukraine, including 10,000 missiles and training more 22,000 army members, helping to halt Putin’s barbaric onslaught.
- Humanitarian aid: We are a leading humanitarian donor, providing £220 million of aid. We have sent more than 11 million medical items to Ukraine, and are donating 42 ambulances, saving thousands of lives.
- International engagement: the UK has led international efforts to support Ukraine’s objectives, working with the EU, NATO and likeminded allies. The UK, Ukraine and 44 other countries launched an OSCE mission to investigate Russia’s violations of human rights & international

humanitarian law. We are making sure Russia is held to account for war crimes and, providing an additional £1 million to the ICC to support their investigations into war crimes and, with the US and the EU, creating the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA).

- Exposing Putin's lies: we are countering the Kremlin's blizzard of lies and disinformation by telling the truth about Putin's war of aggression. We will work with our allies on the urgent need to protect other European countries that are not members of NATO and that could become targets of the Kremlin playbook of subversion and aggression.

[ICF Brazil](#)



ICF looks to enable and accelerate the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by:

- catalysing and mobilizing strategic private sector investments in sustainable low carbon projects on forests, agriculture and infrastructure

and;

- encouraging technological progress, ensuring that these activities can continue to develop while preserving natural resources, reducing deforestation and reducing GHG emissions.
- Support Brazil to create lower carbon economies, meeting energy needs and climate commitments.
- Leverage ICF programmes to engage government, civil society and businesses to build consensus towards ambition and higher Brazilian emissions reduction targets, to help UK ambitions for UNFCCC COP26 agreeing 5 year targets.

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[British Embassy commemorates the](#)

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Dear friends,

Good evening and welcome to the Queen's Birthday Party and Platinum Jubilee Celebration!

The last time I stood at a podium to deliver a Queen's Birthday speech was in March 2020. It feels a long time ago. And as I stand here today it shocks me how much the world has changed in two years.

In March 2020 Covid-19 officially arrived in Guatemala. The reality of a global health crisis was beginning to be felt. But I doubt that many of us understood then the impact Covid-19 would have. People across the world have suffered directly or indirectly. They have lost loved ones. They have suffered economic challenges. And we continue to live with uncertainty.

I also doubt that two years ago anybody would have believed that a European country, Russia, could invade without provocation a neighbour, Ukraine. But today we witness via news channels the flattening of Ukraine's cities through the indiscriminate use of artillery and missile strikes with massive loss of life. These are horrors from the past that I never expected to see in the 21st century.

Despite the challenges we have faced, the global response to Covid and the near universal repudiation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine demonstrate the resilience and importance of international organisations such as the UN and NATO. In this context, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Guatemala for its strong support. Guatemala's votes at the UN have helped send a clear message to President Putin that his invasion will not be allowed to succeed.

Another area of international co-operation that we should celebrate is COP26 and the concrete outcomes it achieved. Of course, there is still much to do if we are going to tackle climate change. But COP26 demonstrated the art of the possible and sets the stage for future work to overcome this existential risk to our world. I would like to express my thanks to Minister Rojas and Rita Mishaan for their important work at COP26 that contributed to its success.

This evening, however, is of course focused on one celebration in particular, And that is the Queen's Birthday and her Platinum Jubilee which marks her 70 years on the throne. I spoke a moment ago my shock at how much has changed during my two years as Ambassador. This change pales into insignificance when one thinks about the changes the Queen has witnessed since she assumed her role in 1952.

In 1952, there was, of course, no twitter, no internet, there were no personal computers or mobile telephones. It took several hours for the Queen to hear of the death of her father because she was travelling in Kenya.

Something unimaginable today.

In 1952, Joseph Stalin still ruled the USSR. Chairman Mao ruled China. And petrol cost 27 US cents per gallon.

Here in Guatemala Jacobo Arbenz was President, Nobel prize winner, Miguel Angel Asturias, was a diplomat in Paris and Guatemala participated for the first time in the Olympic Games in Helsinki with 21 athletes. The population of Guatemala was just three million people.

In the UK Winston Churchill was Prime Minister and a thick smog in London in December killed 4,000 people. The UK was still recovering from the impact of the Second World War.

Since 1952 the Queen has worked with 14 Prime Ministers, made 150 overseas visits and carried out more than 21,000 royal engagements. She has sat for more than 200 official portraits, and she is the longest reigning monarch the UK has ever had.

She is the only person in the UK to be allowed to drive without a licence. She doesn't have a passport – despite her extensive travel. And she has two birthdays – today we mark the official birthday that happens in June.

But the fact that stands out for me about the Queen is her outstanding sense of duty and empathy to those who are in suffering around the world. She has been an important figurehead for the UK during times of enormous social change, including the difficult times we are facing today. She has stood for important values.

I take inspiration from this as I look forward to working, with my team, in Guatemala and Honduras during the coming year.

We will continue to build our economic relationship through the UK-Central America Association Agreement. I very much hope that despite global challenges we can boost bilateral trade and explore investment opportunities. These are important pre-conditions to reducing poverty.

At the same time we will continue to champion the importance of rule of law, fostering transparency, protecting human rights and tackling corruption. These values are prerequisites for solid democratic structures and creating a business environment that can attract investment. As part of this work the UK last year sanctioned a Guatemalan Congressman for corruption. The UK Government also made statements linked to other rule of law-related issues. In line with the norms of diplomacy around the world, my team and I will continue to promote these values – and we value the important dialogue we have with the Guatemalan government.

Our climate change work and efforts to support biodiversity here will ramp up this year following the launch of the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund. About US\$25 million will be invested over the coming seven years in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras to achieve these objectives and help with the sustainable development of communities living in these areas.

None of this will happen of course without the support of everyone here today. The Guatemalan Government, private sector, civil society, the press, British nationals – all of you are essential partners. So let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your support during the past two years – and I very much look forward to working with you all during the year ahead (hopefully without masks!).

I would also like to thank the Embassy team who have demonstrated enormous energy, creativity and commitment during difficult times. I feel very fortunate and humbled to lead such a great team.

And of course I thank my wife, Yuehping, who always says the words I need to hear, and listens to words she's probably had to listen to at least two times before. I couldn't do my job without her.

So to finish, thank you all for coming. Enjoy the evening, which is designed to be a party – not a formal reception. Hot food is now served. And, I hope, dance to the music of the Rubber Souls who have a programme of British music lined up.

Cheers.