

Steps for Peace and Security in Yemen

Thank you to all our briefers today.

First, I'd like to welcome Special Envoy Grundberg. You will bring a depth of knowledge to the role and we look forward to working with you and supporting your efforts. Your appointment comes at a critical time. Indeed the resumption of inclusive political talks that represent all of Yemeni society – including minorities and women – is essential for ending the war. Your approach of listening first is right and I welcome your plans to travel throughout Yemen and the region. Now is the opportunity for the Yemeni parties to demonstrate their commitment to real peace and move beyond their existing positions: they must regularly meet with you, without pre-conditions, and facilitate your travel into Yemen.

Second, I'd like to thank Entesar Al-Qadhi for her poignant briefing. The bleak picture she painted today for women and girls in Yemen, particularly in Marib, underlines the necessity of peace. As this Council has said repeatedly, the Houthi offensive on Marib must end. And we condemn the reckless cross-border attacks by the Houthis, facilitated by Iran. They have resorted again to launching missiles and explosive laden UAVs. Most worryingly is the indiscriminate nature of these actions: on 31 August shrapnel wounded eight civilians and damaged a commercial aircraft in Abha airport, and on 4 September another two civilians – just children – were wounded by more shrapnel.

Third, we continue to express concern at the situation in the South. The Riyadh Agreement – facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – needs to be implemented so that stability returns to the South. The Government of Yemen and the southern groups must work together to this end. In addition, the Southern Transitional Council must facilitate the return of the entire Cabinet of the Government of Yemen back to Aden.

Finally, we remain alarmed by the deteriorating economy and increasing risk of famine. This must remain a key priority for the UN-led peace process. Last month, the Yemeni Riyal passed the symbolic mark of 1000 Riyals to the dollar for the first time, making food and basic services increasingly unaffordable to millions. The Government of Yemen must therefore implement reforms to open up the possibility of greater external financial assistance, with support from the international community and International Financial Institutions.

Call for bids: capacity upgrading

support for Romanian NGOs working on MSHT prevention and victim protection

This project is part of a wider British Embassy portfolio of projects which seeks to support the Romanian Government and civil society in reducing the drivers of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) and the ability of organised crime groups to exploit vulnerabilities and retraffic MSHT victims.

Addressing human trafficking and SOC requires international cooperation, as the nature of these crimes is transnational and criminal networks frequently operate across borders. This is a priority policy area for the British Government and the British Embassy Bucharest, as Romania is a source, transit and destination country for MSHT. In 2020 alone, the British referral mechanism registered 368 Romanian victims of trafficking.

The Romanian authorities are working on strategies to combat MSHT, but many activities of both prevention and support are carried out by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and shelters. These organisations have been badly affected by the pandemic.

For these reasons, we acknowledge the urgent need to support those who provide invaluable help to those who require it most. NGOs in Romania do an incredible job at helping survivors escape modern slavery and reintegrate into society. We want to ease the burden represented by the volume of cases and the scale of the crime, which, despite best efforts, can be daunting for key actors that often rely exclusively on donations. We are therefore committed to supporting NGOs with capacity building, stakeholder engagement and accessing resources, so their ability to save lives is not hindered.

Objective

The main objective is to increase the capacity of NGOs working to prevent human trafficking and/or offer support to the victims.

Scope of work

We expect the project to have a limited reach and to include targeted interventions, with a clear indication of the impact of the grant funding on the activities of the NGO submitting the bid.

Activities

Main activity: capacity upgrading – funding expenditure for upgrading the facilities or for new equipment.

Facilities or equipment that could be financed under by this project could include*:

- upgrading shelter facilities (buying furniture, renovating a part of the shelter or facilities etc)
- providing IT support services and/or equipment (building platforms, buying tablets or other devices)

*This is not an exhaustive list and the British Embassy welcomes proposals from potential implementing partners which suggest additional or alternative activities to deliver the key objectives.

Project approach

Bidders are asked to submit a project proposal which will be approved by the British Embassy Bucharest and will form the basis for project planning. The proposal should set out how the implementing partner will deliver activities to support the objectives set out above with an implementation plan and supporting budget. The British Embassy Bucharest will oversee the project planning and provide the necessary contacts to the implementers.

The project implementer will manage project logistics, including travel plans, lodging, car hiring etc. and is expected to consider the pandemic context and its possible impact on the project implementation when submitting the bid.

How to Bid

Our process will consist of a one-stage full bid proposal.

Bids should be completed in English using the [project proposal bid form for implementers](#) (ODT, 48.4KB) an [Activity Based Budget template](#) (ODS, 10.2KB) should be submitted alongside it.

Please specify in the subject of the email: Name of implementing organisation and title of the project. Activity Based Budgets should list the activities needed to deliver the outcomes (results) of the project and all costs should be in Romanian Lei (RON).

Reporting

The reports to be produced during the course of this project are to be delivered in English:

- an Inception Note detailing approach and proposed activities. This should also set out key stakeholders who will be engaged, a proposed schedule of activities, risks, safeguarding approach and any additional details
- a draft report
- three-monthly financial reports
- after a facilitated process of commenting, the final report

Composition of the project teams:

A Project Director, from the part of BE Bucharest (Tanya Collingridge, Deputy Head of Mission) and a Project Manager, from BE Bucharest (Andrada Petrache, Senior Political Officer) will oversee the project delivery.

Project proposals should demonstrate that the implementing partner's staffing levels are appropriate to delivery the project and that the staff have relevant expertise and experience in MSHT victim support, as well as detailed knowledge of the MSHT situation in Romania.

Timing and scope of input

The bidding round is an open and competitive process, assessed by the British Embassy in Bucharest. Results will be issued by early October. Once a bid is approved, a Grant Contract will be signed with the successful bidders. In the documents section you will find an example of a Grant Contract. Your organisation will be expected to sign the contract within one week of the funds being awarded. Failure to do so will result in the funds being re-allocated. The implementing organisation will be required to submit report updates and a final evaluation of the project.

There are no pre-payments. Reimbursements will be completed once activities have taken place and all receipts submitted. Implementing organisations will request repayments using an invoice (including receipts and a financial report of spend) and the repayments will be carried out during those dates agreed upon in the respective contract. The budget should be presented in Romanian Lei. All payments will be made in RON to a bank account held in Romania.

Please send any questions regarding the call for bids to rsvp.bucharest@fcdo.gov.uk and andrada.petrache@fcdo.gov.uk.

It is expected that the project will be carried out from October 2021 to February 2022.

The crucial milestones will be the submission of the Draft report (February 2022) and the Final report (March 2022).

Budget

Project proposals must include an estimated budget of up to RON 194,000. Depending on the quality of the proposals, the British Embassy reserves the right not to grant all or part of the available funds. The Embassy also reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicants. In such a case, applicants will be asked to increase the amount that they co-finance, to propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal.

Justice Secretary outlines immediate action to improve Chelmsford prison

- £1.2 million to improve security, safety and living conditions at the local jail
- Reduction in the number of prisoners by almost 10 per cent

Justice Secretary Dominic Raab has today (24 September 2021) announced a raft of urgent measures to improve HMP Chelmsford, including a reduction in the number of prisoners and an additional £1.2 million to bolster security, safety and living conditions.

Action is being taken in response to a number of serious failings at the prison, identified during last month's inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), which triggered an Urgent Notification (UN).

The Prison Service will cut HMP Chelmsford's population by 55 places to 695 and invest an additional £1.2 million in new windows, generators and showers as well as general maintenance, security and health and safety.

In just 4 weeks, staff have already made significant improvements to the running of HMP Chelmsford, including:

- Deploying a new team of experienced frontline staff to raise standards among new officers – providing coaching and assistance to those new to the job
- Launching regular reviews of mental health support on offer in the prison, to ensure those with mental health issues are getting the help they need
- Introducing a new housing specialist to help prisoners leaving prison into stable accommodation – vital to reducing further offending and cut crime
- Ensuring all new arrivals get access to phones within 72 hours – making sure prisoners can contact family during their first few nights when they can be at their most vulnerable

The action plan published today details how Ministers will continue to build upon these improvements and hold the prison to account over the coming weeks and months.

Further measures include mandatory drug testing for offenders every month; additional 'Listeners' –prisoners trained by the Samaritans charity who provide support to those struggling with mental health issues; and new specialist training for night staff so they can better identify and support vulnerable prisoners during their shift.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Dominic Raab

said:

We're giving intensive support to Chelmsford prison to raise standards, support staff and protect vulnerable prisoners. We are providing more experienced staff, specialist training and refurbished facilities.

We have a detailed action plan to help drive down violence, rehabilitate offenders, and reduce reoffending.

The government introduced the Urgent Notification protocol in 2017 to ensure immediate steps are taken to address serious concerns identified by inspectors. The process is triggered when

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons writes to the Justice Secretary following an inspection, with Ministers having 28 days to respond and set out a detailed action plan.

Since 2018, 8 prisons have been issued with a Urgent Notification, with five sites having since been removed from the Urgent Notification process thanks to the significant and sustained improvements put in place as a result of the government's action plans.

The Justice Secretary's response and action plan can be found on GOV.UK. It also sets out how HMP Chelmsford's progress over the coming year will be regularly monitored.

Notes for editors

[CMA continues action in the PCR testing market](#)

Press release

The CMA has launched a formal investigation into Dante Labs, a private provider of PCR tests, to investigate concerns the firm may be breaking the law.



- Dante Labs targeted by watchdog over treatment of customers.
- Latest firm to face action in efforts to make testing market work better for consumers.

The latest Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation will probe concerns that Dante Labs may be treating customers unfairly by:

- Not delivering PCR tests and/or results on time or at all.
- Failing to respond to complaints or provide proper customer service.
- Refusing or delaying refunds when requested.
- Using T&Cs which may unfairly limit consumers' rights.

The firm, a popular provider of PCR travel tests in the UK this summer, has generated complaints from customers to Citizens Advice and directly to the CMA over recent months.

This investigation is the latest stage of the CMA's ongoing probe into concerns about customers being treated unfairly in the PCR testing market. On 3 September, the CMA launched an [investigation into Expert Medicals](#), a large private PCR firm. In addition, a further 19 test providers have also been told directly by the CMA to improve their pricing information or risk further action.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

"People are paying significant amounts of money for these crucial PCR tests and there is no excuse for poor or non-existent service.

"While the rules in England around PCR testing for travel are due to change in the coming weeks, the CMA will continue to investigate whether companies are breaking the law.

"Firms should be aware that if we find evidence of the law being broken, we will not hesitate to take action."

The CMA has requested enhanced powers, including fines, to tackle consumer rip-offs and bad business practices. The Government is currently [consulting](#) on these proposals.

Further information can be found on the [PCR travel tests enforcement action web page](#).

Notes to Editors

1. Today's announcement marks the start of the CMA's investigation into a possible breach of consumer law by Dante Labs. No decision has yet been made on whether Dante Labs is breaking the law. Ultimately, only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. Dante Labs is a company comprising Dante Labs S.r.l. and Dante Labs Inc.
3. The Department for Health and Social Care have confirmed that consumers who have already purchased test packages from Dante Labs will still be able to use these as a valid test package upon arriving in the UK.
4. The UK Government has [stated](#) that from the end of October it wants to allow eligible fully vaccinated passengers and those with an approved vaccine from a select group of non-red countries to replace their day 2 PCR test with a cheaper lateral flow test, reducing the cost of tests on arrival into England. At present, no changes have been announced in respect of international arrivals into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
5. On 25 August the CMA published an [open letter](#) warning PCR test providers against breaking consumer law.
6. For media queries, please contact the press office via press@cma.gov.uk or on 020 3738 6460.

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[Royal Navy seizes £17m of cocaine in Caribbean drug bust](#)

COCAINE worth more than £17 million has been seized by the Royal Navy's Caribbean Task Group – less than 24 hours into the first drugs patrol of their deployment.

Support ship RFA Wave Knight intercepted the suspect craft as it transited international waters near South America.

Despite efforts by the suspected traffickers to dump their cargo overboard, eight bales were recovered from the sea. Weighed and tested, they proved to be 216kg of cocaine with an estimated UK street value of £17.28 million.

Armed Forces Minister James Heapey said:

This successful operation, which deprived criminal gangs of over £17 million, is another example of the determination, versatility and effectiveness of the Royal Navy wherever it is deployed around

the world.

Whether protecting the UK's shores, providing hurricane and disaster relief for the people of the Caribbean or working with our US partners to prevent international drug traffickers plying their deadly trade, our brave servicemen and women prove their worth time and again.

The bust began when the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship launched her Wildcat helicopter – callsign Knightrider – on a routine patrol.

Minutes later Knightrider's crew reported a small craft with three people on board and large objects on deck. Having been ordered to stop by Knightrider, the suspected drug-runners then began throwing bales overboard.

The ship closed in and launched her smaller sea boat, carrying the embarked US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), to intercept the vessel and detain its occupants.

More than 200kg of drugs were recovered and the crew of the boat detained. They will be handed over to the US authorities.

The vessel was then destroyed to prevent it becoming a danger to other seafarers.

Captain Simon Herbert RFA, Commanding Officer of RFA Wave Knight at the time, said:

I am extremely proud of the professionalism and dedication of all on-board RFA Wave Knight – that includes 213 Flight, Royal Marines, Royal Navy and the US Coast Guard LEDET – which led to the seizure of these illegal drugs.

In doing so they've contributed to the reassurance and protection of UK Overseas Territories, as well as keeping these narcotics off the streets of the UK.

RFA Wave Knight is deployed as part of the UK's Caribbean Task Group, working alongside the patrol ship HMS Medway, which is the UK's permanent presence in the region.

The ship's main role is to provide support to British Overseas Territories in the event of a natural disaster, with peak hurricane season running from August to November. This year RFA Wave Knight has already delivered over 75 tonnes of aid to St Vincent following the volcanic eruption in April.

The task group also works alongside regional navies, authorities and police forces – especially the US Coast Guard – to tackle criminal activity across the Caribbean. Last year Royal Navy ships and helicopters in the Caribbean – again working side-by-side with US authorities – seized cocaine worth nearly

£400 million.