

# Recognising the clear link between illicit trading of natural resources and conflict

Thank you very much, President.

President Excellency, thank you for convening this important debate, and I thank our briefers as well this morning for their insights. I'd like to highlight three considerations.

First, as today's briefers and previous speakers have underlined, we recognise the clear link between illicit trading of natural resources and conflict. From Somalia to Sudan to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the illicit trade in natural resources of charcoal, timber and gold has helped fund conflict and the activities of armed groups.

And we should bear in mind that increased global demand for critical minerals – essential to decarbonisation and our green growth goals – risks exacerbating the illegal sourcing of natural resources without appropriate action.

So we do need a concerted and coordinated effort to tackle illicit trafficking as a root cause of conflict, and in this context, I welcome the African Union's efforts including conflict prevention, including the work of Commissioner Bankole and his department. As a Council, too, we should look at ways to strengthen the UN Security Council's sanctions regimes both against individuals and entities that illegally exploit natural resources to fund or prolong or provoke conflict. The Council acted in Somalia by banning the export of charcoal to inhibit Al-Shabaab's revenue streams; we can and should do more across other mandates.

Second, President, we need stronger regulation and governance efforts to tackle the illicit trafficking of natural resources, including stringent certification and verification processes.

And in this context, the UK is proud to support a number of international mechanisms that deliver this, including the OECD's Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Mineral Supply Chains and the Kimberley Process that helps stem the flow of conflict diamonds.

Finally, President, we share the view of previous distinguished speakers of the dangerous consequences of the exploitation of Africa's natural resources by private military companies.

There is significant independent reporting outlining the exploitation of gold resources in Sudan and the Central African Republic through Wagner Group's subsidiaries like Meroe Gold. Gold extraction and smuggling operations risk undermining local stability, present significant ecological and human rights

risks and are a significant loss to Sudan.

The United Kingdom reiterates our concerns over Wagner Group's activities in Africa, which undermine effective resource governance and offer no sustainable solutions to Africa's security challenges.

In concluding, President, I thank you again for convening this important debate during Gabon's Security Council Presidency.

Thank you.

---

## [UK-France Joint Statement: 6 October 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Liz Truss and President Emmanuel Macron met in the margins of the first Summit of the European Political Community in Prague.



Prime Minister Liz Truss and President Emmanuel Macron met in the margins of the first Summit of the European Political Community in Prague.

They underlined their determination to provide all necessary support to Ukraine for as long as it takes to restore Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, to resist Russian aggression, and to hold Russia to account for its actions.

The President and the Prime Minister reaffirmed the strong and historic ties between their two countries. They agreed to hold the next UK-France Summit in 2023 in France to take forward a renewed bilateral agenda.

Energy transition and decoupling from Russian hydro-carbons are common challenges. The Prime Minister and the President discussed advancing bilateral cooperation in particular on energy. They reaffirmed their belief that both renewable and nuclear energies are part of consistent strategies to

achieve energy transition and strategic autonomy. They confirmed the full support of the UK and French Governments for the new nuclear power station at Sizewell and expect the relevant bodies to finalise arrangements in the coming month.

The leaders committed to advance and increase UK-France civil-nuclear cooperation, including on innovation, infrastructure development and workforce skills, ahead of next year's UK-France Summit.

They further agreed to deepen cooperation on illegal migration within the bounds of international law, to tackle criminal groups trafficking people across Europe, ending in dangerous journeys across the Channel. Interior Ministers should conclude an ambitious package of measures this autumn. Leaders agreed to reinforce cooperation with near neighbours, including through an early meeting of the Calais group.

President Macron and Prime Minister Truss welcomed the quality of the discussions during the first summit of the European Political Community and look forward to next steps.

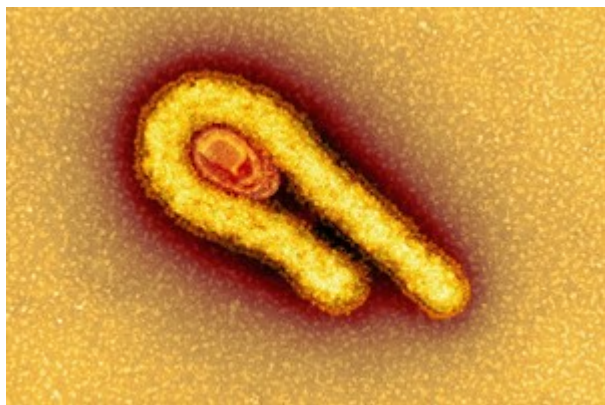
Published 6 October 2022

---

## [UKHSA monitoring Ebola outbreak in East Africa](#)

News story

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is currently monitoring an outbreak of Ebola virus disease cases in Uganda.



The risk to the public in the UK is very low and there are currently no cases of the disease confirmed in the UK. A [public health alert](#) has been issued to urge healthcare professionals to be vigilant to the symptoms in patients who

have recently returned from affected areas and to remind them of the established procedures for infection control and testing.

Ebola virus disease (EVD) is a rare but severe infection. It is caused by the Ebola virus, a filovirus that was first recognised in 1976 and has caused sporadic outbreaks since in several African countries.

Dr Meera Chand, UKHSA Director of Clinical and Emerging Infection, said:

UKHSA constantly monitors emerging infection threats in collaboration with partners across the world. We are aware of an outbreak of Ebola cases in Uganda and are monitoring the situation closely. The risk to the public in the UK is very low.

## **Background**

There has never been a case of Ebola virus disease contracted in the UK. Two cases contracted overseas were transported to the UK in 2014. Both recovered after treatment in specialist high consequence infectious disease (HCID) units.

Published 6 October 2022

---

## **[UN Human Rights Council 51: UK welcomes resolution on Sri Lanka](#)**

News story

FCDO Minister of State for the Middle East, South Asia and the United Nations Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon has issued a statement on the UN resolution.



Responding to the UN resolution, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

Minister of State for the Middle East, South Asia and the United Nations Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

We welcome the result of today's vote on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This resolution will support progress on human rights, justice, and accountability. It has renewed the mandate of the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to report on Sri Lanka and to protect and preserve evidence of past human rights abuses to use in future accountability processes. This is integral to establish truth and achieve lasting justice and reconciliation, as well as to improve human rights in the country.

Our focus should now turn to our collective and renewed ability to work with the new Government of Sri Lanka to take forward their commitments to the Council. We call on UNHRC members to support this effort, and to work together to address the economic challenges faced by the people of Sri Lanka.

Notes to editors:

- The UK has supported efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, including at the UNHRC for many years. This new resolution acknowledges the challenging economic situation in Sri Lanka, and the progress made in addressing this in recent months. It continues the international community's efforts to centre and support victims of Sri Lanka armed conflict. The UNHRC framework is integral to establish truth and achieve lasting justice and reconciliation, as well as to improve human rights in the country.
- The UK is the penholder on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council, meaning we lead on preparing resolutions and other products, and has held this position since 2017. The UK is a member of the Core Group on Sri Lanka, along with United States, Canada, Germany, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Malawi.
- The FCDO has a range of UK-funded programmes which support a number of human rights priorities, including UK's £11.3 million Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programme (2022 to 2025) for Sri Lanka which focusses on addressing the legacy of conflict in the country.
- The UK is providing [£3 million of lifesaving humanitarian support](#) for Sri Lanka. The funding will be delivered through Red Cross and UN partners. It will provide access to food, seeds, and tools to help grow

crops as well as mental health care, including for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Published 6 October 2022

---

## [North Korea ballistic missile test: FCDO statement](#)

Press release

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson statement on North Korea's ballistic missile test on 6 October.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

North Korea's decision to conduct a further ballistic missile test on 6 October is a violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. The UK continues to work closely with our partners to urge North Korea to return to dialogue and take credible steps towards denuclearisation in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We call on North Korea to prioritise the well-being of their people instead of the illegal pursuit of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Published 6 October 2022