

# A deliberate attempt to distort history for Russia's own political purposes

## **Statement delivered by Fergus Eckersley, UK Political Coordinator at the UN:**

Russia-organised Arria formula meeting on national minorities and the "glorification" of Nazism in the Baltic and Black Sea region – UK Intervention

Today's meeting comes 76 years after the founding of the UN, following the horrific destruction of WWII. The UK is proud of the role that we and many partners around this table – Russia included – played in defeating fascism in Europe in WWII, and subsequently in helping to establish the multilateral system to end the scourge of war.

Since then, the UK has stood alongside many UN Member States to defend democracy and freedom, and the right of people everywhere, including minorities, to live free from oppression. Minority rights is an issue that does require attention in many parts of the world, including Europe.

We are therefore grateful to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues for his important work in this area. We also welcome the work of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities.

We have listened carefully to the other speakers today. We do not believe that they have been chosen to represent a balanced position of national minority communities in the region. We note just as one example the absence of any reference to the concerns raised with the OSCE by Crimean Tatars, a human rights issue we have regularly flagged in the Council.

The OSCE's Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations make clear that a State's wish to support national minorities residing elsewhere does not imply in any way a right under international law to exercise jurisdiction over those people or the territory of another State. Concerns for national minority groups within other States should be dealt with through normal channels of international co-operation.

We regret that this Arria-formula meeting does not appear to have been organised in line with those principles. Instead, the Russian Federation appears to be using this meeting in a deliberate attempt to distort history for its own political purposes, and to use disinformation as a tool to destabilise its neighbours.

And when set against the backdrop of Russia's military build-up and aggressive activity on Ukraine's borders and in illegally annexed Crimea – similar to that seen prior to the 2014 invasion of Ukraine – we have an even

deeper concern that the Russian Federation may once again be using this issue as part of an effort to fabricate a pretext for military aggression against a sovereign nation.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns these actions. The G7, NATO and the EU have all made clear to Russia that further military aggression against Ukraine would be a strategic mistake, with massive consequences and a severe cost in response. We call on Russia to step back, abide by its international commitments, report troop movements and return to diplomacy for serious dialogue.

Genuine concern for national minorities should be raised in line with established international processes. We are happy to work together to deal with the danger of extremism in all its forms.

I'd like to finish by reiterating the UK's unwavering support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. As our Foreign Secretary has said, we want to see a world where freedom and democracy don't just survive, they thrive.

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# [IFRA delivers 100th donation to firefighters in Paraguay](#)

World news story

UK-based International Fire & Rescuer Association (IFRA) delivered today the 100th donation in their history. The Paraguay National Board of Volunteer Firefighter Bodies (JNCBVP) received it.



The JNCBVP got photos with HMA Ramin Navai, DHM John Davie and Europe Director for the Paraguay Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ana Mariela Ayala

The JNCBVP received a donation of a fully equipped fire engine with all firefighting equipment, as well as a breathing apparatus and hydraulic rescue equipment (Jaws of Life). This refurbished equipment comes from IFRA, an organization based in Scotland. The occasion marks the 100th time the IFRA donated to an organization around the world.

To celebrate this milestone, the JNCBVP hosted an event at their headquarters in the city of Luque. Her Majesty's Ambassador Ramin Navai participated in the event, as well as members of the British Community in Paraguay and the Europe Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of the ceremony, the head of the JNCVBP Brig. Gen. Gustavo Alcaraz and Brig. Gen. Yeny Sosa received the keys to the fire engine. This truck will go to the city of Ybycui, located 120 km away from Asunción, in the department of Paraguari. After the event, the JNCBVP offered a tour of the facilities and other donations sent by IFRA in prior occasions.

The fire engine truck will find a new home in Ybycui, Paraguari

In the words of Brig. Gen. Gustavo Alcaraz:

The JNCBVP receives support from the IFRA since 2004. Many of us

have been to the UK for training, and routinely receive training and equipment.”

We are grateful for this donation from IFRA, and for the growing support from the British Embassy in Asuncion and from government.

During the event, HMA Ramin Navai said to the firefighters:

I’m proud of this collaboration between the UK and Paraguay. This continued support will help continue saving lives and aiding communities around Paraguay.

You are the heroes of this country.

David Kay OBE, director and chairman of the IFRA, said:

It was a great honour for IFRA to be able to send the 100th vehicle that we have sent worldwide to Paraguay. (. . .) [T]his was our way of recognising the support that we have received both from the government of Paraguay and the JNCBVP, and of course our own government in the United Kingdom.

We are pleased that this vehicle, which was donated by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will go on to have a second life as a front line fire appliance, saving lives in Paraguay.

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## [PM call with Chancellor Scholz: 22 December 2021](#)

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.



A Downing Street spokesperson:

“The Prime Minister spoke to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz this evening to congratulate him on his appointment.

“The Prime Minister and Chancellor Scholz underlined the fundamental value of the UK-Germany relationship, which is driven by our countries’ shared global outlook. They agreed on the importance of the partnership in areas including foreign policy, climate change and trade. Both leaders resolved to work to deepen and broaden the relationship further.

“The leaders discussed a number of international issues, including the current situation on Ukraine’s border. They agreed on the importance of engaging with Russia to de-escalate the situation and prevent further aggression.

“They also updated one another on the latest developments relating to the emergence of the Omicron variant in their respective countries.

“The Prime Minister and Chancellor Scholz welcomed the opportunity Germany’s Presidency of the G7 in 2022 presents for building on the progress made under the UK’s Presidency this year.

“The Prime Minister stressed the importance he places on resolving the very real issues caused by the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Both leaders agreed it was important to address this issue as soon as possible

“The leaders looked forward to meeting again in person at the earliest opportunity.”

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# Casa Rica adheres to Terra Carta charter

World news story

Local business Casa Rica Gourmet Kitchen adheres to the Terra Carta initiative, seeks more partners to join initiative.



HMA Ramin Navai gave a speech during the presentation

On the early morning of Thursday 22 December, Casa Rica hosted a breakfast event to join the Terra Carta initiative for sustainable markets. Her Majesty's Ambassador Ramin Navai participated in the event, organized with the support of the British Embassy in Asuncion.

Representatives from the British Chamber of Commerce, the United Nations Global Pact, and CEO of other businesses with a commitment to social corporate responsibility attended the event.

Terra Carta is an initiative by HRH The Prince of Wales, a charter that puts sustainability at the heart of the private sector. Part of the Sustainable Markets Initiative, Terra Carta offers the basis of a recovery plan to 2030 that puts Nature, People and Planet at the heart of global value creation.

Casa Rica Gourmet Market is the first business to join Terra Carta in Paraguay, and seeks others who want to be part of this laudable initiative. Upon joining the charter, CEO Florian Haensch emphasized:

(. . . ) [t]he indispensable role of the private sector and the enormous contribution it can make towards a more sustainable Paraguay, a region, and ultimately a more sustainable world in balance between economic, social and environmental development.

During the event, HMA Ramin Navai said:

The Terra Carta aims to reunite people and planet, by giving fundamental rights and value to Nature, ensuring a lasting impact and tangible legacy for this generation.

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