

PM meeting with Taoiseach Micheál Martin: 12 March 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in London today.



The Prime Minister met with Taoiseach Micheál Martin in London today.

Both leaders discussed their deep concern around the intensification of hostilities near Kyiv and condemned the attacks by Russian forces on civilians. The Prime Minister said this was critical moment for Ukraine and for wider European and international security.

They agreed on the vital importance of continued unity in the face of Russian aggression, including through humanitarian relief, defensive military support to the Ukrainian government and further sanctions to target the Putin regime.

The Prime Minister reiterated the need to make significant changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

He said that while greater ambition and flexibility was needed from the EU in the negotiations, it was his hope that the same spirit of cooperation that had characterised the UK/EU relationship in respect of Ukraine could also be applied to resolving the issues with the Protocol.

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£48 million to safeguard nation's critical cultural heritage

- Move is a major part of levelling up drive to improve people's access to the arts, support cultural assets, and power economic growth through culture
- Recipients include famed codebreakers site Bletchley Park, internationally renowned Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and heritage site Berwick Barracks

Galleries, museums, libraries and other cultural venues across the country are set to benefit from £48 million of funding which will improve people's access to the arts, safeguard cultural assets for future generations, and power economic growth through culture.

More than 60 organisations in England will receive a slice of the funding which is being released as part of the government's Cultural Investment Fund which was first unveiled in 2019.

Much-loved public venues such as Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, with its internationally important collection of art and cultural objects, and the museum and former top-secret Second World War code-breaking centre Bletchley Park will receive funding.

Support will also go to smaller venues such as True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum in King's Lynn which celebrates 900 years of the fishing industry, and heritage sites including Berwick Barracks in Northumberland.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

Culture is the bedrock of society. It brings people together, entertains and informs us, and helps us to understand our common past and shared future.

Today we are announcing a raft of new funding for treasured cultural institutions up and down the country.

This will help them to continue their great work, advance our work to level up access to arts and culture so they can be enjoyed by people no matter where they live, and protect these cherished institutions for future generations to enjoy.

Iain Standen, CEO of Bletchley Park Trust, said:

We are very grateful to DCMS and Arts Council England for their generous support via the Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND), that will enable improvements to the aged electrical and water

systems at Bletchley Park.

This work is currently beyond the scope of the Bletchley Park Trust's budgets as we rebuild our finances following the pandemic.

With this significant support, the Trust can continue the important restoration of this nationally and internationally significant heritage site, keeping the doors open for future generations.

Kate Mavor, chief executive at English Heritage, which manages Berwick Barracks, said:

This major grant will help to breathe life into Berwick Barracks, unlocking and bringing back into use empty buildings and spaces within this immense site, right in the heart of Berwick town.

Our Living Barracks project is incredibly exciting – saving an important historic site, providing badly needed employment and investment, and creating a new cultural, residential and commercial space for Berwick.

All the partners involved in delivering this project are delighted at this resounding vote of confidence in it and we'd like to thank the Government for its support.

Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal Neil Mendoza said:

The Cultural Investment Fund was a major commitment in the election manifesto.

It has already helped places like Grimsby and Plymouth. Today's announcement highlights steadfast and needed support for museums and libraries.

We also see a new set of impressive, culture-led regeneration projects all around the country from Torbay to Middlesbrough. Levelling Up in action.

Darren Henley, Chief Executive Officer, Arts Council England, said:

Our artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries are experts in making villages, towns and cities better places to live, work, visit or play.

This investment means they'll be able to help more people across England to lead happier, more creative lives.

Sam Mullins, director of the London Transport Museum, said:

As we recover from the impact of the pandemic, this new investment will enable us to carry out critical repairs and upgrades to our historic Grade II listed building.

It will help ensure our galleries and exhibitions, which relate how public transport moves and shapes our city, are more accessible to our visitors and aid our efforts to ensure our building is more environmentally friendly for the future.

The fund will see £48 million distributed to 63 organisations. It is allocated through three streams: £24 million through the Cultural Development Fund, £18.8 million through the Museums Estate and Development Fund, and £5 million through the Libraries Improvement Fund.

Cultural Development Fund

The Cultural Development Fund aims to give people access to arts and culture in areas with historically low levels of cultural engagement and boost economic growth. The first round of funding announced in 2019 saw Grimsby, the Thames Estuary, Plymouth, Wakefield and Worcester receive a share of £20 million to invest in culture, heritage and the creative industries. The fund helps transform cultural sites which are at the heart of communities.

Today seven regional organisations have been given money for culture-led regeneration projects. Barnsley Museums will receive almost £4 million to transform Elsecar Heritage Centre into a cultural and creative industries hub.

Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services has received a similar amount for a number of projects including creating a printmaking facility, a new studio and a gallery space at The Auxiliary warehouse and to fund new event spaces and a gallery at the Carnegie Library and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

Another £4 million will help turn Berwick Barracks in Northumberland into a year-round cultural venue with refurbished gallery and cinema spaces. Designed by architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, it was among the first purpose-built barracks in the country and is now run by English Heritage as a visitor attraction.

Libraries Improvement Fund

The Libraries Improvement Fund is helping to transform library services in England by helping them upgrade their buildings and digital infrastructure so they can respond to the changing ways people use them. Twenty-five library services are being supported in this round of funding, including Sandwell Library and Information Service in the West Midlands (£495,000) and Sheffield Libraries (£340,000).

Museum Estate and Development Fund

The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) helps fund museum and local authority infrastructure projects and urgent maintenance works beyond their day-to-day budgets.

Thirty-one museums across England have been supported by the fund in this round, including Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (£653,000) and Leicester Museum & Art Gallery (£766,450). Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery will receive £5 million to improve public access and fund structural work to safeguard the building for future generations.

True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum in King's Lynn, Norfolk, will receive £50,000 to help the independent community organisation deal with flooding issues which threaten the safety of the collection.

Bletchley Park, the museum and former top-secret Second World War code-breaking centre, has been given £468,000 to pay for essential maintenance works to its buildings near Milton Keynes to help preserve them for future generations. The historic site is now a popular visitor attraction with more than 250,000 visitors per year.

Haringey Council has also been given £588,900 to fund the restoration of the north London landmark Bruce Castle. The Grade 1 listed building is home to the borough's museum and archive and the funding will help address structural issues within the historic building.

London Transport Museum has also been given £277,093 for upgrades including improvements to its lifts to increase public access to the venue.

Government support for the arts

The announcement follows a concerted effort by the government to support the country's vital cultural organisations.

Its unprecedented £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund helped thousands of organisations survive the pandemic. Last month the Government also announced an additional £75 million of arts funding, which will be distributed by 2025 to places that have been culturally under-served in the past as part of its work to level up access to the arts.

Together with today's announcement, the total amount of funding granted now constitutes the highest level of investment by the taxpayer in culture in the post-war period.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Barnsley Museums will receive £3,930,000.
- Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services will receive £4,250,000.
- English Heritage will receive £4,200,000 for its work at Berwick Barracks.

- Details of the recipients of the remaining portion of the Cultural Investment Fund will be announced in due course.
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[G7 Leaders' Statement on Ukraine: 11 March 2022](#)

We the Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) remain resolved to stand with the Ukrainian people and government who heroically resist Russian President Vladimir Putin's military aggression and war of choice against their sovereign nation. This unprovoked and unjustified attack is causing enormous suffering and a tragic loss of life, including through the increasingly indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilians in schools, homes, and hospitals.

We are united in our determination to hold President Putin and his regime accountable for this unjustified and unprovoked war that has already isolated Russia in the world. The world should join together in calling on President Putin and his regime to immediately stop its ongoing assault against Ukraine and withdraw its military forces. We stand in solidarity with those who are bravely opposing the invasion of Ukraine.

We urge Russia to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to victims of its assault in Ukraine, and to allow safe passage for civilians wishing to leave. We call for, and commit to provide, humanitarian, medical and financial support to refugees from Ukraine.

Since President Putin launched the Russian Federation's invasion on February 24, our countries have imposed expansive restrictive measures that have severely compromised Russia's economy and financial system, as evidenced by the massive market reactions. We have collectively isolated key Russian banks from the global financial system; blunted the Central Bank of Russia's ability to utilise its foreign reserves; imposed sweeping export bans and controls that cut Russia off from our advanced technologies; and targeted the architects of this war, that is Russian President Vladimir Putin and his accomplices, as well as the Lukashenko regime in Belarus.

In addition to announced plans, we will make further efforts to reduce our reliance on Russian energy, while ensuring that we do so in an orderly fashion and in ways that provide time for the world to secure alternative and sustainable supplies. In addition, private sector companies are leaving Russia with unprecedented speed and solidarity. We stand with our companies that are seeking an orderly withdrawal from the Russian market.

We remain resolved to isolate Russia further from our economies and the international financial system. Consequently, we commit to taking further measures as soon as possible in the context of our ongoing response and

consistent with our respective legal authorities and processes:

First, we will endeavor, consistent with our national processes, to take action that will deny Russia Most-Favoured-Nation status relating to key products. This will revoke important benefits of Russia's membership of the World Trade Organization and ensure that the products of Russian companies no longer receive Most-Favoured-Nation treatment in our economies. We welcome the ongoing preparation of a statement by a broad coalition of WTO members, including the G7, announcing their revocation of Russia's Most-Favoured-Nation status.

Second, we are working collectively to prevent Russia from obtaining financing from the leading multilateral financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Russia cannot grossly violate international law and expect to benefit from being part of the international economic order. We welcome the IMF and World Bank Group's rapid and ongoing efforts to get financial assistance to Ukraine. We also welcome the steps the OECD has taken to restrict Russia's participation in relevant bodies.

Third, we commit to continuing our campaign of pressure against Russian elites, proxies and oligarchs close to President Putin and other architects of the war as well as their families and their enablers. We commend the work done by many of our governments to identify and freeze mobile and immobile assets belonging to sanctioned individuals and entities, and resolve to continue this campaign of pressure as a matter of priority. To that end, we have operationalised the task force announced on February 26, which will target the assets of Russian elites close to President Putin and the architects of his war. Our sanctions packages are carefully targeted so as not to impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Fourth, we commit to maintaining the effectiveness of our restrictive measures, to cracking down on evasion and to closing loop-holes. Specifically, in addition to other measures planned to prevent evasion, we will ensure that the Russian state and elites, proxies and oligarchs cannot leverage digital assets as a means of evading or offsetting the impact of international sanctions, which will further limit their access to the global financial system. It is commonly understood that our current sanctions already cover crypto-assets. We commit to taking measures to better detect and interdict any illicit activity, and we will impose costs on illicit Russian actors using digital assets to enhance and transfer their wealth, consistent with our national processes.

Fifth, we are resolved to fighting off the Russian regime's attempts to spread disinformation. We affirm and support the right of the Russian people to free and unbiased information.

Sixth, we stand ready to impose further restrictions on exports and imports of key goods and technologies on the Russian Federation, which aim at denying Russia revenues and at ensuring that our citizens are not underwriting President Putin's war, consistent with national processes. We note that international companies are already withdrawing from the Russian market. We

will make sure that the elites, proxies and oligarchs that support President Putin's war are deprived of their access to luxury goods and assets. The elites who sustain Putin's war machine should no longer be able to reap the gains of this system, squandering the resources of the Russian people.

Seventh, Russian entities directly or indirectly supporting the war should not have access to new debt and equity investments and other forms of international capital. Our citizens are united in the view that their savings and investments should not fund the companies that underpin Russia's economy and war machine. We will continue working together to develop and implement measures that will further limit Russia's ability to raise money internationally.

We stand united and in solidarity with our partners, including developing and emerging economies, which unjustly bear the cost and impact of this war, for which we hold President Putin, his regime and supporters, and the Lukashenko regime, fully responsible. Together, we will work to preserve stability of energy markets as well as food security globally as Russia's invasion threatens Ukraine's capacity to grow crops this year.

We continue to stand with the Ukrainian people and the Government of Ukraine. We will continue to evaluate the impacts of our measures, including on third countries, and are prepared to take further measures to hold President Putin and his regime accountable for his attack on Ukraine.

UN Human Rights Council 49: UK statement for the interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

World news story

The UK delivered this statement reiterating that all attacks on Human Rights Defenders are part of a wider trend of restrictions to civic space that must be abated.



The Human Rights Council takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Mr Vice-President,

The United Kingdom welcomes the Special Rapporteur's report. Human Rights Defenders perform a crucial function within society. They promote the rights of their fellow citizens, including marginalised groups. And they expose corruption and challenge poor governance. Sadly, that role is not universally respected.

The UK notes with concern the attacks on Human Rights Defenders working in the field of anti-corruption, as outlined in the report. All attacks on Human Rights Defenders are part of a wider trend of restrictions to civic space that must be reversed.

The United Nations must lead by example to protect those who participate in its processes from reprisals. We regret in particular that women working in the fields of peacebuilding and security are being increasingly targeted for sharing their views.

In July 2019, the UK published guidance outlining its support for Human Rights Defenders. We continue to provide assistance through our bilateral engagement around the world, and through multilateral organisations. Our diplomatic network will go on monitoring cases, observing trials, and raising our concerns on this issue with other governments.

Special Rapporteur,

What can be done to reduce reprisals against Human Rights Defenders and where should responsibility lie for their protection?

Thank you.

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Yet another lie in Russia's disinformation campaign against Ukraine

Thank you Mr President,

Russia has today brought into the Security Council a series of wild, completely baseless and irresponsible conspiracy theories.

Let me put it diplomatically: they are utter nonsense.

There is not a shred of credible evidence that Ukraine has a biological weapons programme.

Ukraine is a State Party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) in good standing.

As we've heard, the research facilities are established facilities set up to deal with public health hazards.

The UN briefers today have confirmed this.

This is yet another lie in Russia's disinformation campaign.

They said they would not invade Ukraine. They then invaded. Foreign Minister Lavrov then said they hadn't invaded, and he repeated this absurdity yesterday.

A whole pack of lies.

They said Ukraine was preparing a "dirty bomb".

That was a lie too.

They said yesterday that a pregnant woman staged her injuries in the Mariupol hospital bombing.

That was a grotesque lie.

Russia is sinking to new depths today, but this Council must not get dragged down with it.

So let's get back to the facts.

Russia is invading Ukraine in violation of international law.

Russia is killing hundreds of civilians through indiscriminate shelling of Ukrainian cities.

It is using cluster munitions and thermobaric rockets, weapons designed to

inflict maximum damage wherever they are deployed.

It is targeting hospitals and schools and committing war crimes.

Thousands of Russian and Ukrainian soldiers are dead. Deaths that will shatter the lives of families they have left behind.

2.5 million Ukrainians have become refugees. One million children forced to flee from President Putin's invasion.

This is a war of choice that Russia needs to end.

Colleagues,

Russia has broken its commitments under the Charter but we must not let it subvert the multilateral system itself.

As the UN said today, Russia is now putting at threat the global framework for peace and security. The Security Council is responsible for addressing many serious conflicts around the world. We have important work to do.

We do not sit in this Chamber to be an audience for Russia's domestic propaganda.

And we should not allow Russia to abuse its permanent seat to spread disinformation and lies and pervert the purpose of the Security Council.

Let us resolve today that this Council remains focussed on the real threats to international peace and security.

I thank you.