

[Kazakhstan: UK government statement on protests](#)

News story

The UK government has issued a statement on the protests in Kazakhstan.



An FCDO Spokesperson said:

We are concerned by the violent clashes in Kazakhstan in recent days and are following developments closely. We call for calm and we condemn acts of violence and the destruction of property and buildings. We also call for a resumption of internet services and for the Kazakh authorities to respect their commitments to freedom of speech and expression.

Protests should be peaceful and law enforcement responses proportionate and in line with Kazakhstan's international commitments. The UK has a close relationship with Kazakhstan and it is important that Kazakhstan's sovereignty is respected. The UK encourages a peaceful resolution through engagement between the authorities and civil society.

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[North Korea missile test: Minister for](#)

Asia statement, January 2022

Press release

Minister for Asia, Amanda Milling, comments on the recent test of a ballistic missile by North Korea.



Minister for Asia, Amanda Milling said:

The UK is deeply concerned by North Korea's decision to carry out a ballistic missile test; this violates multiple UN Security Council Resolutions and poses a threat to regional peace and security.

We urge North Korea to refrain from further provocations and take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. Alongside our allies and partners, the UK is committed to peace on the Korean Peninsula, upholding the rules-based international system and securing an end to North Korea's unlawful activities. We strongly encourage North Korea to return to dialogue with the US.

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Oral statement on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the government's continuing support for Afghans.

The United Kingdom has always been generous to those fleeing persecution...

And last August, as the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly and dangerously, we worked at great speed to evacuate 15,000 people to the United Kingdom and offer them immediate sanctuary and support.

This number was the second largest number evacuated by any country, behind only the USA. Our priorities during Operation Pitting were clear: to save as many lives as possible while keeping the British public safe.

The people evacuated included courageous Afghans who had worked closely with the British Armed Forces, as well as other vulnerable people at risk and British Nationals and their families living in Afghanistan.

Since that evacuation, we have helped a further 1,500 people enter the UK, including female judges, human rights defenders, and LGBT Afghans.

And, today, I am pleased to inform the House that the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme opens formally. We will resettle up to 20,000 people under this scheme.

I emphasise that this scheme is in addition to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy which provides a route to safety for any current or former locally employed staff working with the UK Government and around 7,000 people alone have already been helped by this scheme.

It means that the United Kingdom has one of the world's most generous humanitarian offers to vulnerable Afghans. This is the government's New Plan for Immigration in action, through which we help those in greatest need via this safe and legal route.

In September, we announced our aim to settle 5,000 people in the first year of the ACRS. In light of the emerging situation in Afghanistan – and the success of our evacuation efforts – we will exceed that aim.

The first to be resettled under the new ACRS will be those already evacuated and in the UK. They include women's rights activists, journalists, and prosecutors, as well as the Afghan families of British Nationals. We are supporting those British Nationals who have been assisted by Her Majesty's Government to the UK and as well as their families who require such help as we recognise that they experienced the same trauma and have the same needs as their Afghan neighbours fleeing Kabul alongside them.

And whilst this policy work has been developed, we have got on with the job and now granted the first people indefinite leave to remain under the ACRS.

And... we will open two further referral pathways under the ACRS this year, to bring more people here safely.

From the Spring, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will refer refugees in need of resettlement who have fled Afghanistan.

The UNHCR has the global mandate to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. We will continue to receive such referrals to the scheme in coming years.

The third referral pathway will resettle those at risk who supported the UK and international community effort in Afghanistan, as well as those who are particularly vulnerable, such as women and girls at risk and members of minority groups.

In the first year of this third referral pathway, the government will honour our commitments and offer ACRS places to the most at risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors, and Chevening alumni. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be in touch with those eligible to support them through the next steps of this process.

Beyond the first year of the ACRS, we will work with international partners and NGOs to design and deliver this unprecedented third referral pathway – this will allow us to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk beyond Year One.

Mr Speaker, as I have said before, the capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited. We have had to take very difficult decisions about who will be prioritised for resettlement, and it is frankly for other countries to step-up and follow the UK's ambitious lead. This scheme reflects the realities of the scale of the challenge, our previous pledges and our endeavours to resettle people well in the UK.

And we continue our international efforts in Afghanistan and the region...

In addition to continuing to bring at-risk people to the UK, we have been coordinating closely with international partners, including through our Presidency of the G7.

We have doubled our aid for Afghanistan to £286 million, including vital humanitarian assistance to save lives this winter.

In conclusion, in the four months since Operation Warm Welcome has been launched, we have worked across ten government departments, with all Devolved Administrations, with around 350 councils and local agencies, as well as with charities and volunteers to offer...

a new start for our new citizens and the freedom to succeed in the United Kingdom.

- We have provided immediate sanctuary for more than 12,000 people, including accommodation, food, healthcare, education and support;
- More than 4,000 people have moved or are being moved into their new homes since the first ARAP flights in June – this is an unprecedented pace of re-settlement;
- And I'm pleased to confirm, contrary to press reports over Christmas, all children who were evacuated under Op Pitting are now in school and those children who have joined us since then are either in school or being placed in schools as quickly as possible;
- 97% of evacuees are registered with GPs and everyone has been offered Covid vaccinations;
- We have launched a brand new housing portal on gov.uk for members of the

public to offer accommodation;

- We are working with the regulators of professions to assess and recognise Afghans' qualifications, especially in sectors that need recruits, such as teaching and healthcare;
- We have made it easier for local community groups to support Afghans through the Community Sponsorship Scheme, which will begin welcoming Afghan families later this month;
- We have developed a new integration programme, tailored to the needs of this traumatised group, which has been piloted and will be rolling out shortly; and
- We are creating from scratch a new approach to employment, housing and integration – Jobs First – to help Afghans become self-sufficient as quickly and as well as they can.

This is the New Plan for Immigration in action.

I have always acknowledged that resettling such large numbers of people well will take time and it demands care.

I therefore urge colleagues across the House to work with their councils and communities to help us build bright futures for our new Afghan citizens.

I commend this statement to the House.

[Golden night at HMS Cambria](#)

The joint regional event held on 17 November 2021 at HMS Cambria saw employers from Wales, West Midlands and Wessex recognised for the outstanding support they give to the armed forces community. Nationally, 140 organisations received the award.

Recipients from Wales were:

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Butterfly Data
- Cardiff and Vale College
- Defence Electronics & Components Agency
- E-Cycle Limited
- Empower Support for the Voluntary Sector Ltd
- Firing Line Museum of The Queen's Dragoon Guards and The Royal Welsh
- Hazelwood Carpentry Contractors Ltd
- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

In addition, there were 15 winners in the West Midlands area and 13 from the Wessex RFCA area. Representing the highest badge of honour, Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards are awarded to those that employ and

support those who serve, veterans and their families.

This year's awardees brings the total number of Gold holders to 493.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Leo Docherty said:

I would like to thank all the organisations who have proven their support for the Defence community during such unprecedented and challenging times.

The vast range of those recognised this year demonstrates how employing the armed forces community makes a truly positive and beneficial impact for all employers, regardless of size, sector or location.

To win an award, organisations must provide 10 extra paid days leave for Reservists and have supportive HR policies in place for veterans, Reserves, and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, as well as spouses and partners of those serving in the armed forces.

Organisations must also advocate the benefits of supporting those within the armed forces community by encouraging others to sign the armed forces covenant and engage in the Employer Recognition Scheme.

This year, organisations include NHS trusts, educational institutions, financial services, hotels, charities, law firms, police services, football clubs and museums. Nearly 50% are a small or medium-sized enterprise and 72% are private companies, demonstrating the wide range of organisations offering support to the military community regardless of size, sector or location.

The evening began with a performance from the Royal Marines Band in a sunset ceremony. Guests were then welcomed by the Chief Executive of the RFCA for Wales Colonel Dominic Morgan OBE who introduced the Chief of Defence People Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, who gave the opening address.

The Welsh awards were presented jointly by Rear Admiral Keith Beckett CBE and Air Officer Wales, Air Commodore Adrian Williams OBE.

Jason Killens, Chief Executive of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, said:

We're delighted to be recognised as a Gold-standard employer in this year's awards. As a uniformed service, we're immensely proud of our strong links with the military, both regular and reservists, as well as their families.

The military were critical in supporting our ambulance service during one of the most challenging periods in its history. Service personnel helped crew our ambulances and make them ready for use during the pandemic, so we're keen to ensure we reciprocate that

fantastic commitment with strong support for the armed forces covenant through recruitment and support of veterans, reservists and their families.

Mr Tony Fish, the MOD's Regional Employer Engagement Director for North Wales said,

We're delighted that so many employers in Wales have been recognised with this Gold Award. It is particularly pleasing that these employers have worked so hard to support our armed forces community, during what has been an extremely difficult year.

2021 is the first year that there has not been one national award ceremony. This is due to the high number of winners (140 in total). Instead regional ceremonies have been held in Edinburgh, London and Wales and Leeds.

[Ministry of Justice marks death of Mr John Quinn QC](#)

Press release

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) marks the death of Her Majesty's Attorney General Mr John Quinn QC with sadness and extends its sympathy to his family, friends and colleagues.



Mr Quinn, who died on 2 January 2022, served the Isle of Man as Acting HM Attorney General from 2013 to 2017 and as HM Attorney General since 2017 with great distinction.

Justice Minister Lord Wolfson of Tredegar, QC said:

I'm deeply saddened to hear of the recent death of HM Attorney General, John Quinn QC.

We have lost a talented individual who dedicated his working life to public service and my thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

HM Attorney General in the Isle of Man is appointed by the Crown. The MoJ has responsibility for the UK government's constitutional relationship with the Crown Dependencies.

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