

# Facilitating a path towards fair and independent elections in Libya

Thank you Mr President. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ambassador Tirumurti and Dr Shaiter for briefing the Council today. Tensions in Libya have risen since we last met on this subject, so today's discussion is particularly timely. I will make three points.

First, I would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for de-escalation. All actors, internal and external, should refrain from any moves that could undermine stability or deepen divisions in Libya and threaten to undo the hard-won progress achieved over the last two years. The United Kingdom strongly supports Special Adviser Stephanie Williams and urges those on both sides of the current impasse to accept her offer to facilitate dialogue.

Second, as we've heard today, 2.8 million Libyans have made their aspiration for elections clear. We support Special Adviser Williams' efforts to mediate between the House of Representatives and High State Council to establish a constitutional basis for elections. Libya's political leaders must set aside narrow interests and engage seriously to address the underlying conditions that prevented elections from going ahead last December. Whilst Libya lurches between political crises, it's Libyan people who continue to suffer from a lack of proper service delivery, an unstable economy, and fragile security.

Third, we call on all Libyan parties to protect the independence, integrity and reunification of public institutions. The National Oil Corporation should not be politicised and must be able to fulfil its duties without interference – attempts to shut down oil production are concerning and are only to the detriment of the Libyan economy and its people. Libyan public institutions are there to serve the whole of Libya and should be empowered to do so.

To conclude, Libya is at a crossroads. There is a real risk of dangerous escalation that could unravel the hard-won ceasefire and threaten Libya's stability. It is now incumbent on all of us to facilitate a path to the elections the Libyan people are waiting for. Thank you, Mr President.

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## PM meeting with the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman: 16 March 2022

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, in Riyadh today.



The Prime Minister met the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, in Riyadh today.

He set out the UK's view that we are facing a fundamentally changed world order following Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, which requires countries to work together to improve energy security and reduce reliance on Russian hydrocarbons.

The Prime Minister and Crown Prince agreed to collaborate to maintain stability in the energy market and continue the transition to renewable and clean technology.

They also committed to boost cooperation in defence, security, trade and culture, welcoming a new UK-Saudi Strategic Partnership Agreement and a major investment announced today by the alfanar group in green aviation fuel in Teesside.

The Prime Minister praised progress against Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, including on women's empowerment and employment, but raised the UK's concerns about ongoing human rights issues.

The leaders also discussed key regional issues and agreed to stay in close contact as the crisis in Ukraine evolves.

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**[Abductions of journalists and local government figures in Ukraine: UK](#)**

# statement

Press release

The UK's Minister for Europe and North America has issued a statement following reports of abductions in Ukraine.



Minister for Europe and North America, James Cleverly said:

Russia must immediately release all illegally-detained persons in Ukraine and we call on Russia to end its egregious violations of human rights.

We condemn those responsible for the reported abductions and abuse of Ukrainian activists, human rights defenders, volunteers, journalists, health-care workers and government representatives in the areas of Ukraine under control of the Russian army.

Gross violations of Ukraine's democratic sovereignty cannot be tolerated. Local politicians and civil society actors are fundamental to a democratic society and it is contemptible that Russia has taken steps against them.

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## Addressing the ongoing humanitarian situation in Yemen

Thank you Mr President, and thank you SRSG Grundberg and USG Griffiths for your valuable and sobering briefings today.

Hans, the UK warmly welcomes the launch of your consultations with the parties this month. We commend your inclusive approach, which invites the views of a wide range of Yemenis, and we encourage all parties to engage constructively in line with their obligations under resolution 2624.

I would like to thank Council members for their efforts in the adoption of that resolution. It imposed, for the first time, an arms embargo on the Houthis as a whole and explicitly denounced the "Houthi terrorist group". This is vital as we witness continued cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE, including last Thursday's attack on a Saudi oil refinery.

It is important to highlight that resolution 2624 was also clear in its support for the continued maintenance of humanitarian access and commercial imports of food, fuel and other essential civilian commodities into all Yemen's ports. The Council has not targeted humanitarian activity or trade.

Resolution 2624 also called for the immediate return of all US and UN staff to their families and for Houthi withdrawal from the US embassy. The United Kingdom strongly condemns the detention in February of an additional US staff member. We also call for the Houthis to release British National Luke Symons.

As we've heard from Martin today, across Yemen, the conflict continues to have a devastating human toll. The evidence from the IPC, and from today's briefing, is clear: Yemen is experiencing drastically deteriorating food security. As seven million Yemenis risk starvation in 2022, and the numbers of those in famine-like conditions is expected to increase five-fold, the Yemen Pledging Conference convenes tomorrow in need of \$4.27 billion. The United Kingdom calls on all donors, including those in the region, to step up.

Finally Mr President, I would like to end on a hopeful humanitarian note, by welcoming the signature this month of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Houthis and UN regarding the transfer of oil from the Safer tanker, as Martin briefed us. This is an important step; we must now all act together in support of the initiative.

Thank you, Mr President.

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## [Defence Secretary meets NATO Defence Minister in Brussels](#)

News story

The Defence Secretary Ben Wallace met NATO Defence Ministers today (16 March) to reaffirm the United Kingdom's support for Ukraine and commitment to NATO



Defence Secretary Ben Wallace alongside his NATO counterparts in Brussels

The extraordinary meeting of Defence Ministers was called by the Alliance's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in response to President Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and the wider security issues for the region.

NATO Defence Ministers addressed both the immediate crisis and the longer-term adaptation of NATO's defence activities. Priorities include demonstrating the Allies' support for Ukraine, the ongoing humanitarian crisis, and the importance of Allies spending a minimum of 2% of GDP on Defence.

During the meeting Defence Ministers agreed to continue providing significant military supplies to Ukraine including lethal and non-lethal aid. The UK Defence Secretary highlighted that the UK would be providing Starstreak, a high velocity anti-aircraft missile system, that complements the other military aid provided by the UK Armed Forces, including over 4,000 anti-tank missiles.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK and our Allies continue to support Ukraine against Russia's invasion.

I have met with my fellow Defence Ministers today to discuss the next steps.

While in Brussels, the Defence Secretary also held bilateral or small-group meetings with the US, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Slovakia, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

The UK has recently bolstered its military commitments in Eastern Europe including doubling the number of troops in Estonia, committing HMS Trent and HMS Diamond to the Eastern Mediterranean and providing air policing over Romania and Poland with RAF fast jets from the UK and RAF Akrotiri.

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