

Colombia's peace process is an example for the world

Thank you Mr President.

First let me thank the Special Representative, for your briefing today and for the important work of the Verification Mission. I'd also like to thank our two civil society briefers Bibiana Peñaranda and Daniela Soto for sharing their perspectives and the powerful testimony you have given on the situation in Colombia.

Vice-President Ramírez, it's a pleasure to welcome to the Council once again; your presence demonstrates the importance your Government attaches to the Security Council's role in supporting Colombia on its journey towards lasting peace.

Mr President, next month we will be marking the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement. This is a significant milestone. We know that more than half of all peace agreements fail within the first five years. It is therefore an important moment for the international community to celebrate with Colombia the progress achieved to date, and the ways in which Colombia's peace process serves as an example for the world.

One such element is the novel transitional justice system created by the Peace Agreement, which puts victims at its heart. The United Kingdom commends the continued progress achieved in recent months by the components of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. We reiterate our appreciation and support for the vital work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Truth Commission and the Unit for the Search for Missing Persons, and we welcome the extension of the Truth Commission's mandate. We encourage all actors to play their part in this process: acknowledging their crimes and injustices, fulfilling their responsibility to the victims of the conflict, and paving the way towards reconciliation.

Another major achievement during this reporting period was the creation of 16 special transitional electoral districts for peace. The UK supports this important initiative to facilitate the political participation of historically excluded groups.

Mr President, while celebrating the achievement represented by the fifth anniversary of the Peace Agreement, it is also an important time to take stock of the challenges that remain to its comprehensive implementation and the commitments required to overcome them. The gains of the last five years cannot be taken for granted.

Foremost among these challenges, as all of us around this table have recognised before, is the high number of killings and threats against former combatants, social and environmental leaders, human rights defenders, women leaders and those from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Again, I

recognise the testimony of Bibiana Peñaranda and Daniela Soto in this regard.

To end this ongoing violence, we urge the Colombian Government to further integrate its presence in conflict-affected areas, and strengthen the institutions that can investigate and prosecute the criminal actors responsible. We note with concern that the National Commission on Security Guarantees has not met fully during this reporting period, and call on the Government to make full use of this body, working with civil society, to develop a public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups. We also call on all institutions to heed the early warnings of the Ombudsman's Office to help prevent attacks from happening and protect those at risk.

Finally, as the 2022 elections come into focus, we underline the importance of peaceful preparations and call on all parties to take steps to ensure safe and inclusive elections, and minimise the risk of pre-electoral and political violence.

Mr. President, the United Kingdom has been proud to accompany Colombia on its journey so far to implement the Peace Agreement. As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting Colombia in consolidating the gains achieved and overcoming the challenges that remain.

In closing, I would like just to add that we look forward to beginning work shortly with other Council members on the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the Verification Mission.

Lateral flow tests to be introduced for vaccinated international arrivals

- From 24 October fully vaccinated passengers and most under 18s arriving in England from countries not on the red list can take a cheaper lateral flow test, instead of a PCR test, on or before Day 2 of their arrival into the UK. These can be booked from 22 October
- Change will come into effect for those returning from half term breaks with lateral flow tests available to book through private providers listed on gov.uk
- Passengers must upload a photo of their test to verify results as soon as possible, with free confirmatory NHS PCRs for any positive cases

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers arriving in England from countries not on the red list can take a lateral flow test on or before day 2 of their arrival from October 24, rather than PCR tests – cutting the cost of tests in time for travellers returning from half term breaks. These can be booked from 22 October.

Eligible travellers will be able to order cheaper lateral flow tests from

private testing providers as an alternative to a PCR, offering faster results. The list of approved private providers will go live on GOV.UK on the 22nd October.

Passengers will need to take a photo of their lateral flow test and booking reference supplied by the private provider and send it back to them to verify the result. Passengers are also able to book to have a test which they can take on their arrival into the UK at testing centres located in some airports.

Those that have already bought a PCR do not need to buy another test. The arrival test must be taken as soon as possible on or before the second day of a passenger's arrival in the UK. Lateral flow tests for international travel must be purchased from a private provider as NHS Test and Trace tests cannot be used for international travel.

The government is able to make this change thanks to the success of the vaccination programme both in the UK and around the world which has protected millions of people and reduced the risks of opening up international travel.

Anyone who tests positive will need to self-isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test. [PCR tests can be accessed free of charge by ordering in the usual way through NHS Test and Trace – via \[nhs.uk/coronavirus\]\(https://nhs.uk/coronavirus\) or by calling 119.](#) Providers will be expected to advise people to self-isolate and direct people towards the NHS Test and Trace booking page.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We want to make going abroad easier and cheaper, whether you're travelling for work or visiting friends and family.

Lateral flow tests will be available later this month for those returning from half term holidays.

This change to testing is only possible thanks to the incredible progress of our vaccination programme, which means we can safely open up travel as we learn to live with the virus.

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport said:

Today's rule changes will make testing on arrival simpler and cheaper for people across the country who are looking forward to well-earned breaks for this October half term.

Taking away expensive mandatory PCR testing will boost the travel industry and is a major step forward in normalising international travel and encouraging people to book holidays with confidence.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

said:

Testing, along with vaccines, remains one of our first lines of defence against COVID-19. Getting a test as early as possible on arrival and isolation when necessary, can help control the spread of the virus and protect one another.

The government will extend regulations and publish protocol to allow some tests supplied to the private testing market that are pending validation to remain on the market in the short term. This is to address any potential shortage of supply while work continues at pace to ensure only high performing tests are ultimately approved to remain on the UK market. The government will continue to publish a list of private testing providers who meet the minimum standards for the public to choose from, with PCR test options available as well.

All travellers must complete their Passenger Locator Form prior to travel, including a test booking reference number supplied by a testing provider. Travellers will be able to upload their test booking reference to the Passenger Locator Form from 22 October for arrival in the UK from 24 October.

Eligible travellers vaccinated in over 100 countries and territories including Brazil, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, South Africa and Turkey, will be treated the same as returning fully vaccinated UK residents.

This means they will be eligible for the quarantine exemption and reduced testing measures, including taking just a lateral flow test on arrival. This is as long as they have not visited a red list country or territory in the 10 days before arriving in England. Eligible under 18s from these countries will also be treated as if fully vaccinated. The government continues to work with the Devolved Administrations to ensure there continues to be robust border measures in place to protect the UK.

Passengers who are not fully vaccinated with an authorised vaccine returning from a non-red destination must still take a pre-departure test, a PCR test on day 2 and day 8 test and complete 10 days self-isolation (with the option of Test to Release on day 5).

Virtual workshops on sustainable construction to fight climate change

This initiative is being implemented by the Guatemala Green Building Council (GGBC) in partnership with the British Embassy.

The #BuildingToCOP26 workshops aim to unify the language around sustainable construction in Guatemala in order to make visible the importance and the sector's role within the actions of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The objective is to establish a communication channel between relevant actors in the construction sector to make alliances that lead to action.

COP26 is the annual meeting of States Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. COP26 will be held in the United Kingdom to set out the actions of all countries, civil society, businesses and individuals in order to accelerate implementation of Paris Agreement objectives to protect the environment.

COP26 places the building sector as an agent of change to transform the climate crisis. Buildings are responsible for almost 40% of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and 35% of energy consumption. However, sustainable buildings can offer efficient and cost-effective mitigation solutions.

The virtual workshops will be open to public and private sector stakeholders with leadership, influence and action roles in the construction sector in Guatemala.

The workshops will address these topics:

- Guatemala: climate change and the role of infrastructure and buildings
- Methodologies and technologies for the construction sector
- Myths and realities of sustainable construction
- The challenge of cities to deliver sustainable infrastructure

Pamela Castellán, Executive Director of GGBC, said:

Our commitment as a sector must be refocused on reducing carbon emissions through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to net zero and reinforcing actions towards resilience and vulnerability reduction.

Nick Whittingham, British Ambassador in Guatemala, expressed:

The British Embassy seeks to promote sustainable development through improvements in the capabilities of the construction sector in the fight against climate change.

Juan Carlos Valenzuela, President of GGBC, mentioned.

Our goal is to make visible the importance of sustainability in health, natural resources and economic issues at a national and international level.

The modality of these workshops will be through scholarships granted by the British Embassy and the GGBC to selected actors. If you wish to participate you can make a request to direccion@guatemalagbc.org.

Government set to bolster supply chains by extending cabotage rights

- thousands more HGV deliveries could be made each month thanks to temporary changes to 'cabotage' to help ensure resilience of country's supply chains
- consultation launching today would allow foreign transport operators to make unlimited journeys for 2 weeks before returning home
- package of measures also announced to support the pig industry

Thousands more HGV deliveries could be made each month in the UK under government plans to help bolster the country's supply chains by temporarily extending so-called 'cabotage' rights.

The proposals set out in a [consultation](#) launching today (14 October 2021) mean foreign operators that come into the country laden with goods can pick up and drop off goods an unlimited number of times for 2 weeks before they return home. Currently hauliers from the EU can only make up to 2 cabotage trips within 7 days.

Subject to a one-week consultation, the temporary measures would come into force towards the end of this year for up to 6 months, helping secure supply chains in the medium term alongside the wider package of measures government has put in place to address the shortage of drivers more broadly.

The relaxation would apply to all types of goods but is likely to be particularly beneficial to food supply chains and goods that come via ports, by ensuring lorries from abroad coming into the UK are used more efficiently, helping to tackle the temporary global supply chain pressures brought on by the pandemic and the global economy rebounding.

It comes as the government continues to address the current global shortage of HGV drivers which is affecting countries around the world, and builds on the raft of measures that have already been announced to support the sector,

including boosting testing capacity and streamlining the licence process.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The long-term answer to the supply chain issues we're currently experiencing must be developing a high-skill, high-wage economy here in the UK.

Alongside a raft of other measures to help the road haulage industry, we've streamlined the testing process and announced thousands of skills bootcamps to train new drivers. These measures are working – we've been seeing up to 3 times more applications for HGV driving licences than normal as well as a deserved rise in salaries.

The temporary changes we're consulting on to cabotage rules will also make sure foreign hauliers in the UK can use their time effectively and get more goods moving in the supply chain at a time of high demand.

The government has also announced a package of measures to support the pig industry which has faced a number of challenges in recent months because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary suspension of approval to export to China for some UK pork establishments, all of which have led to a backlog of pigs awaiting slaughter. These measures come in recognition of the unique temporary circumstances farmers are facing, brought about by the global economy responding to the impacts of the pandemic and the global pressures facing supply chains worldwide.

As well as working with industry to introduce processing of animals on Saturdays and longer working days where possible, the government will fund a private storage aid scheme in England which will enable meat processors to store slaughtered pigs for 3-6 months so that they can be preserved safely and processed at a later date. Further details of the scheme will be announced shortly.

In support of pig producers in England and Scotland, the 2 meat levy bodies have also today announced a pork levy holiday – suspending payments of the levy pig farmers and producers are required to pay for November 2021. This will amount to savings for the sector of just under £1 million. The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) took the decision in response to the continued build-up of pigs on farm, falling prices and high production costs.

Until 31 December up to 800 pork butchers will be eligible to apply for visas from the existing allocation in the Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme, allowing them to travel and work in the UK for a period of 6 months. This temporary adjustment is in addition to foreign butchers already being eligible since December 2020 to apply to come to the UK through the Skilled Worker Route as part of the point-based immigration system.

Temporary visas are not a long term solution and businesses must make long term investments in the UK domestic workforce to build a high-wage, high-skill economy, instead of relying on overseas labour.

The government expects the pork sector to encourage better training offers, career options and wage increases to ensure that the sector draws on the large domestic labour pool in the UK, as well as investing in technology across the industry.

Other measures include:

- working with AHDB to support the establishments that have been delisted by China and to identify other export markets for pork
- support processors and the consumption of a variety of cuts of domestically produced pork by engaging with retailers and food service sectors

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

A unique range of pressures on the pig sector over recent months such as the impacts of the pandemic and its effect on export markets have led to the temporary package of measures we are announcing today. This is the result of close working with industry to understand how we can support them through this challenging time.

The government has already announced a [raft of measures to address the global shortage of HGV drivers](#) including increasing the number of weekly HGV tests available by 90% compared to pre-COVID levels, streamlining the testing process and announcing training for up to 5,000 new drivers through skills bootcamps.

Efforts to raise the profile of the road haulage sector and encourage people into the career are also already proving successful, with up to around 16,500 hits per day on the new GOV.UK [becoming a lorry or bus driver](#) site – while the DVLA has seen up to 3 times the number of applications for provisional HGV driving licences than normal levels.

The [consultation to temporarily amend cabotage rules](#) has launched today and will run until 21 October.

[After six years of war, the people of](#)

Yemen are still suffering from the world's worst humanitarian crisis

May I start by commending the Special Envoy for your efforts during your first month. Your engagement with a broad range of actors has laid an important foundation for a revived peace process. We are committed to helping you and to mobilising international support behind the UN-led approach.

I would also like to welcome the return of the Prime Minister and wider Cabinet to Yemen. The parties must now work together to secure the sustained presence of the Government of Yemen in the country. As you, Special Envoy, have previously stressed we need to see implementation of the Riyadh Agreement in order to support stability, services, and functional state institutions.

Ramesh your sobering words remind us today that – after six years of war – the people of Yemen are still suffering from the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian response can only do so much for so long. As you emphasised, we need a political solution to end the war and we need initiatives to support the economy to reduce humanitarian need.

The picture painted by Maysaa today of the situation in Marib is bleak and your recommendations are far-reaching. It is galling to see the Houthi offensive on Marib continue, including their siege of Marib's al-Abdiya district. Marib's citizens witnessed an atrocity on 3 October when a Houthi missile attack on the densely populated Al-Rawda neighbourhood in Marib killed two children and injured 33 civilians. As a Council, we must now place greater pressure on the Houthis to end such appalling, indiscriminate attacks. Respect for International Humanitarian Law – including the protection of civilians and assisting civilians to move out of conflict zones – is imperative.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms the incessant and unjustifiable Houthi cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, including the drone attack on 8 October which left ten people wounded at a civilian airport in Jizan.

Finally, we wish to express our deep disappointment that the Human Rights Council failed to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. Monitoring and accountability are essential in all conflict situations. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and to investigate allegations of violations where they arise.