

Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Madam Chair, again for convening us today and bringing together panel experts for such a timely discussion that has highlighted the impacts on civilians when critical services are damaged, as well as the role of States in protecting these services in armed conflict.

As has been noted several times today but cannot be overstated, a little over a year ago, Russia joined with others at the UN Security Council to unanimously adopt [Resolution 2573](#). Yet, in a flagrant breach of International Humanitarian Law, Russian bombers have, in recent weeks, repeatedly and remorselessly dropped targeted munitions on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including government buildings, hospitals, schools, and transportation.

Today we have heard the numbers of verified attacks on Ukraine's health facilities. Stretched healthcare facilities in the East are having to respond to growing reports of gender-based violence, including Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Earlier today, [Prime Minister Johnson addressed Ukraine's Parliament](#), setting out a new package of military aid to enable Ukraine to defend itself as well as specialised civilian protection vehicles, and we will continue to provide humanitarian aid including generators to support vital services to keep running.

The dangers of this war transcend borders. As described by our keynote speaker, the world has witnessed concerning attacks on Ukrainian nuclear facilities, demonstrating Russia's reckless attitude to nuclear safety and security. The UK will continue to support neighbouring countries, including those which are hosting refugees. We continue to provide regional support in the cyber space, including by sharing threat information. For instance, we have recently launched our new programme supporting Georgia to implement its new National Security Strategy, focusing on incident management, information sharing, and the cyber awareness of vulnerable groups.

At times of heightened international tension all critical service providers must be vigilant to the risk of cyber compromises. Earlier this month, [the UK joined our international partners to share updated mitigation advice against state-sponsored and criminal cyber threats](#). Strengthening the relationships between government departments, regulators, and private sector operators is key to ensuring the latest threats, risks and vulnerabilities are understood and mitigated effectively.

States should, where possible, make publicly available their approaches to cyber security and resilience, including how they relate to critical infrastructure protection. The UK routinely publishes this information including guides on how to effectively detect, respond to and resolve cyber

incidents, and crucially where organisations can find support from certified Cyber Incident Response companies assessed against clear published standards. Sharing best practice in approaches to critical infrastructure dependences and cooperating across borders are crucial elements of strengthening our international resilience.

Madam chair, we have entered a new world where service protection and resilience measures must not only be prepared to stand up to threats caused by non-state terrorist acts, but direct and targeted missile attack. As we enter the third month of President Putin's illegal and unprovoked war, not only do thousands of civilians remain in Mariupol, Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and other cities, struggling to survive without food, water, warmth, and medical supplies, but the effects continue to mount around the world. The OSCE has a role to play to prevent knock-on crises in crime, trafficking, and terrorism, and the UK stands ready to support the Security Committee to that end.

Thank you.

[Embajadas Británicas en México, Guatemala y El Salvador abordan retos para la libertad de prensa](#)

World news story

Para conmemorar el Día Mundial de la Libertad de Prensa 2022, las Embajadas Británicas en México, Guatemala, El Salvador y Honduras organizaron una mesa redonda regional.



UK Government

En la sesión también se abordaron los impactos de la disminución de los espacios democráticos para un periodismo seguro y abierto. También se discutió cómo la comunidad internacional puede ayudar a apoyar el periodismo independiente.

Jon Benjamin y David Lelliott, embajadores del Reino Unido en México y El Salvador respectivamente brindaron los discursos de apertura y clausura. Ambos destacaron la importancia de la libertad de los medios de comunicación como un componente clave de las comunidades democráticas prósperas:

“El intercambio libre de ideas es el motor del desarrollo, tanto económico como político y social. Esfuerzos dirigidos a reducir o limitar la libertad de medios de comunicación son contraproducentes”, señaló David Lelliott.

“En los últimos 15 días, más de 700 periodistas se han beneficiado de un reciente proyecto de formación impartido por la Oficina de la UNESCO en México, con el apoyo de nuestra embajada, del Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales (INAI) y del gobierno federal”, recalcó Jon Benjamin, en relación al trabajo de la Embajada Británica en México para promover la libertad de los medios de comunicación y apoyar a las y los periodistas.

De acuerdo al Comité para la Protección de los Periodistas (CPJ), México es el país más peligroso del mundo para ser periodista fuera de una zona de conflicto. El CPJ informa que, de los 25 periodistas asesinados en todo el mundo en 2022 hasta ahora, siete han sido asesinados en México.

El Reino Unido mantiene su compromiso de promover el periodismo independiente

en todo el mundo, esencial para construir sociedades abiertas, prósperas y democráticas. El debate sobre los retos de la libertad de los medios de comunicación a nivel regional ayudará a informar el apoyo del Reino Unido a los periodistas a través de proyectos tanto nacionales como regionales.

Published 3 May 2022

[Reinforcing our support of UN Peacekeeping Initiatives: UK Statement at the UN General Assembly](#)

Mr Chair,

Mr Chair, I thank you, Bureau members, Fifth Committee Secretariat, ACABQ, and UN Secretariat for continued efforts in support of the Fifth Committee.

Since its inception, the UK is a strong and a long-standing supporter of UN Peacekeeping. Last week we closed our UNSC Presidency by dedicated a new tree on the UN North Lawn to the memory Sir Brian Urquhart, the British Under Secretary General widely known as the founder of UN Peacekeeping.

In this session we must ensure peacekeeping operations receive adequate, cost-effective financing and staffing in support of full mandate delivery, including on human rights and gender, building on lessons learned from the pandemic. We must also break the cycle of failing to agree a cross cutting resolution if we are to deliver our responsibilities in providing proper guidance.

I would take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Peacekeepers, and those who support them. We look forward to discussing the important issue of troop reimbursement rates, and the safety, security and health of peacekeeping personnel, including mental health, and the Secretary General's proposal on PTSD.

Safety and security should be a right for all, of course. On sexual exploitation and abuse, we expect member states to agree a resolution, and we urge continued, sustained whole-of-UN system commitment and action, through strengthened leadership and organisational culture, including on prevention, response and survivor support.

We would reiterate that peacekeeping is the highest contributor to climate change within the UN system, and urge greater progress on reducing impacts, including through continued progress on efficient, professional, sustainable supply chain management.

Mr Chair,

An effective, inclusive organisation is critical across the UN system, not just in peacekeeping, so we look forward to ensuring adequate funding for the strategic action plan of the Secretary General's Task Force on addressing racism. Doing so will help address racism and promote dignity for all staff, giving the UN benefit from diverse perspectives and life experiences. We also look forward to discussing progress on better accessibility for persons with disabilities, to ensure full and equal participation in UN meetings and conferences.

Mr Chair

Other important issues this session include options for enhanced funding for prevention and peacebuilding and resuming discussions on the UN's financial situation to put it on a more stable footing, on which we will make statements later in the session.

Lastly, as we strive for continuous improvement and accountability we welcome the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and Office for Investigation and Oversight Services.

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom looks forward to rapid progress this session under your leadership and guidance, in support of timely closure.

[Providing support for people to claim Universal Credit: supplier event](#)

DWP currently provides grant funding to support people to make and maintain their Universal Credit (UC) claim up until their first correct UC payment.

DWP is looking at how best to fulfil these requirements in the future by considering our strategy and the capability of the marketplace.

The requirements have not yet been finalised, and DWP is hosting an industry pre-market engagement event to give potential delivery partners the opportunity to better understand DWP's objectives and challenges, and for DWP to gain insight from the market about potential ways forward.

About the Department for Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers a range of working age, pension age, disability and ill-health benefits to over 20 million claimants and customers.

DWP priorities include:

- running an effective welfare system that enables people to achieve financial independence by providing assistance aimed at supporting them into employment
- creating a fair and affordable welfare system which improves the life chances of citizens
- delivering outstanding services to our customers and claimants
- delivering efficiently: transforming the way we deliver our services to reduce costs and increase efficiency

DWP currently provides grant funding to organisations to support people to make and maintain their Universal Credit (UC) claim up until their first correct UC payment. For example, support to:

- set up an email address
- work through claimant to-do's
- access the UC phone service to make a claim
- access DWP home visiting support
- help verify identity
- help provide additional evidence
- help access adaptations such as direct payments to landlords and conditionality easements
- apply for advances and help to access other financial support
- help prepare for first monthly payment
- signpost out to other provision and support

Future strategy

This event is aimed at how best to fulfil these requirements in the future by considering our strategy and the capability of the marketplace.

The requirements have not yet been finalised, and DWP is hosting an industry pre-market engagement event to give potential delivery partners the opportunity to better understand DWP's objectives and challenges, and for DWP to gain insight from the market about potential ways forward.

We want to engage with all potential delivery partners (commercial and not for profit) to establish interest and further understand how the support could be delivered, including an indication of realistic timescales for implementation, transition and training, as well as indicative costs.

Some of the key considerations for delivery may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- the delivery model e.g. single national delivery, lot-based regional delivery, lot-based channel delivery
- the channels for support e.g. telephony, digital, face-to-face
- a grant versus commercial contract
- a 2-year delivery agreement

At this stage it is not confirmed if DWP require a single or multiple

delivery partners to deliver the different channels for support, however we would welcome and encourage feedback from potential delivery partners regarding partnership working or consortiums and building relationships with other organisations to provide wrap around support where necessary.

The event will be held virtually over MS Teams and hosted by Tech UK on Thursday 19 May at 10am and will last no longer than 90 minutes.

There will be an introduction from the Universal Credit Programme, providing a high-level overview of the requirement. Following the introduction, there will be an opportunity for suppliers to ask any questions.

After the event, suppliers will be invited to complete a questionnaire, providing supporting information on a range of areas that will support DWP's strategy. The supplier responses will be reviewed and where appropriate, suppliers may be invited to a 1-2-1 session to explore ideas and discuss further.

Please note that due to technical capacity constraints suppliers will be limited to a maximum of 2 representatives.

Registration is for this pre-market engagement event only. This is not a Contract Notice or an invitation to tender for a contract opportunity. In the event that DWP wishes to progress with any procurement activity, a separate Contract Notice will be advertised on Contracts Finder and Find a Tender (FTS) websites.

Care will be taken not to provide any individual organisation or organisations with a competitive advantage at any stage in the pre-market engagement process.

Minister for Defence Procurement at SupportNET 22

Two years ago I was relatively new in post and I regret I wasn't able to join you on that occasion but now I know it was referred to as a Support Net superspreader event and therefore perhaps I regret it a little less.

It is great, in happier circumstances, for us all to be together in the same room.

Last year I joined you virtually and I recall quoting then from the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, who you will all be familiar, who said the line between success and failure is of course logistics.

This year, I don't feel I need to delve 2,000 years into Chinese literature

to make the same point. We've been seeing it daily on our television screens.

Those pictures of the 40-mile Russian convoy sat stuck on the road to Kyiv have become some of the defining images of Putin's war.

Indeed, Russia's failure in almost all of its initial objectives may be found to be deeply rooted in the logistics and supply mistakes, amongst others, that they have been making.

Expensive equipment is getting literally bogged down because it relied, in part, on failing old tyres which have been unmonitored.

Russian soldiers have been relying on cheap handheld radios because theirs don't work.

And, if reports are to be believed, they've even resorted to scavenging and looting because their rations are not just weeks or months but years out of date.

Napoleon, who learned a few things about logistics of the cold climate as you'll recall, famously talked about an army marching on its stomach.

And it's fair to say that the UK has a good track record when it comes to Defence logistics and support networks.

And we'll be reminded in this, the 40th anniversary year of the Falklands War, that we succeeded in maintaining an 8000-mile-long supply chain that ultimately led us to victory.

And just last year, we utilised every asset of Defence to carry out the biggest peacetime airlift in history from Kabul.

But in this new era of rising threats – where war in Europe is no longer a distant memory but a stark reality – we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball.

Last year, I spoke about the publication of our Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper, which constituted the biggest review of our Defence since the end of the Cold War.

Those two documents recognised the importance of getting logistics right.

Not simply by reorganising the Army into more self-sufficient Brigade Combat Teams able to meet demand by drawing on their own dedicated logistics and combat support units.

But by investing in modernising and transforming engineering and logistical support systems to improve the availability and sustainment of our capabilities, our equipment and our people across all the domains.

Indeed, the Defence Support organisation was created to pursue these common goals.

They are making sure that no British serviceperson suffers that Russian ration fiasco.

In fact, today I can reveal that we have been trialling new, nutritionally balanced ration packs, which show a 23% increase in performance for Commando Forces – despite being smaller and lighter to carry. Napoleon no doubt would have approved.

But this is only a small element in the start of the transformation in logistics that we're looking for. From my perspective, I want to see and succeed in meeting four key objectives.

First, we must strengthen our strategic base.

In other words, the infrastructure and systems upon which we depend to store our stock and to process complex transactions that supply materiel to the front line.

Over the past year, our Agile Stance Campaign Plan has been probing the fragilities in our supply lines and fixing them.

I'm glad to say we're now seeing accelerated investment in sites like Longtown on the Scottish borders, the development of a Supply Chain Strategy that will enable improved agility and resilience, and an enhanced focus on Supply Chain Resilience.

But I know the people here in this room are likely to have plenty more enterprising and innovative solutions to some of the challenges we face. And I'm very keen to hear from you.

How do we increase scalability and production through the lifetime of a platform?

To what extent can we be standardising parts across Defence so that they will always be available, rather than buying our whole stock of wheelnuts for tanks up front and then storing them somewhere indefinitely?

Can we change commercial agreements so that industry holds the financial liabilities for maintaining stock levels? Would that incentivise industry to design around off-the-shelf solutions more readily?

My second objective touches directly on the theme of today's conference – improving the readiness and availability of our equipment.

Whether that's through more resilient designs for future platforms, or better through-life management. Here too there are critical questions to consider around contracting for availability.

For example, should we have contracts which ensure kit is ready for a set number of days in a year?

How do we best work together to ensure that our bottom-line availability requirements are always met?

Involving industry contractually in the numbers and maintenance required from the outset for our equipment.

The Army and Navy are already starting to integrate these ideas. The former's Land Integrated Operating Service specifically addresses support contracts and seeks better equipment availability and through-life management.

While the Naval Enterprise Support Strategy is about reducing the amount of time vessels spend in maintenance by working with an agile, global supply chain and support network.

My third aim is about rapidity in the digital world. Our Command Paper tasks us with creating a digital spine that underpins everything else in our transformed Defence network.

But that spine needs to be able to exploit data through a common digital architecture, spanning factory to foxhole, to ensure agile, flexible support that is suited to the demands.

And it needs to ensure the interoperability of every platform we use throughout our organisation, and those of our allies too.

It might sound simple, but the magnitude of the task is simply daunting when you consider the number of organisations tied into this common digital framework and the security implications of that.

It is another area where we are looking to draw on your expertise.

What is the best way to ensure every new platform we invest in can be plugged into the same digital spine for decades to come?

How can we exploit the Business Modernisation for Support programme to fundamentally revolutionise our processes, enabling those in support to generate your own part of the digital spine?

My fourth and, you'll be pleased to hear, my final point is about sustainability and resilience.

The imperative for energy security has been underlined in recent weeks as nations scramble to reduce their reliance on Russian oil and gas.

This is not just a major concern for the cost of living in our country; it also has a direct effect on Defence procurement.

The platforms we procure today will likely be around in 20 years' time, by which time our current reliance on hydrocarbons will have been reduced in favour of electric, hydrogen and other energy solutions.

But we must be ready for this change while recognising there are real operational benefits to becoming more sustainable that go well beyond earning plaudits for being socially responsible.

Consider that an armoured vehicle which can run silently and recharge itself

from the sun – what an enticing prospect for Defence.

If we don't have a long logistical tail, we will be far less vulnerable to future threats.

We are already seeing successes with the launch of our Prometheus programme of solar farms on Army land, as well as the development of the world's first biofuel for fighter jets.

The massive price hikes we've seen for hydrocarbons show the enhanced resilience on which we can benefit in this renewable space.

As I've already intimated, we can't achieve these four Rs – real estate, readiness, rapidity and resilience without working together.

We need partners who are ready to work with us on defining new patterns that achieve our joint objectives. Partners committed to skills development and innovation.

Partners who will help us identify problems and join forces in finding solutions.

I am determined to get this partnership with all of you in this room right.

Last year I spoke about how we are using the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy to reform relationships with the sector.

Since then, we have made progress, by strengthening our Defence Suppliers Forum and setting up new working groups for SMEs.

By using our National Security Technology and Innovation Exchange to give industry and academia the world-class facilities they need to succeed.

And by establishing Regional Defence and Security Clusters to promote skills sharing and foster collaborations between higher tier Defence suppliers and SMEs across the country.

But I do want you to tell me what more we can do.

So the ball is being thrown back into your court.

I've spoken about our aims, our ideas and some of the frictions involved. But I want your take on how we take this symbiotic relationship between Government and industry to the next level.

Be in no doubt, in this more dangerous age, we are only too aware of your value, and we're determined to have your back because we know that when the chips are down, you will have ours.