

# PM call with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine: 13 March 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy this afternoon.

He commended the President and the Ukrainian people on their fortitude. The Prime Minister said Putin's barbaric actions were testing not just Ukraine but all of humanity.

The leaders condemned the murders of Brent Reynaud and countless innocent Ukrainians, and the abduction of the Mayors of Dniprorudne and Melitopol.

The Prime Minister outlined the support the UK continues to deliver to Ukraine. He said the UK would continue to pursue more options for bolstering Ukraine's self-defence, working with partners including at Tuesday's meeting of the Joint Expeditionary Force in London.

The Prime Minister said the UK would continue to stand behind Ukraine in all their efforts to bring an end to this disastrous conflict.

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## 'Cyberflashing' to become a criminal

# offence

- Online Safety Bill will include new cyberflashing offence
- Maximum sentence of two years in prison
- Part of wider Government efforts to ensure laws keep pace with emerging crimes

The practice typically involves offenders sending an unsolicited sexual image to people via social media or dating apps, but can also be over data sharing services such as Bluetooth and Airdrop. In some instances, a preview of the photo can appear on a person's device – meaning that even if the transfer is rejected victims are forced into seeing the image.

[Research](#) by Professor Jessica Ringrose from 2020 found that 76 percent of girls aged 12-18 had been sent unsolicited nude images of boys or men.

Ministers have today confirmed that laws banning this behaviour will be included in the Government's landmark Online Safety Bill alongside wide-ranging reforms to keep people safe on the internet.

The new offence will ensure cyberflashing is captured clearly by the criminal law – giving the police and Crown Prosecution Service greater ability to bring more perpetrators to justice. It follows similar recent action to criminalise upskirting and breastfeeding voyeurism with the Government determined to protect people, particularly women and girls, from these emerging crimes.

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

Protecting women and girls is my top priority which is why we're keeping sexual and violent offenders behind bars for longer, giving domestic abuse victims more time to report assaults and boosting funding for support services to £185m per year.

Making cyberflashing a specific crime is the latest step – sending a clear message to perpetrators that they will face jail time.

The change means that anyone who sends a photo or film of a person's genitals, for the purpose of their own sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, alarm or distress may face up to two years in prison.

It follows a Law Commission review 'Modernising Communications Offences' which recommended that a new offence should be created.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Tech has the power to bring people together and make our lives better, but it can also enable heinous behaviour from those who wish to abuse, harm and harass.

The forthcoming Online Safety Bill will force tech companies to stop their platforms being used to commit vile acts of cyberflashing. We are bringing the full weight on individuals who perpetrate this awful behaviour.

Justice Minister Victoria Atkins said:

It is unacceptable that women and girls travelling on public transport, or just going about their day-to-day lives, are being subjected to this despicable practice.

Cyberflashing can cause deep distress to victims and our changes ensure police and prosecutors have the clarity they need to tackle it and keep people safe.

Professor Penney Lewis, Criminal Law Commissioner at the Law Commission said:

Whilst the online world offers important opportunities to share ideas and engage with one another, it has also increased the scope for abuse and harm. Reports of cyberflashing are rising worryingly. This offence will close loopholes in the existing law and ensure that cyberflashing is treated as seriously as in-person flashing.

British Transport Police Assistant Chief Constable Charlie Doyle said:

British Transport Police have always taken reports of cyberflashing very seriously and we welcome any extra help in bringing more offenders to justice.

We expect this new legislation will be a positive step in helping to drive out this unacceptable behaviour and increase judicial outcomes for victims.

We know that all forms of sexual harassment are under-reported to police and I hope the new legislation and increased awareness will encourage more victims to come forward and tell us about what's happened to them.

Today's announcement builds on what the Online Safety Bill already does by making sure criminal law is fit for the internet age and better protects victims from harmful communications online.

Alongside the new cyberflashing offence, the Government has previously committed to [creating three other new criminal offences](#) through this Bill, tackling a wide range of harmful private and public online communication. These include sending abusive emails, social media posts and WhatsApp messages, as well as 'pile-on' harassment where many people target abuse at an individual such as in website comment sections.

The Online Safety Bill will also put more legal responsibility on social media platforms, search engines and other websites or apps which host user-generated content to tackle a range of illegal and harmful content on their services.

## Notes to Editors

- The new cyberflashing offence will apply to England and Wales. The Government continues to engage with all the Territorial Offices and the devolved administrations to effectively manage devolution considerations.
- [YouGov](#) research from 2018 found that four in ten young women aged 18-34 have been sent unsolicited sexual images.

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# [Chancellor calls on firms to stop investing in Russia](#)

News story

The Chancellor has called on UK firms to "think very carefully" about any investments that would support the Putin regime, in the wake of his illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.



- Chancellor Rishi Sunak calls on firms to “think very carefully” about any investments that would in any way support the barbaric Putin regime
- Sunak welcomes commitments already made by firms and investors to divest away from Russian assets and is “crystal clear” that he supports any further signals of intent
- Move is part of government strategy to inflict maximum economic pain on Putin and his regime – and to stop further bloodshed

Rishi Sunak welcomed commitments from firms such as BP, Shell, Aviva, M&G and Vanguard, who have announced their intention to reduce or sell holdings in Russia in recent days.

And in a bid to ensure Putin and his regime feel maximum economic pain, he said there was no argument for new investment in the Russian economy from UK firms.

**Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:**

I welcome commitments already made by a number of firms to divest from Russian assets – and I want to make it crystal clear that the government supports further signals of intent.

I am urging firms to think very carefully about their investments in Russia and how they may aid the Putin regime – and I am also clear that there is no case for new investment in Russia.

We must collectively go further in our mission to inflict maximum economic pain – and to stop further bloodshed.

The Chancellor and Economic Secretary met with asset managers and owners last week to discuss UK investment in Russia – and welcomed the consensus on the need to economically isolate Putin and his regime.

The Chancellor’s call is part of the government’s strategy to hold Putin to account and to send a clear message that the invasion will come at a huge economic cost to Russia.

The government recognises that some firms may find winding down their positions is a long-term process, given market conditions and the ability to sell assets due to the global sanctions placed on the Russian economy. However, the Chancellor has been clear about the value of the strong signal of intent made by many firms to date, and said the government would do all it could to stand behind and support businesses who want to divest.

The UK has worked with allies to impose sweeping sanctions on Russia. This includes designating more than 300 individuals and entities at the heart of Putin’s regime, freezing tens of billions of pounds in assets, and working at

pace to sanction more oligarchs with close links to the Kremlin.

The Prime Minister has also been clear that there will be impacts, and we must do everything we can to protect consumers and the public. We are already providing support worth around £21 billion during this year, and next, to help people with the cost of living and we will continue to monitor the economic impact of the conflict and keep our approach under review.

### **Further information**

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## **Justice Secretary to offer support in investigating Russian war crimes in visit to The Hague**

- Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab to visit the Hague on Monday
- Offer of UK legal expertise and technical support to the International Criminal Court
- UK to bring together broad coalition of countries to help war crimes investigations

The visit will also inform how the international community can best support the court as the Deputy Prime Minister vows to bring together a broad coalition of countries which also have the capability to help the investigation.

It follows a virtual meeting last week with Ukraine's Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova, and Attorney General Suella Braverman to discuss what help the country needs to collect and preserve evidence of war crimes.

This is the latest in a series of efforts to provide Ukraine with economic, diplomatic, humanitarian and defensive support alongside lethal aid. The UK Government is also investigating how to stop Russian oligarchs using the British legal system to intimidate and silence their critics.

The Deputy Prime Minister will meet ICC Prosecutor, Karim AA Khan QC, its Registrar, Peter Lewis, and President of the Court, Judge Piotr Hofmański. He will emphasise UK support for the Court and respect for its independence.

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

Tomorrow I will go to The Hague to offer the ICC UK technical support in bringing those responsible for war crimes in Ukraine to justice – including support with the immediate priority of gathering and preserving evidence.

Russian commanders carrying out war crimes should know they cannot act with impunity. Like Radovan Karadzic and Charles Taylor before them, their actions risk landing them in a jail cell.

Separately, Dominic Raab will meet ambassadors from a range of countries to build a coalition able to provide extra assistance and cooperation to the Office of the Prosecutor to investigate war crimes in Ukraine.

The UK has a long history of supporting war crimes prosecutions from Nuremburg through to the Yugoslav tribunals in the 1990s and was a founder member of the ICC.

The offer ranges from police and military analysis to specialist IT to help the ICC collect and preserve evidence, as well as the UK's significant legal expertise. It might eventually lead to witness relocation and imprisoning those found guilty, as the UK has done for previous war crimes.

Separately, last week the Attorney General, Suella Braverman, signed a statement with the Ukraine's Prosecutor General which reaffirms the UK's support for holding Russia to account for war crimes committed in Ukraine.

The Deputy Prime Minister was the FCDO's head of war crimes in the British Embassy in the Hague, liaising with the ICC from 2003 until 2006, supporting the prosecution of war crimes. In this role he negotiated agreements that have since allowed for witnesses to be relocated to safety in the UK and for those convicted to serve their sentences in UK prisons, including Radovan Karadžić who was found convicted of genocide in Bosnia at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in 2016.

He is leading a taskforce of Ministers, senior civil servants and operational partners such as the police and Crown Prosecution Service to establish how best the UK can support the ICC prosecute war crimes in Ukraine.

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## **Prime Minister to host Nordic and Baltic leaders as he pushes to bolster European resilience and defence**

- Leaders of Joint Expeditionary Force countries to attend meetings in London and Chequers on shoring up European security and increasing

defensive military support to Ukraine

- Prime Minister will urge the coalition to work together on greater resilience against hostile state threats
- Leaders are expected to discuss joint military exercises in the High North and Baltic regions

Nordic and Baltic leaders will attend a summit in London this week hosted by the Prime Minister, as he continues to lead the charge on ensuring no one actor or malign government can fundamentally compromise European security again.

The Prime Minister will host the leaders of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), a northern European security coalition, bringing together representatives from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway.

While the JEF began as a defence-focused group, the Prime Minister has been impressed by the common approach and values shared by its members. They will discuss the immediate crisis in Ukraine but also long-term energy security and how they can help Ukraine rebuild again after war.

The grouping faces a unique set of threats from Russia, with some members facing aggression on their land borders, in the skies and from the North and Baltic Seas. Many face increasing cyber threats too.

The Prime Minister is set to host the group for dinner at Chequers on Monday night, after inviting the leaders to his country residence during the most recent JEF leader call last month.

The leaders will then meet in London on Tuesday before the Prime Minister hosts the leaders of Finland and Sweden at Downing Street in the afternoon. He is expected to host the Prime Minister of Latvia ahead of the summit on Monday.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

European security has been shaken by the attack of Russia on Ukraine, and alongside our partners, we will take action to ensure we emerge stronger and more united than before.

Ensuring we are resilient to Putin's threats needs to go beyond our military footing – together alongside our North and Baltic Sea partners we must ensure we are insulated from Russia's interference and impact on our energy supplies, economy and values.

The Prime Minister is set to raise the importance of broader European security in his meetings, and will urge leaders to work together to ensure that no other nations can fall victim to Putin's aggression

The leaders are also expected to agree to an enhanced programme of integrated



JEF exercises and activities at sea, on land and in the air in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea the member nations deepen military ties and interoperability.

The meeting follows the deployment of UK Armed Forces to Exercise Cold Response in Norway this weekend, where more than 30,000 troops from 27 nations will be put through their paces in extreme temperatures.

Exercise Cold Response will be the largest of its kind in 30 years.