

PM: UK-India partnership 'brings security and prosperity for our people'

- PM will meet Narendra Modi in New Delhi today for high-level talks on defence, diplomacy and trade
- UK will work with India to boost security in the Indo-Pacific, including new fighter jet technology, helicopters and collaboration in the undersea battlespace
- PM will also discuss new cooperation on clean and renewable energy

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson will reiterate the vital importance of the UK-India partnership for global peace and security, as he visits New Delhi today [Friday].

He is expected to discuss next-generation defence and security collaboration across the five domains – land, sea, air, space and cyber – in meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as our nations face complex new threats.

This includes support for new Indian-designed and built fighter jets, offering the best of British know-how on building battle-winning aircraft. The UK will also seek to support India's requirements for new technology to identify and respond to threats in the Indian Ocean.

To support greater defence and security collaboration with India over the coming decade, the UK will issue an Open General Export Licence (OGEL) to India, reducing bureaucracy and shortening delivery times for defence procurement. This is our first OGEL in the Indo-Pacific region.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The world faces growing threats from autocratic states which seek to undermine democracy, choke off free and fair trade and trample on sovereignty.

The UK's partnership with India is a beacon in these stormy seas. Our collaboration on the issues that matter to both our countries, from climate change to energy security and defence, is of vital importance as we look to the future.

I look forward to discussing these issues with Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi today and working together to deliver a more secure and prosperous future for both our peoples.

The Prime Minister will also discuss new cooperation on clean and renewable energy in his meetings in New Delhi today, aimed at supporting India's energy

transition away from imported oil and increasing its resilience through secure and sustainable energy, and addressing climate change in both the UK and India.

The UK and India are launching a virtual Hydrogen Science and Innovation hub to accelerate affordable green hydrogen, as well as new funding for the Green Grids Initiative announced at COP26, and collaboration on joint work on the electrification of public transport across India.

As well as boosting our domestic energy and economic resilience, the UK and India are collaborating as a force for good globally. Our governments are committing up to £75 million to roll out adaptable clean tech innovations from India to the wider Indo-Pacific and Africa, and working together on international development and girls education.

Future homebuyers to be freed from expensive ground rent bills on 30 June

- Ground rent charges will be banned on most new residential leases from 30 June 2022
- Ban will put an end to increasing annual costs
- First step in government reform package to create fairer housing system, levelling up opportunities for more people

Future homebuyers will see their prospective property bills reduce in just over two months, when the government's ban on charging ground rent on new leases in England and Wales comes into force.

The government is taking action to rid future homeowners of annual costs – known as ground rent. Sometimes worth hundreds of pounds a year, these charges provide no clear service in return and can be set to escalate regularly, with a significant financial burden for leaseholders.

From 30 June 2022, anyone buying a home on a new long lease will now be freed from these annual costs, helping homeowners manage their bills as they face cost of living increases.

Landlords will be banned from charging ground rent to future leaseholders, under a new law that will lead to fairer, more transparent homeownership for thousands of homebuyers, helping to level up opportunities for more people.

In preparation, many landlords have already reduced ground rent to zero for homebuyers starting a new lease with them. Anyone preparing to sign a new lease on a home in the next two months should speak to their landlord to ensure their ground rent rate reflects the upcoming changes.

Leasehold Minister, Lord Stephen Greenhalgh said:

This is an important milestone in our work to fix the leasehold system and to level up home ownership.

Abolishing these unreasonable costs will make the dream of home ownership a more affordable reality for the next generation of home buyers.

I welcome the move from many landlords who have already set ground rent on their new leases to zero and I urge others to follow suit ahead of this becoming law.

The move forms the first part of the government's reform package that will make homeownership cheaper, fairer and more secure.

Future measures, [announced last year](#), include a new right for leaseholders to extend their leases to 990 years at zero ground rent and an online calculator to help leaseholders find out how much it would cost to buy their freehold or extend their lease.

In addition, thousands of existing leaseholders have also already seen a reduction in their inflated ground rent costs. In a government crackdown, the Competition Market Authority (CMA) secured commitments with major homebuilders to stop doubling ground charges every year for leaseholders.

Those who own properties with Aviva, Persimmon, Countryside Properties, Taylor Wimpey and others will see their ground rent returned to the rate it was when they first bought their home. The CMA's investigation is continuing into Barratt Developments, Brigante Properties and the investment group Abacus Land and Adriatic Land.

The ban on landlords charging ground rent on new residential leases, announced today, will also apply to retirement homes. This will come into force no earlier than 1 April 2023 and more details will be confirmed in due course.

See more information on the [Leasehold Reform \(Ground Rent\) Act](#).

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act is the first of a two-part programme of legislation to reform the leasehold system in this Parliament.

Leasehold is a form of home ownership that gives a leaseholder the exclusive right to live in a property for a fixed number of years. The lease is an agreement between the leaseholder and their landlord/ freeholder, listing the number of years and any other obligations and responsibilities upon both parties.

Ground rent is a charge that leaseholders pay to their freeholder – usually paid annually for long leases.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act means that if any ground rent is demanded as part of a new residential long lease, it cannot be charged at more than the cost of one peppercorn per year. This is known as 'peppercorn ground rent' and effectively sets the rate to zero.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act will also restrict ground rent to zero on retirement properties, to ensure that those who live in retirement housing benefit from the same reform as other leaseholders. The changes to ground rent for retirement properties will come into force no sooner than 1 April 2023.

There will only be selected exceptions from this Act. These are tightly defined and include applicable community-led housing, certain financial products and business leases. Statutory lease extensions for both houses and flats remain unchanged and are therefore exempt from the provisions of the Act.

For existing leaseholders (of both houses and flats) who choose to extend their leases through the non-statutory ('voluntary') route, the ground rent will now be restricted to zero ('a peppercorn') on that newly extended term, under the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act.

Last year, the [government announced a package of reforms](#) to make it cheaper and easier for leaseholders to buy their freehold or extend their lease. The [government recently consulted on further changes](#) that could help leaseholders buy or extend their lease and it will respond in due course.

[Food insecurity and the global cost of Russia's war on Ukraine: UK statement at the UN](#)

Thank you to Ireland for convening this meeting, and to our speakers for so clearly setting out the scale of food insecurity, its relationship to conflict, and the precariousness of the situation.

But today's discussion is particularly timely because Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted the export of one third of the world's wheat. So, Russia's actions directly result in 1.7 billion people, in 107 economies, being severely exposed to at least one of rising food, or energy prices, or tighter finance conditions.

In short, Russia has violated a sovereign nation, killed civilians and destabilised the global economy.

As a result, countries on the Security Council's peace and security agenda

are increasingly fragile. The risk of famine in Yemen is exacerbated as nearly 50% of its wheat is imported from Ukraine and Russia, so seven million Yemeni people are expected to be one step away from famine by June 2022. And that can only put the recent truce under pressure.

We know that Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan are likely to be hardest hit – wheat prices there have already tripled in the last 8 weeks. But many other countries will feel the impacts too. And worldwide, it's harder for the world food programme and OCHA to deliver food aid.

The UK is working with the international community to take action, including at this week's spring meetings.

First, we want the World Bank to prioritise support for Ukraine and other countries hardest hit. This includes expanded social safety nets, finance for agricultural trade, advocating against export bans, and ensuring the Crisis Response Window and Early Response Financing is sufficiently resourced and flexible. The \$93 billion International Development Association replenishment should be deployed quickly and effectively to help countries most in need.

Second, the UK is providing bilateral funding and technical advice to countries to support their transition to renewable energy, helping Small Island Developing States access concessional finance, and providing funding to support the livelihoods of farmers and vulnerable populations.

Third, we are supporting the better use of data and technology for early warning, as Amina so eloquently recommended.

In conclusion, today we join resounding calls for Russia to end their attack on Ukraine. The war must stop now – so we can help Ukraine and the world recover.

Thank you.

UN Human Rights Council 49: UK closing statement

The UN Human Rights Council concluded its 49th session on Friday 1 April, adopting important resolutions on South Sudan, Syria, Iran, Belarus, Myanmar, and Human Rights Defenders, among many other pressing issues.

At the start of the session, the Foreign Secretary delivered the UK national statement, in which she condemned Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. I welcome the Council's establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate Russia's actions in Ukraine, which will play an essential role in documenting and drawing international attention to the most grievous human

rights violations and abuses, and in ensuring accountability. I also welcome the decision of the UN General Assembly to suspend Russia's membership of the Human Rights Council – it is unconscionable that Russia should remain a member as evidence continues to emerge of egregious acts by Russia's invading forces in towns such as Irpin and Bucha. The UK stands with the people of Ukraine, and calls on Russia once again to end its war and withdraw its troops.

I welcome the Council's adoption of the resolution on South Sudan. The renewal of the mandate for the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan is a strong signal of the international community's support to help South Sudan and address serious human rights concerns. Comprehensive monitoring and reporting is an important part of the country's path to reconciliation, particularly with a view to potential elections. I urge South Sudan to continue its cooperation with the Commission and work with the international community to help end the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

This month marks the 11th anniversary of the Syrian conflict. It is deplorable that the Asad regime continues this brutal assault against its own people. I am pleased that the Council has once again adopted the resolution on Syria. The resolution highlights the Commission of Inquiry's latest findings, confirming over a decade of appalling atrocities including enforced disappearances, torture and sexual violence. It is right that the resolution mandates the Commission to continue assessing the human rights concerns. We must not forget the plight of the Syrian people.

The human rights situation in Iran continues to be of concern. The UK remains deeply concerned about increases in executions, high rates of child forced marriages and excessive use of violence against peaceful protestors. We are working closely with the United States to secure Morad Tahbaz's permanent release and departure from Iran. It remains in Iran's gift to release any unfairly detained British nationals. I welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, which signals the international community's continued commitment to ensuring inalienable human rights are respected. Iran should now permit an in-country mission by the Special Rapporteur to enable him to fulfil his mandate.

I am pleased that the Council has once again adopted a resolution on Myanmar. The resolution rightly condemns last February's coup in the strongest terms. It highlights the severe deterioration in the human rights environment, including human rights violations against the Rohingya and other minorities. We continue to stand with the people of Myanmar and call for an end to violations and abuses.

I welcome the adoption of the resolution on the Human Rights situation in Belarus. While he has rightly faced widespread condemnation for his support for Russia's unprovoked and premeditated invasion of Ukraine, it is important that the international community also continues to hold Lukashenka and his regime to account for the human rights violations perpetrated daily against the Belarusian people

Human Rights Defenders play a crucial role in society, often at great risk to

themselves. The UK welcomes the resolution on Human Rights Defenders and its reinforcement that they should be treated as civilians and protected in conflict scenarios. Sadly, this role is not universally respected and the treatment of women human rights defenders working in peace and security is of particular concern.

I also welcome the renewal of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK and the adoption of the resolution on the promotion and protection of human rights in Nicaragua and the technical co-operation with Georgia.

The Human Rights Council continues to play an essential role in promoting human rights. The UK remains strongly committed to supporting the Council and the wider international community in championing human rights and holding to account those who violate or abuse them.

Kenya: call for bids for provision of ground maintenance services

World news story

The British High Commission Nairobi is inviting bids for the provision of ground maintenance services for its offices.



On behalf of the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, The British High Commission in Nairobi is seeking the provision of ground maintenance services to be delivered at the High Commission's premises. We are therefore looking for a supplier that has the relevant professional skills, experience, technical resources and financial capability to provide comprehensive ground maintenance services in our premises.

Competent and financially stable suppliers are invited to access the invitation to tender documents by following these steps:

1. Open the [Bravo solutions website](#) and sign in
2. Navigate to Provision of Cleaning Services CPG/3947/2022

[Tender: Ground maintenance services](#) (PDF, 741 KB, 5 pages)

All prospective bidders are invited for a compulsory site visit on Tuesday 26th April 2022 at 08.30am.

Kindly contact Nairobi Procurement at Nairobiprocurement@fcdo.gov.uk for details on the site visit.

Deadlines

The Tender documents should be completed and uploaded on the Bravo System by 18th May 2022 at 15.00hrs (Kenyan Time).

Contact the Regional Procurement Lead, Mr. Wilhelm Holtmann at Wilhelm.Holtmann@fco.gov.uk for any queries.

Kindly note that the responses will be required to be in English.

The BHC reserves the right not to select any service provider and will only reply to the best-suited organisation.

The BHC will not meet any expenses incurred in preparing your Invitation to tender documents.

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