

We urge the Security Council to expand the UN's cross-border mandate in Syria

Thank you, Madam President.

First, let me thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Dr Almouslem for their briefing, and for the vital work they and their colleagues are doing for the Syrian people.

Over the coming weeks, this Council will be considering the future of the UN's mandate to deliver cross-border assistance for Syria.

When we authorised the UN to deliver cross-border aid in 2014, over 10 million people required assistance.

Now, around 14.6 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance – more than 80% of the population.

With the backdrop of a growing global food crisis, the ongoing impacts of the COVID19 pandemic and increasing violence, it is clear that the Syrian people need more support from the international community.

The United Kingdom has supported the Syrian people from the start of the conflict, having spent over \$4 billion in aid to date.

And, in the last six months, UK funding on early recovery, a key element of resolution 2585, has enabled:

the rehabilitation of water networks;

agricultural training and inputs for livestock and vegetable production;

and, apprenticeships and small business grants to help create jobs and fill key gaps in the market.

At the Brussels Conference last week, the UK committed nearly \$200 million over the course of 2022.

This funding will help further scale up early recovery and resilience interventions inside Syria and support vital humanitarian efforts to rebuild the lives of Syrians.

Madam President,

The UN cross-border mandate sits at the heart of this humanitarian support, serving over four million people in North West Syria.

We have heard time and again, from the UN and NGOs on the ground, that there is no viable alternative to the mechanism – and Dr Almouslem has made that point again clearly and powerfully today.

Closing the Bab al-Hawa crossing would mean

reduced access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls;

severe disruption to early recovery efforts;

a devastating hindrance of ongoing efforts to vaccinate Syrians against Covid19;

and, without the UN's 'gold standard' monitoring mechanism, closing the crossing would make it easier for aid to get into the hands of terrorists.

This Council needs to support the Syrian people who are trying to build a better future.

So, we urge Members to support the renewal and expansion of the UN's cross-border mandate in July.

Thank you, Madam President.

UK Covid Alert Level

News story

The UK Covid Alert Level has moved from level 4 to level 3



"Based on advice from UKHSA, we the UK Chief Medical Officers and NHS England Medical Director have recommended to ministers that COVID Alert Level should move from level 4 to level 3.

"The current BA.2 driven Omicron wave is subsiding. Direct COVID-19 healthcare pressures continue to decrease in all nations and ONS community positivity estimates continue to decrease.

"We would like to thank healthcare staff for their remarkable efforts during

a challenging time. Whilst it is reasonable to expect the number of cases to increase due to BA.4, BA.5 or BA2.12.1, it is unlikely in the immediate future to lead to significant direct COVID pressures. This will continue to be kept under review.”

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty

Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride

Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Gregor Smith

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton

NHS England National Medical Director, Professor Stephen Powis

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Fines for Merseyside anglers caught fishing illegally

Joe Edgar of Baker Street, Huyton, Louis Cannon of Knowsley Lane, Liverpool and Anthony Wood of Harsefinch Road, St Helens were each ordered to pay £389 after appearing at North Cheshire Magistrates Court on the 11th May 2022.

The total included a fine of £220 for fishing without a licence, with costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £34. An annual fishing licence would have cost them just £30 a year.

On 17th October 2021, while on patrol at Carrside Fishery near Ince Blundell, Environment Agency Fisheries Officers discovered Mr Edgar and Mr Cannon fishing illegally. Both failed to produce a rod licence when asked.

Additionally, on the 17th October 2021 an Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer, who was on routine patrol in Formby, spoke to Anthony Wood, who was also found to be fishing without a licence at a popular fishing spot near Rosemary Wood.

Following the verdict, Damien Linney, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer, said:

This case shows how seriously the courts take these offences and we hope the penalty will act as a deterrent to any angler who is thinking of fishing without a licence.

Fishing illegally can incur a fine of up to £2,500 and offenders

can also have their fishing equipment seized. We inspect rod licences throughout the North West and work 24 hours a day, seven days a week to check on cases of illegal fishing and other associated fisheries crime.

Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers. Those cheating the system risk prosecution and a criminal conviction.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1-day licence costs from just £6 and an annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 – 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Demersal non quota species Fisheries Management Plan](#)

News story

Marine Management Organisation will lead stakeholder engagement and drafting of the Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for demersal non-quota species (NQS) in the English Channel.



FMPs are a cornerstone of the Government's approach to fisheries management now the UK has left the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

The Channel NQS FMP will include ICES divisions 7d and 7e and will cover demersal species such as red, tub and grey gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, john dory, surmullet and lesser spotted dogfish.

Development of a plan specifically for demersal non-quota species in the Channel was highlighted by the fishing industry and other key marine stakeholders as a necessary move because of concern about potential over-exploitation of some stocks and a lack of data about non-quota stocks in general.

This FMP is one of 43 FMPs to be developed under the Joint Fisheries Statement to support a sustainable and profitable fishing industry. The Channel NQS FMP will be among the first of six frontrunner FMPs being developed, with an aim to publish the plans at the end of 2023.

MMO is currently working on a series of face-to-face events with stakeholders, especially the fishing industry on England's south coast, to be held in mid to late June as a critical first step in developing the Channel NQS FMP.

MMO will provide more information on how stakeholders can get involved in the coming weeks in its fortnightly Fishers and Seafood Exporters Bulletin, on its website and social media platforms.

To be included in more detailed communications for the Channel NQS FMP send your [details in confidence](#) and a summary of your particular interest to FMP@marinemanagement.org.uk.

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Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon looks ahead to the UK-hosted conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Watch the statement

[Watch Lord Ahmad's statement](#)

Statement

I'm sincerely looking forward to welcoming our partners and friends from around the world to London in early July for the United Kingdom-hosted Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

This will be the first international ministerial conference on this theme since 2020 and the first to take place in person since 2019.

Together with our international partners we share a collective commitment to freedom of religion or belief for everyone, everywhere.

This is an issue that we all should care about. Although the right to freedom of religion or belief is enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is regrettable, indeed tragic, that too many people around the world continue to live in fear of persecution on the basis of what they choose to believe or not to believe, or indeed how they choose to practice those beliefs.

Being denied the fundamental human right of freedom of religion or belief can be devastating for individuals and communities.

At the conference we'll therefore hear from survivors directly on the impact that persecution has had upon them, on their lives, on their communities.

As individuals suffer from being denied this human right, societies, countries where survivors live suffer too. They become smaller, diminished culturally and spiritually by this lack of freedom. Therefore, let us strengthen all of our communities by driving forward the collective importance of not just promoting this important issue, but strengthening freedom of religion or belief for all.

This conference in London will bring together ministers, but also importantly other representatives from government, from faith and belief group leaders, and indeed importantly from civil society as well.

Alongside the official ministerial conference, an associated conference fringe will see a series of events organized directly by civil society.

These will be taking place around the United Kingdom and provide further

opportunities for all to join this important debate and discussion and learn from each other about this important issue.

I therefore hope that you will take this opportunity to really get involved and share our collective commitment to promoting and protecting, and indeed strengthening freedom of religion or belief for everyone across the world.