

# Russian aggression against Ukraine: UK response to OSCE

Thank you Madam Chairperson. Ambassador Çevik, Ambassador Grau we are grateful for your reports today and all your efforts towards a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict.

The UK still has significant concerns about the heightened tensions caused by the increased Russian military activity on Ukraine's border and in illegally annexed Crimea in April. We continue to call on Russia to engage with the OSCE processes and mechanisms available to provide necessary transparency regarding this activity.

Ambassador Çevik, the Special Monitoring Mission's impartial, facts-based reporting remains crucial. Your written report outlined that the SMM recorded over 20,900 ceasefire violations between 21 March and 6 June – an almost threefold increase compared with the previous reporting period. While the average number of ceasefire violations recorded remains below those seen prior to July 2020, the UK is concerned by this overall upward trajectory.

We are particularly alarmed that the SMM recorded 150 instances of the use of weapons that should have been withdrawn under the Minsk agreements, compared with two instances in the last reporting period. It is noteworthy that of the 670 weapons observed by the Mission in violation of their respective withdrawal lines, 87 per cent were in non-government controlled areas.

Given the SMM's vital role, we condemn ongoing impediments to the Mission's monitoring through the targeting of its equipment. During the reporting period, the instances of GPS signal interference encountered by the SMM UAVs, assessed as caused by jamming, increased almost four-fold, with 43 per cent of all UAV flights experiencing signal interference.

The SMM also continues to face systematic restrictions on its freedom of movement in non-government controlled areas, where 82 per cent of restrictions occurred. It is unacceptable that COVID-19 continues to be used as a pretext to impose restrictions, particularly given the numerous measures the mission has taken. We commend the SMM on its vaccination programme and Poland for its contribution.

We urge Russia to use its undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs to ensure SMM monitors and equipment have safe, unconditional and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine, including in Crimea and areas near the Ukraine-Russia state border.

Sadly, civilians also continue to face restrictions on their freedom of movement. Your report outlines that the partial closure of crossing points – now for 15 months – has severely restricted civilians' ability to cross the line of contact.

Ambassador Grau, we are grateful to you and your team for your ongoing efforts to make progress on the opening of new checkpoints at Zolote and Shchastia. We note that these checkpoints have now been open for nearly 8 months on the government-controlled side. It is unacceptable that Russia and the armed formations it backs continues to keep them closed on their side.

Women have been particularly affected by these closures. Ambassador Çevik, we welcome the inclusion in your report of the SMM's findings from its interviews with over 150 women living near the line of contact. The concerns raised ranged from economic difficulties, to security risks stemming from shelling and the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance.

Tragically, the SMM has corroborated 14 civilian casualties occurring due to mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive devices in April alone. Ambassador Grau, we commend you and your team for your efforts to make progress on plans agreed in the Trilateral Contact Group for demining in 19 locations and for 4 new disengagement areas. If implemented, these plans would greatly improve the lives of civilians living in conflict-affected areas. We call on Russia to match the political will shown by Ukraine, so that progress can be made.

I would like to thank Ambassadors Frisch and Morel for their work in the Trilateral Contact Group, and to congratulate Ambassador Bermann and Relander on their appointments. They have the UK's full support. Finally, Ambassador Grau, I would like to pass on the UK's immense gratitude to you. The professionalism, dedication and patience you have demonstrated have been exemplary and will be sorely missed. We wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Madam Chair, we reiterate our support for the Minsk agreements to deliver a peaceful resolution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Four in this regard. We call on Russia to withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine and cease its support for the armed formations it backs.

The UK strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The UK has consistently stood with Ukraine in opposing all instances of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and we will continue to do so, including through sanctions, together with our international partners.

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**[UN Human Rights Council: Universal](#)**

# Periodic Review adoption – Australia

World news story

The UK delivered this statement during the Universal Periodic Review Adoption for Australia.



Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom welcomes the engagement of Australia with the UPR process and its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, both at home and around the world.

We are pleased by Australia's acceptance of our recommendation to implement the Closing the Gap Strategy, while ensuring shared decision-making and genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We support Australia's efforts to address the disparity in health and socio-economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, by tackling the underlying causes of disadvantage.

We also welcome Australia's decision to ratify the 2014 ILO Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, which builds on their continuing commitment to address modern slavery.

We would encourage Australia to submit an optional mid-term report on

progress in implementing all the recommendations which have been accepted.

We reiterate our thanks for Australia's open and constructive approach to the human rights challenges raised at its UPR.

Thank you.

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## [Addressing the State of Siege in DRC and MONUSCO's transition plan](#)

Mr President, before I begin my statement, let me just join others and you in condemning the abhorrent murder of President Moïse of Haiti. We send our condolences to the people of Haiti and to his family, and our thoughts are with the injured First Lady. This Council should continue to monitor developments in Haiti closely and we must ensure accountability for those responsible for the murder.

Mr President, let me begin my response to our briefing today by thanking SRSK Keita for her comprehensive presentation and also for her reassuring leadership. I'd like also to pass to SRSK Keita our condolences on the killing of the peacekeeper Corporal Kamanga. Corporal Kamanga was simply trying to protect civilians in the DRC and do her job, and it's appalling that she should be murdered and we condemn that.

I'm also very grateful to Dr Kibambe for her firsthand account to respond to COVID against what are very challenging circumstances.

Mr President, I will focus my intervention on three issues: the State of Siege in eastern DRC; the humanitarian situation; and MONUSCO's transition, including SRSK Keita's action plan.

The UK continues to be concerned by the deteriorating security situation in eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu and Ituri. The civilian population continues to withstand appalling attacks by armed groups, and MONUSCO and DRC armed forces personnel continue to lose their lives as they attempt to tackle these armed groups. Concerted efforts are required to combat armed groups and critically to disrupt support from their political and economic backers.

We take note of the State of Siege announced by President Tshisekedi on 6 May, and his acknowledgement of and commitment to addressing the challenges the DRC armed forces need to overcome in order to tackle armed groups effectively.

The manner in which the state of siege is implemented will determine its

success. In this regard, the United Kingdom urges the Government of DRC to ensure that the state of siege remains transparent, time-limited, and continues to be implemented with full respect for human rights and international law.

We also encourage the Government of DRC to increase the armed forces' collaboration, including joint planning, with MONUSCO to ensure coordinated efforts to tackle the armed groups. On a related note, we look forward to the completion of the enhancements to MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade later this month. And we also agree wholeheartedly with SRSK Keita's assessment that military means alone cannot provide or guarantee security. The Government of DRC must focus on using security to enhance government.

Mr President, as we have noted several times before, the humanitarian situation in DRC is dire. We remain concerned about the ongoing threat posed by COVID-19 in DRC, as we've heard today, which remains extremely vulnerable to the health, food security, social and economic impacts of the pandemic. The United Kingdom has provided almost \$17 million to support the DRC's response to COVID-19. The rapid and effective response to the recent resurgence of Ebola in North Kivu demonstrated the importance of responding to health emergencies through local health structures and leadership.

Mr President, turning to the transition of the UN presence in DRC, the United Kingdom welcomes the establishment of the joint working group between the Government and the UN. We encourage the Government of the DRC to engage fully with MONUSCO and the UN Country Team through the joint working group, including on the articulation of a joint transition plan that is to be provided to the Council in September.

Effective coordination between MONUSCO and the UN Country Team will also be essential to the success of the transition and we encourage continued efforts to overcome the remaining coordination challenges.

In this respect, we welcome the progress that has been made in Tanganyika to bring MONUSCO, the UN Country Team, local authorities and civil society together to operationalise the provincial transition plan. In addition to the cessation of MONUSCO's operations in the Kasais, these joint efforts in Tanganyika will enable MONUSCO to focus its efforts on the three remaining provinces heavily affected by conflict in eastern DRC. As MONUSCO's transition progresses, it will be important to reflect on the experiences and lessons learnt in provinces the Mission has already departed from.

Finally, Mr President, we want to support SRSK Keita's four objectives, which she clearly set out in her briefing just now. We agree that it is critical that the Mission support the Government in implementation of the Government's action plan. We agree it is particularly critical that elections in 2023 happen on time and we urge her to continue to press for the right appointments now so that the DRC can finally deliver credible elections. We also think that political engagement to ensure non-military solutions to violence should be pursued energetically.

I thank SRSK Keita again for her leadership.

Thank you.

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## [COP26 President visits Antigua and Barbuda](#)

The COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma visited Antigua and Barbuda on 6-7 July to see the effects of Hurricane Irma and discuss climate action to support small island states.

Mr Sharma saw firsthand some of the devastation caused to the island of Barbuda by Hurricane Irma and how the island's communities are recovering and building resilience to natural disasters.

While on the island, Mr Sharma visited the Barbuda Energy Resilience Project, funded by a £2.89 million grant from the UK Government, which is increasing the resilience of the island's power network to the effects of climate change.

On the island of Antigua, Mr Sharma took part in a Cabinet Meeting, following an invitation by Prime Minister Gaston Browne, where he explained the key goals for the UN Climate Change summit set for 31 October – 12 November 2021. Together they agreed to increase the pressure on major emitters and G20 countries to deliver urgent climate action ahead of COP26.

Mr Sharma reaffirmed the UK understanding of the vulnerability and challenges faced by small island developing states (SIDS) and continued commitment to advocate for them in the run up to COP26.

He repeated his challenge to all countries to make climate action plans that keep the goal of limiting global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees alive, something that is of particular importance to small island states.

As chair of AOSIS, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) negotiating group, Antigua and Barbuda is pushing for COP26 to be a delivery point for climate action and ambition.

Following the visit, COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

"Antigua and Barbuda's contribution to global emissions is 0.002%, yet as a small island state it will disproportionately suffer the effects of climate change.

"I have seen on my visit the ravages that Hurricane Irma has caused to communities and the need for international support to build resilience to extreme weather.

"But there is also a spirit in building back from this disaster that shows

why Antigua and Barbuda are prominent climate action leaders, giving voice to small island states as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States.

“The UK is an ally of small island states and as COP hosts we will ensure their voices will be heard at the climate change summit we are hosting later this year.

“And together we will push all countries but especially major emitters, to keep 1.5 alive, for increased action and ambition on adaptation, and to avert, minimise and address the loss and damage caused by climate change.”

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## [COP26 President boosts cooperation on tackling climate change during visit to Jamaica](#)

- Ministers discussed shared goals around boosting climate finance and support for communities affected by climate change
- Ministers discussed how to increase pressure on major emitters to take urgent climate action

The COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, has welcomed Jamaican support for climate priorities ahead of the crucial UN climate change summit, COP26, later this year.

During a two-day visit to Kingston, Mr Sharma met leaders from the Jamaican government, including Prime Minister Andrew Holness. The pair discussed their shared priority of encouraging developed countries to deliver on their commitment to jointly mobilise US\$100 billion annually to support the climate needs of developing countries and welcomed the progress made by the G7.

During a meeting with leaders from youth and civil society, academia and the private sector, Mr Sharma stressed the importance he places in action to protect people and nature from the worst impacts of climate change. Jamaica has suffered the effects of climate change through hurricanes, heavy downpours and coastal erosion.

The UK and Jamaica are also working closely towards a shared priority of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C, as co-chairs of the NDC Partnership. The partnership supports countries around the world to put forward ambitious emissions reduction targets through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Mr Sharma’s visit follows the recent launch of the COP Presidency’s Visions for a Net Zero Future project which will see academics, business, civil society and citizens coming together to develop a ‘Vision’ for a net zero

Jamaica, alongside five other regions of the world. The project aims to help all nations envision what a climate-resilient, net zero future would look like for them.

Speaking at the end of his visit, Mr Sharma said:

“Jamaica is a clear leader on climate action. I have been delighted to hear how this inspiring island is bringing other countries on its journey, and I encourage Prime Minister Holness to continue to be a vocal spokesperson for how climate change is impacting developing countries and particularly small island states.

“Climate change impacts lives and livelihoods around the world every day. The world must continue to work together to drive down emissions and make our communities more resilient to climate shocks.

“Countries like Jamaica on the front line of climate change have done the least to cause climate change and it is on all G20 countries to step up and deliver urgent climate action.

“The UK and Jamaica’s joint leadership through the NDC Partnership sets a gold standard for the kind of collaboration and international solidarity that we need to see if we are to keep 1.5C alive and safeguard our planet for future generations.”

Mr Sharma looks forward to continuing to work closely with Jamaica and hopes to welcome Jamaica’s Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Parnell Charles Jr., to a Ministerial meeting he is hosting later this month to discuss the shape of the Glasgow outcome and explore tangible solutions to some of the most important issues.