

PM call with Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin: 24 November 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this afternoon.

The Taoiseach began by congratulating the Prime Minister on the success of the COP26 Summit. The Prime Minister thanked Ireland for its support and the leaders agreed that the Summit marked a step change in tackling climate change around the world. The leaders also discussed their countries' respective fights against coronavirus.

The Prime Minister raised his ongoing concern about the substantial distance between the UK and EU positions when it comes to resolving the issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol. The Protocol was rightly keeping North-South trade open but its implementation was damaging the much larger East-West dimension. We could not allow a situation to develop in which the Government was unable to provide economic support to Northern Ireland in the same way it could in the rest of the UK. Ultimately Northern Ireland's place in the UK internal market was crucial to its long-term prosperity and could not be damaged.

The implementation of the Protocol was now colliding with economic and political realities and significant change was necessary. The Court of Justice (CJEU) was part of this fundamental imbalance because disputes were decided in the court of one party.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that a negotiated outcome was the preferred outcome and to work hard to achieve it. The Prime Minister was clear, however, that if talks were not able to deliver a rebalanced and sustainable outcome soon, the Government would be left with no choice but to use the safeguard measures under Article 16. This was a perfectly legitimate provision in the Protocol that had been agreed by all parties.

The two leaders agreed on the vital importance of the UK-Ireland relationship in finding solutions and in providing long-term stability in Northern Ireland. They agreed to keep in close contact.

Published 24 November 2021

Venezuela regional and municipal elections, November 2021: UK statement

Press release

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson gave a statement on the 21 November elections in Venezuela.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

Regional and municipal elections were held in Venezuela on 21 November. These elections took place with observation missions from the UN, the EU and the Carter Centre watching.

While electoral conditions may have improved and the participation of more opposition parties was welcome, it is clear that the conditions necessary for free, fair elections fell well below the standards required. Opposition candidates were arbitrarily disqualified, state resources were channelled and media access skewed in favour of the Maduro regime, and the Venezuelan Supreme Court intervened in an inappropriate and politicised manner in the running of opposition parties. There remain serious structural deficiencies that need to be addressed.

We applaud the efforts of the opposition parties and candidates who participated, notwithstanding the many disadvantages and difficulties they faced. And we applaud the commitment to democracy

shown by all voters, and the courage of those who voted for opposition candidates in spite of risks.

The UK will continue to stand with those who are working to restore democracy and rebuild democratic institutions and processes in Venezuela. A democratic transition through free and fair presidential elections, held in accordance with international democratic standards, is essential to help to bring an end to the multiple crises afflicting the Venezuelan people.

We urge the regime to return to dialogue with the opposition quickly and in good faith.

Published 24 November 2021

[Defence Secretary and Qatari Defence Minister unveil new Joint Hawk Squadron](#)

Press release

The new squadron will deliver training to British and Qatari pilots.



Two Hawk jets over RAF Leeming

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace MP and the Qatari Minister of State for Defence, His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah, have unveiled a new Joint Hawk Training Squadron at RAF Leeming in Yorkshire.

This new Joint Squadron builds on years of close partnership between the Royal Air Force and the Qatari Emiri Air Force (QEAF).

The Squadron will deliver advanced and high-speed jet training to QEAF and RAF pilots in the new Hawks. This will greatly enhance the capabilities of the two Air Forces and improve their ability to operate together.

The Defence Secretary and His Excellency Dr Khalid, a trained fast-jet pilot, travelled to RAF Leeming to see the rollout of BAE Systems' new Hawk Mk167 jet.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK's defence relationship with Qatar is strong and enduring and it has been a great pleasure to welcome His Excellency Dr Khalid to RAF Leeming.

The new Joint Hawk Squadron not only delivers greater prosperity for British industry, it will also allow our Armed Forces to build stronger relationships and create opportunities for further engagement with our Gulf partners in the future.

Qatar is among the UK's closest partners in the Gulf region. Our Armed Forces work together to address shared security challenges and common threats in the region and beyond. Our defence relationship helps to improve regional stability in the Gulf and helps to ensure the security of the UK.

Training at RAF Leeming is already underway and the first four QEAF student pilots began Hawk training in October. The Squadron will aim to train eight Qatari pilots a year, with RAF student pilots due to join the Squadron in 2022 to train alongside their Qatari counterparts.

The new Joint Hawk Training Squadron builds on the great success of the UK-Qatar Joint Typhoon Squadron based at RAF Coningsby. This Squadron aims to train up to 20 Qatari pilots ahead of the delivery of Typhoons to Qatar to in 2023.

Qatar has ordered nine Hawk Mk167 aircraft, which are manufactured in Lancashire by BAE Systems. This is part of a £6 billion package which also includes 24 Typhoons and bespoke training.

Published 24 November 2021

[WTO TRIPS Council November 2021: UK statement](#)

News story

UK statement during the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council on 18 November 2021.



Thank you, Chair and good morning colleagues

We welcome the status report as it was delivered and support its adoption. The report is factual, objective, and accurately reflects developments at the TRIPS Council.

Ahead of MC12, the UK has held an intensive series of bilateral meetings with Members on all sides of the debate. While we are not yet able to reach consensus, we're grateful for the valuable discussion and constructive tone. The UK is continuing to hold bilateral discussions with an aim to finding a pragmatic solution.

What we all agree on is the need for a trade and health outcome at MC12, which promotes vaccine production and supports equitable vaccine distribution. In this regard, we continue to emphasise the role of the international IP framework including the use of TRIPS flexibilities and wider trade and non-trade related initiatives to scale up and improve access to COVID-19 goods.

Our collective focus must remain on ensuring the production of COVID-19 vaccines and other goods continues to rise, but also on their equitable distribution and administration to contain, treat, and prevent COVID-19. The UK is committed to continuing to support a multifaceted and pragmatic response, and we will work hard to achieve a multilateral outcome on trade and health at MC12.

Published 24 November 2021

[Stockton waste boss ordered to repay](#)

£800,000

Andrew Mark Bainbridge (52) of Harlsey Road, Stockton on Tees, was the Managing Director and sole share-owner of Auckland Environmental Services Limited (AES) when it was investigated by the Environment Agency in 2016 for waste offences.

For consenting to the unlawful deposits of waste by AES Ltd, he received a 15 month custodial sentence suspended for two years. For consenting to the making of false or misleading information by AES Ltd, he received a 12 month custodial sentence suspended for two years. The two sentences will run concurrently.

Bainbridge must also undertake 200 hours of unpaid work and perform a rehabilitation activity. He was disqualified from acting as a company director for six years.

Sentencing follows confiscation hearing

Sentencing follows a Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation hearing on 7 October, 2021, in which Bainbridge was handed a confiscation order for £806,786.79. He was told to repay the total sum of his current assets which amounts to £275,833.16 by 7 January 2022 or risk a default custodial sentence of 2½ years. The remainder of the confiscation order will remain as a debt against the director until it is satisfied.

The company, now in liquidation, which operated from a site at 2/3 Bowsfield Lane, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland, was found to have engaged in criminal activity between June 2014 and February 2016, by mis-describing waste it deposited at landfill for significant financial gain.

The company was investigated by the Environment Agency after it was found to be storing waste materials on site without an appropriate environmental permit. This included waste that the company had purposefully mis-described, allowing AES to dispose of the material at a lower rate of landfill tax.

Environment Agency spokesperson John Cowl said:

The savings were substantial. Between December 2014 and February 2016 approximately 3,510 tonnes of waste were deposited at the landfill site at a cost £9,055 when it should have cost £288,085.

Further, by operating without an environmental permit, Bainbridge, through the company, sought to avoid complying with operating conditions that were necessary to protect the public and the environment from harm. This represented a further financial advantage to the company and further undermined legitimate local waste operators and jobs.

Committed offending deliberately

The court found that Bainbridge had committed the offending deliberately and there had been a major undermining of the regulatory regime as a result. In mitigation the court heard Mr Bainbridge had not committed any further offences, represented a low risk of re-offending and had caring responsibilities.

John Crowl added:

We take a hard line against anyone that intentionally sets out to profit from defrauding systems designed to protect people and the environment. We work hard to prevent and disrupt waste crime, working alongside partners in the Joint Unit for Waste Crime including the government, police forces and local councils.

We welcome this sentence and Confiscation Order by the judge which should act as a deterrent to others that might consider flouting the law. It shows that waste crime does not pay.

Both AES and Bainbridge have previous convictions for environmental offences committed in August/September 2013. In February 2015 the company and Bainbridge were convicted of operating without an environmental permit and fined £7,800 and £520 respectively.