

PM call with German Chancellor Angela Merkel: 22 July 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.



The Prime Minister spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel this afternoon.

He began by expressing his condolences for the terrible loss of life in the recent floods in Germany. The leaders agreed on the importance of tackling climate change to prevent these kinds of extreme weather events and the devastation they cause.

On the Northern Ireland Protocol, the Prime Minister said that the disruption being caused to people and businesses in Northern Ireland by the current operation of the Protocol was not sustainable.

He explained that the Protocol was failing to deliver on many of its intended objectives: to minimise disruption to everyday lives, to respect Northern Ireland's integral place in the UK's internal market, and to preserve the delicate balance in the (Belfast) Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions.

The Prime Minister underlined that solutions could not be found through the existing mechanisms of the Protocol and that was why we had set out proposals for significant changes to it. He urged the Chancellor and the EU collectively to engage in a constructive and detailed discussion on the UK's proposals.

Both leaders agreed to remain in touch.

Published 22 July 2021

£195m contract signed for 13 additional RAF Protectors

Protector is a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) that will provide critical surveillance capability for the RAF and will be equipped with a suite of surveillance equipment and precision strike weapons to deploy against potential adversaries around the globe, all while being operated from RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire.

16 aircraft have now been ordered from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc (GA-ASI) and are expected to enter service with the RAF by mid-2024, doubling the capability currently provided by Reaper. The investment also includes four additional ground control stations and associated support equipment.

At GKNA's Cowes site, Minister Quin saw first-hand how the programme benefits UK industry as they manufacture the V-tails for Protector and other SkyGuardian variants for customers across the world, including Belgium and Australia, following their partnership with GA-ASI.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

Our fleet of sixteen Protector aircraft equipped with ultra-modern technology will provide the RAF with a vast global reach allowing us to monitor and protect the battlespace for hours on end.

The Protector programme involves industry across the UK with vital parts of the aircraft manufactured on the Isle of Wight, supporting highly-skilled jobs for years to come.

The commitment to a 16-strong Protector fleet was outlined in the Defence Command Paper and is supported by the £24 billion uplift to the defence budget over the next four years.

With 12 UK industry partners, the programme is bringing together world-leading technology and service providers to work with GA-ASI, supporting over 200 UK jobs with £400 million being reinvested into UK industry.

Protector will be deployed in wide-ranging Intelligence, Surveillance, Targeting and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) operations where its ability to fly consistently for up to 40 hours offers the RAF vastly improved armed ISTAR capability.

Protector Programme Senior Responsible Owner, Air Commodore Richard Barrow said:

The contract for the additional 13 Protector aircraft, taking the total to 16, is a major milestone for the UK. When Protector enters service in 2024, UK Defence will take an enormous jump forward in capability, giving us the ability to operate globally with this cutting-edge, highly-adaptable platform.

The first three aircraft were ordered last year, with the first two completed and currently undergoing test and evaluation in the US. The first aircraft delivery to the RAF will be in 2023.

CEO of Defence Equipment and Support, Sir Simon Bollom said:

I am delighted the purchase of a further 13 Protector aircraft has been confirmed enabling us to ensure the RAF will have the increased capability needed to operate effectively in the modern battlespace.

Later this year, Protector's capability will be demonstrated in the UK. A SkyGuardian aircraft will take to the skies in Lincolnshire before taking part in Exercise Joint Warrior from RAF Lossiemouth.

Protector will have to meet stringent NATO and UK safety certification standards meaning it could operate in civilian airspace. It therefore will also be available, if requested, to support civilian agencies in the UK, for example in search and rescue and disaster response missions.

The fleet will also have advanced anti-icing and lightning protection, providing the RAF with unprecedented flexibility to operate in adverse weather conditions.

The aircraft will use enhanced data links and carry next-generation, low collateral, precision strike weapons – the UK-made Brimstone missile and Paveway IV Laser Guided Bomb.

[The UK as a science and technology superpower](#)

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New strategy to attract world class talent and put people at the heart of R&D

- R&D People and Culture Strategy sets out how to make the UK the most exciting place in the world for researchers to thrive and pursue cutting edge research
- new commitments designed to attract and retain international and home-grown talent to ensure UK can cement its status as a science superpower
- comes alongside publication of Innovation Strategy setting out plans to make UK a global hub for innovation by 2035

The government has set out plans to make the UK the best destination in the world for researchers, making sure that it continues to attract the brightest and best from the UK and from overseas, cementing its status as a science superpower.

The new [R&D People and Culture Strategy](#) published today builds on all the work already underway to make the UK a truly great place for research and innovation, led by individuals, universities and businesses and funders.

As part of the strategy the government will review the research funding offer to retain, attract and support the very best researchers, innovators and their teams. A review of youth engagement will also be undertaken to encourage more, and more diverse, young people into research and innovation careers.

Science, Research and Innovation Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The incredible work of the UK's scientists and researchers over the past year in response to the coronavirus pandemic has reminded us how crucial it is to make R&D a compelling and inclusive career path for as many people as possible.

This Strategy is driven by our vision of a more inclusive, dynamic, productive and sustainable UK R&D sector in which a diversity of people and ideas can thrive to drive economic and societal benefit for the UK. As we build back better by unleashing innovation, it's vital that we create a research environment that attracts and retains people from all backgrounds so that we can continue making cutting edge discoveries while cementing UK's status as a science superpower.

In addition, the government has made a series of new commitments, including:

- developing a New Deal for post-graduate research students, starting later this year with a cross-sectoral consultation led by UKRI
- providing support for flexible, cross-sector training programmes to encourage more movement and collaboration between academia, industry and the charity sector
- creating a Good Practice Exchange to develop, test and evaluate ways to ensure the right culture is created within the academic community, including to support and develop talent, tackle bullying and harassment and promote a system in which diversity of people and ideas can thrive

Developed in collaboration with the sector, including academia, industry and charities with organisations such as Universities UK and GSK, the strategy lays out the challenges that researchers and institutions are facing, including skills shortages in particular disciplines, limited opportunities for career progression and issues of bullying and harassment.

In response, the strategy sets out how government will work with institutions, businesses, funders and charities to drive change in the sector, with new initiatives to encourage more young people into research, broaden career pathways in the sector and look further into the impacts of bureaucracy on researchers.

The publication of the R&D People and Culture Strategy comes alongside the launch of the [Innovation Strategy](#), also published today, which aims to make the UK a global hub for innovation and increase business investment in R&D.

The R&D People and Culture Strategy was developed as a result of commitments made in the R&D Roadmap, published by the government last year. The roadmap put pursuing ground-breaking research, attracting global talent, and cutting unnecessary red tape at the forefront of our long-term plan to ensure the UK is the best place in the world for scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs to live, work and innovate.

The Global Talent Visa, along with the High Potential Individual and Scale-up visa routes announced today in the Innovation Strategy, provide fast track visa routes for high skills individuals and their teams, attracting top research talent to the UK. The UK's points-based immigration system also does this by enabling employers to attract the best and brightest global talent to contribute to the UK's economy.

Earlier this year the government also launched a review into research bureaucracy, which is being led by Professor Adam Tickell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. It seeks to identify why bureaucracy has increased across the UK's research system. Interim findings are expected in the autumn.

New UK sanctions against individuals involved in corruption around the world

News story

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has announced further sanctions on individuals under the UK's Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime.



- Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab today announces new UK sanctions against five individuals involved in serious corruption in Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Iraq
- Sanctions target cases of serious corruption which have deprived developing countries of vital resources
- One of those designated spent millions of misappropriated funds on mansions, private jets and a \$275,000 glove that Michael Jackson wore on his "Bad" tour, another ruthlessly exploited public food programmes in Venezuela.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has today announced further sanctions on individuals under the UK's Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime.

This second set of Global Anti-Corruption sanctions targets corrupt individuals who have lined their own pockets through misappropriation, with their greed causing untold damage to the countries and communities they exploit.

The UK will impose asset freezes and travel bans against these individuals to ensure they will no longer be able to channel their money through UK banks or enter the country.

The new sanctions announced today target five individuals involved in serious corruption in Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Iraq. The individuals designated today are:

- Teodoro Obiang Mangué, Vice President of Equatorial Guinea, and son of the current President, for his involvement in the misappropriation of

state funds into his own personal bank accounts, corrupt contracting arrangements and soliciting bribes, to fund a lavish lifestyle inconsistent with his official salary as a government minister. This included the purchase of a \$100m mansion in Paris and a \$38 million private jet.

- Kudakwashe Regimond Tagwirei for profiting from misappropriation of property when his company, Sakunda Holdings, redeemed Government of Zimbabwe Treasury Bills at up to ten times their official value. His actions accelerated the deflation of Zimbabwe's currency, increasing the price of essentials, such as food, for Zimbabwean citizens.
- Alex Nain Saab Morán and Alvaro Enrique Pulido Vargas for exploiting two of Venezuela's public programmes which were set up to supply poor Venezuelans with affordable foodstuffs and housing. They benefitted from improperly awarded contracts, where promised goods were delivered at highly inflated prices. Their actions caused further suffering to already poverty stricken Venezuelans, for their own private enrichment.
- Nawfal Hammadi Al-Sultan has been involved in serious corruption in his role as Governor of Nineveh province, Iraq, where he misappropriated public funds intended for reconstruction efforts and to provide support for civilians, and improperly awarded contracts and other state property. Al-Sultan is currently serving a combined five-year prison sentence in Iraq for corruption offences, including wasting five billion Iraqi dinars (approximately £2.5 million) through fictitious public works.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The action we have taken today targets individuals who have lined their own pockets at the expense of their citizens. The UK is committed to fighting the blight of corruption and holding those responsible for its corrosive effect to account. Corruption drains the wealth of poorer nations, keeps their people trapped in poverty and poisons the well of democracy.

These measures follow the first tranche of UK sanctions under the Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime in April, which targeted 22 individuals involved in serious corruption cases in Russia, South Africa, South Sudan and Latin America.

Over 2% of global GDP is lost to corruption every single year. Today's action demonstrates the UK's ongoing commitment to the fight against corruption.

Since the Foreign Secretary launched the Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime in April, in total the UK has now sanctioned 27 individuals around the world involved in serious corruption.

Further details:

- The financial restrictions will also apply to any entities owned or controlled by the persons designated today.

- The UK Sanctions list can be found here – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-sanctions-list>

Further background on those designated today:

- Teodoro Obiang Mangué – In a country where, according to UNICEF, a third of the population does not have access to even basic sanitation, investigations and media reports show that Obiang has spent over \$500 million since he was appointed a government minister in 1998. This includes buying a \$100 million mansion in Paris and others around the world, a \$38 million private jet, a luxury yacht, dozens of luxury vehicles including Ferraris, Bentleys and Aston Martins and most notoriously, a collection of Michael Jackson memorabilia including a \$275,000 crystal-covered glove that Jackson wore on his “Bad” tour.
- Kudakwashe Regimond Tagwirei – Both Sakunda and Tagwirei, as its CEO and owner, profited significantly from the misappropriation of property at the expense of wider macroeconomic stability in Zimbabwe, in one of the most serious incidences of corruption under the current government.’
- Alex Nain Saab Morán and Alvaro Enrique Pulido Vargas engaged in serious corruption in Venezuela through their participation in two of Venezuela’s public programmes: the ‘Local Committees for Supply and Production’ (CLAP) and the Great Housing Scheme (GMV). In each case, contracts were improperly granted for the benefit of an official and/or for another person including Saab and Pulido themselves. In the CLAP programme, basic foodstuffs were provided at highly inflated prices. For GMV, Global Construction Fund only delivered a small proportion of the products they had agreed to deliver, misappropriating the remainder of the funds.
- Nawfal Hammadi Al-Sultan – Nineveh province suffered devastation during the Da’esh occupation and the fight to liberate the province in 2017. Incomplete reconstruction of Nineveh and Mosul, in particular, continues to undermine stability in these areas, and is slowing the recovery of vulnerable populations affected by Da’esh’s occupation.

Published 22 July 2021