

UK statement on the political crisis in Somalia

Press release

Vicky Ford, Minister for Africa, has issued a statement about the escalating political crisis in Somalia



Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford said:

The UK is deeply concerned by the escalation of the current political crisis in Somalia. The situation threatens to undermine the credibility of Somalia's leadership and risks the safety and future of the Somali people.

It is vital that Somalia's leaders refrain from unilateral actions that could deepen political tensions, including any further public statements and personnel announcements which could increase the risk of violence.

We urge that all stakeholders maintain peace to avoid any risks to Somalia's stability and security. Likewise, it is important that Somalia's security forces remain focused on countering the common threat of Al Shabaab, who stand to gain from this ongoing political crisis. As champions of the debt relief efforts, the UK also urges the de-politicisation of Somalia's finances to protect the gains made through the process.

This is a moment for statesmanship, restraint and compromise. We look to Somalia's leaders to engage in meaningful mediation and to agree ways forward that de-escalate the situation and restore the focus on the priority of conducting peaceful elections, as agreed on 27 May, without further delay. Somalia needs effective governance. The continued failure to move quickly towards elections will increase insecurity and exacerbate the grave humanitarian

challenges the country is facing.

A continued deterioration in the situation leading to further electoral delays will have a substantial impact on the legacy of Somalia's leaders.

Published 18 September 2021

[UK gas supply explainer](#)

There has recently been widespread media coverage of wholesale gas prices, and the effect this could have on household energy bills. The impact on certain areas of industry, and its ability to continue production, has also attracted attention.

This explainer sets out the background to the issue and the action the government is taking to protect the UK's energy supply, industry, and consumers.

Natural gas prices have been steadily rising across the globe this year for a number of reasons. This has affected Europe, including the UK, as well as other countries around the world.

We have a diverse range of gas supply sources, with sufficient capacity to more than meet demand. The UK's gas system continues to operate reliably and we do not anticipate any increased risk of supply emergencies this winter.

Why are there high global gas prices?

The prices that are currently visible reflect the high value being placed on gas at the present time, with prices being determined by global supply and demand. They are not necessarily representative of pre-existing contracts and therefore do not apply to all of the gas being consumed in the UK this winter.

Current prices reflect a number of factors including:

- as the world comes out of COVID-19 lockdowns and economies reopen, we are seeing an uptick in global gas demand this year. *combined with a cold winter (which has an impact on gas demand as gas is often used for heating homes) this has led to a much tighter gas market with less spare capacity
- in particular, high demand in Asia for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), natural gas transported globally by ship, means less LNG than expected has reached Europe *some essential maintenance projects rescheduled from 2020 due to coronavirus coincided with necessary scheduled projects in

2021, while weather events in the US have adversely affected their LNG exports to Europe

How are high global gas prices impacting the UK?

The gas market is crucial to the UK's energy supply because of its significance in heating, industry and power generation.

Over 22 million households are connected to the gas grid and in 2020, 38% of the UK's gas demand was used for domestic heating, 29% for electricity generation and 11% for industrial and commercial use.

High gas wholesale prices have subsequently driven an increase in wholesale power prices this year.

In recent weeks, this trend has been exacerbated by the weather and planned maintenance at some power stations. This has resulted in unusually low margins for this time of year. These factors have combined to cause spikes in wholesale electricity prices, with a number of short-term markets trading at, or near, record levels.

While we are not complacent, we do not expect supply emergencies this winter.

Is our gas supply at risk?

The Great Britain (GB) gas system has delivered securely to date and is expected to continue to function effectively, with a diverse range of supply sources and sufficient delivery capacity to more than meet demand.

While our largest single source of gas supply continues to be the UK Continental Shelf (approximately 48% of total supply in 2020), the maturity of that source means we have to supplement supply from international markets.

Whilst the diversity of those international sources promotes our energy security, by reducing reliance on a particular source, the UK – as with other nations – is exposed to global trends in supply and demand which affect the price of gas traded at UK's market hub (the National Balancing Point).

We have a wide range of supply sources including direct pipelines across the North Sea from Norway to the UK, our single biggest source of imports. We are also investing millions into scaling up strong renewable energy capacity and driving down demand for fossil fuels.

GB also has a number of gas storage facilities that act as a source of system flexibility when responding to short-run changes in supply and demand.

What is the government doing on this?

Energy security is an absolute priority for this government. The government works closely with the regulator and gas supply operators to monitor supply and demand.

While wholesale gas prices have increased internationally this year, the

market continues to balance supply and demand through adjusting the prices at which energy trades take place. We have no reason to suggest this will not continue but will monitor the market.

National Grid Gas has a number of tools at its disposal to mitigate the risk of a gas supply emergency, including requesting additional gas supplies be delivered to the National Transmission System. Together with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), National Grid Gas has robust response plans in place in the unlikely event that risk should materialise. [Read plans for network gas supply emergencies](#).

Will this affect energy bills?

The high wholesale gas prices that are currently visible may not be the actual prices being paid by all consumers.

This is because major energy suppliers purchase much of their wholesale supplies many months in advance, giving protection to them and their customers from short-term price spikes.

The Energy Price Cap is also in place to protect millions of customers from the sudden increases in global gas prices this winter. Despite the rising costs of wholesale energy, the cap still saves 15 million households up to £100 a year.

The current global wholesale gas price situation as set out above could have an effect on companies.

Companies without longer-term contracts may face higher costs, but we expect that companies with longer-term contracts in place may have little exposure to the current high wholesale prices. If there were an event where a supplier fails, Ofgem would work to ensure that customers are moved to a new supplier, so they are not without energy.

How is the government helping poorer households?

Our Energy Price Cap will protect millions of customers from the sudden increases in global gas prices this winter.

We are also supporting low income and fuel poor households with their energy bills in a number of ways which demonstrates the government's commitment.

This includes through:

- the Warm Home Discount which provides eligible households with a £140 discount
- in addition, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments will help ensure those most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the colder months

Vulnerable people and anyone in financial distress during this time should talk to their energy supplier, who will be able to discuss personal circumstances and consider options to help, including reassessing, reducing

or pausing payments. Emergency measures have been agreed between government and energy suppliers to support those most in need during the disruption caused by COVID-19, and this agreement remains in place this winter. [Read details of the agreement.](#)

As set out in the [Energy white paper](#), we plan to extend the [Warm Home Discount](#) until 2026, increase it to £150, and help an extra 780,000 pensioners and low-income families with their energy bills. With a total of 2.7 million to get support, with the vast majority to receive the money back automatically, without having to apply as at present.

[Cold Weather Payments](#) provide vulnerable households on qualifying benefits with financial support when the weather has been, or is forecasted to be, unusually cold. £25 is available for eligible households for each 7 day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

[PM meeting with Dutch PM Rutte: 17 September 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte this evening.



The Prime Minister welcomed Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte to Downing Street this evening, on the 77th anniversary of Operation Market Garden – the allied operation in the Netherlands during the Second World War.

They noted the strength of the UK-Dutch relationship in a number of areas, including trade and defence. They highlighted the work the UK and the Netherlands are doing together as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force and the UK-led Carrier Strike Group.

The Prime Minister outlined the details of this week's announcement of the

new 'AUKUS' defence alliance, and stressed that the alliance will be an important force for stability in the Indo-Pacific.

The leaders discussed the current situation in Afghanistan. They agreed on the need for the international community to come together to prevent a humanitarian crisis in the region and establish conditions which will allow our countries to re-establish a diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. They talked about how the two nations could work together bilaterally on things like securing safe passage and future diplomatic representation.

They also agreed on the need to make concrete progress on tackling climate change ahead of the UK-hosted COP26 Summit. In particular the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Rutte stressed the need to support developing countries to achieve green growth.

The Prime Minister outlined the UK's concerns with the current implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol and the strain it was placing on the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The leaders agreed on the importance of urgently finding a way forward on the issue.

Published 17 September 2021

[Health Secretary has genome sequenced for project tackling health disparities](#)

- Health and Social Care Secretary provided blood sample at Great Ormond Street for genomic sequencing programme
- Genomics England's Diverse Data Initiative is aimed at reducing disparities in healthcare

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid visited Great Ormond Street Hospital today to provide a blood sample for a genomic sequencing programme aimed at tackling disparities in health.

Genomics England's Diverse Data Initiative is working in collaboration with researchers and the NHS to ensure their life-changing work to sequence genomes benefits everyone, regardless of their ethnic socioeconomic or geographic background.

His data will be analysed by researchers to help speed up diagnoses and develop new treatments for patients with cancer and rare diseases as part of ongoing efforts to make healthcare more diverse and inclusive.

Secretary of State Sajid Javid said:

"I am extremely proud to be taking part in this study which is helping make sure that everyone, no matter their background, can benefit from our world-leading genomic research programmes.

"Genomics England's vital initiative will sequence the genomes of those who are under-represented in research data so that we can develop better treatments and transform healthcare for all."

To date, studies of human genetics have often been based on volunteers of European ancestry which means these communities may not be benefitting the genomic healthcare revolution. This has also contributed to the misdiagnosis of gene-disease relationships, poor 'generalisability' of research findings across different populations, and substantial barriers in safe and effective translation of genomic research into clinical care for everyone.

Genomics England is helping to reduce health inequalities by working in partnership with communities to analyse data from an increasingly diverse population, to rapidly improve the representation of under-represented groups in genetic data sets and research.

Genomics England CEO Chris Wigley said:

"Genomics has the potential to transform healthcare. The technology can provide new and faster diagnoses and enable the development of life-changing treatments for those with rare diseases, cancer and other conditions.

"However it has to work for all of us, and those who have non-European ancestry have been under-represented in research data and therefore risk not getting equal benefit as this comes into the mainstream of patient care. Through our Diverse Data Initiative we are making important progress in addressing that problem."

By taking part in the initiative, the Health Secretary is now part of a community of research participants whose data is stored securely and anonymously by Genomics England among over 140,000 human genomes.

His blood sample will now be mapped by a sequencing lab at the Sanger Centre near Cambridge and stored in the National Genomic Research Library, alongside other participants of the 100,000 Genomes Project and the GenOMICC COVID-19 Study.

The new Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) – launching on 1 October – will lead national efforts to level up public health by preventing illness and supporting people of all ages and in all parts of the country to live healthier lives.

The OHID will be a vital part of the Department of Health and Social Care and will drive the prevention agenda across government to reduce health disparities, many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Single case of classical BSE confirmed on a farm in Somerset

News story

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is investigating the source of the incident.



A single case of classical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) has been confirmed on a farm in Somerset, the Animal and Plant Health Agency confirmed today (Friday 17 September).

The animal is deceased and has been removed from the farm. There is no risk to food safety.

In line with the government's disease prevention response plan, precautionary movement restrictions have been put in place to stop the movement of livestock in the area while further investigations continue to identify the origin of the disease.

Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

A single case of classical BSE has been confirmed on a farm in Somerset. The animal died on farm and was tested as part of our TSE surveillance controls.

Movement restrictions have been put in place on the farm. This is standard procedure until we have a clear understanding of the origin of the disease. This is further proof that our surveillance system for detecting and containing this type of disease is working.

We recognise this will be a traumatic time for the farmer and we are on hand to offer advice through this difficult period.

The UK's overall risk status for BSE remains at 'controlled' and there is no risk to food safety or public health.

A Food Standards Agency spokesperson said:

There are strict controls in place to protect consumers from the risk of BSE, including controls on animal feed, and removal of the parts of cattle most likely to carry BSE infectivity.

Consumers can be reassured that these important protection measures remain in place and that Food Standards Agency Official Veterinarians and Meat Hygiene Inspectors working in all abattoirs in England will continue to ensure that the safety of consumers remains the top priority.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency will now begin a thorough investigation of the herd, the premises, potential sources of infection and will produce a full report on the incident in due course.

There have been five cases of confirmed BSE in the UK since 2014, all of these have been in animals which, as fallen stock, were not destined for the human food chain and posed no risk to the general public.

In line with international commitments, the World Organisation for Animal Health and trading partners have been informed of the case. This does not affect the UK's ability to export beef to other countries.

Published 17 September 2021