

When we challenge discrimination and progress gender equality, everybody benefits: UK statement at UN Third Committee

Thank you Mr Chair,

Multiple and interconnected barriers are preventing women and girls from reaching their full potential. Where women and girls are unable to reach their potential, whole countries suffer. We know that when we challenge discrimination and progress gender equality, everybody benefits.

The UK is committed to protecting and promoting women and girls' rights and freedoms at home and abroad so that they can have their voice, choice and control over all aspects of their lives.

Women's rights are human rights, as enshrined by numerous conventions that the UK supports. Our ambition remains higher than ever, and we cannot be complacent when reviewing our progress.

That is why we have committed to placing women and girls at the heart of our foreign and development policy, prioritising action on 3 areas: Educating girls; Empowering women and girls; and Ending violence.

We know that achieving gender equality is fundamental to building democracies and accelerating progress on securing freedoms, prosperity and trade, as well as strengthening global security and resilience. Women's knowledge and leadership strengthens decision-making, driving better, more sustainable, and fairer policies that benefit whole communities.

Together, over many years, we have made real, hard-won progress on this agenda. There are more girls in school; fewer girls forced into early marriage; more women serving in high political offices and private sector leadership positions; and there have been encouraging legal reforms in many countries to address inequalities.

However, progress has stalled. At the current rate, it will take 135 years to close the gender gap worldwide. Women and girls are, and continue to be, disproportionately impacted by crises, be it the COVID pandemic, conflict, or climate change.

Take COVID as an example. At a global level, we have witnessed women shouldering the unpaid care burden and being hardest hit economically, deepening poverty for women and girls. There has been a global surge in gender-based violence, reduced access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; and increases in child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. An estimated 20 million girls will never return to school because of COVID.

Recent months have also shown the deep resilience of the human spirit and of free societies, with women and girls on the frontline of and being affected by multiple brutal conflicts, including most recently due to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Increasing authoritarianism is undermining democratic values, human rights and effective institutions and placing these hard-won gains under threat. Systematic attempts by several actors to roll back and reverse women's and girls' rights have gained momentum at the international and community level.

In Afghanistan, twenty years of progress on women's rights have been reversed. Afghan girls have been largely banned from secondary school for over a year, the only country in the world where this is the case. In Iran, the death of Mahsa Amini is a shocking reminder of the repression faced by women. No one should face violence because of what they wear, how they practice their beliefs or any expression of fundamental rights.

The UK stands steadfast in its commitment to protect and promote women's and girls' rights. In particular, we must respect the bodily autonomy of women and girls throughout their lives by supporting them in exercising their sexual and reproductive rights, preventing all forms of gender-based violence and eliminating harmful practices including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

The UK has a long record of leading the charge against gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. This November, the UK will host a major international conference to promote prevention, justice and support for survivors, and strengthening the global response.

Mr Chair,

We are prepared to do things differently, to think differently, and to work differently to achieve true gender equality. We must act across multiple sectors and disciplines simultaneously and tackle the many forms of disadvantage that women and girls face, spanning age, race, disability, economic status, gender identity, religion/belief and geographical location.

And we cannot do this alone. We will continue to work with our partners, including women's rights organisations who are at the frontlines of this work, to deliver for women and girls everywhere.

I thank you.

Thousands more neighbourhood criminals to be GPS tracked in expansion of

tagging project

News story

The Justice Secretary, Brandon Lewis MP, has today (Tuesday 4 October) announced that more thieves, burglars and robbers will be fitted with GPS electronic tags when they leave prison, helping cut crime and keep the public safe.



Under this expansion of this Government's Acquisitive Crime GPS tagging project, 2,000 more criminals will have their whereabouts monitored on leaving custody – another important step forward in the use of technology to drive down re-offending rates and protect our communities.

Under the current system, only criminals with sentences of a year or more can be monitored via electronic tags on release under the scheme. The changes announced today will see offenders with sentences of 90 days or more eligible to be tagged – dramatically cutting the existing sentence threshold by nine months.

Tags for criminals who carry out theft, burglary, and robbery offences – known as acquisitive crimes – were introduced last year. They work by tracking the physical movements of offenders so police can find out if any tagged offenders were in the vicinity of a crime.

The technology also allows probation staff to keep a much closer eye on the whereabouts of offenders under their supervision – meaning they are better able to prevent ex-criminals from falling back into a life of crime.

The expansion, part of this Government's unprecedented £183 million investment in expanding the use of electronic monitoring technology, means the UK is continuing to lead the world in using tagging to fight crime and keep people safe.

The Justice Secretary has also (today) confirmed his plans to create more oversight of where transgender prisoners are housed and consider options to ensure risk assessments are robust as possible.

The government has been clear on the issue of single sex spaces – whether it be in our prisons, our schools, or our hospitals. That is why we will act to better protect single sex spaces within our prisons and protect women from harm.

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[Time for Iraq's political leaders to resolve the current impasse and begin delivering for the Iraqi people](#)

Thank you Mr. President, and let me start by commending the tireless efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq and of the Special Representative in difficult circumstances.

We'd like to make four points today.

First, the UK offers our deepest condolences for the deaths and casualties caused by the violence in the International Zone in Baghdad on the 29th and 30th of August. As the Special Representative said, the country stood on the brink of chaos. We cannot allow violence to destabilise the political process.

We urge Iraq's leaders to work together urgently in the coming weeks to find a peaceful, inclusive solution to the political crisis. The political impasse has gone on too long. This will enable Iraq to address and tackle the considerable challenges faced by its people, from ensuring the country's long term security, to tackling climate change, delivering urgent economic reform, and reconstructing the areas of the country liberated from the control of Da'esh.

Second, the UK condemns in the strongest terms Iran's indiscriminate missile attack on Kurdish towns on the 28th of September, which led to the loss of innocent lives and damaged civilian infrastructure. These attacks are a violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and are wholly unacceptable. They demonstrate a repeated pattern of destabilising activity in the region by Iran. We stand with the Kurdistan Regional Government in condemning these attacks and continue to support the security of Iraq, including the Kurdistan region.

Third, we need to manage carefully the humanitarian risks. We welcome the efforts by the FAO and the WFP to support food production and sustainable resource management. We urge regional neighbours to engage with the government of Iraq on water shortages. The UK is also working with UNDP to

support the government of Iraq in dealing with the worst effects of climate change, including providing support on the governance of water resources.

Finally, we welcome the Special Representative's update on missing Kuwaiti and third country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. We note the progress made on the identification of burial sites, including in Najaf, and we urge continued progress on this file.

Mr President, the fundamental point is this: As the Special Representative has said, Iraq's political leaders must step up their efforts to resolve the current impasse and begin delivering for the Iraqi people. And as a Council, we must be united in encouraging progress on this.

Thank you.

Landmark agreements strengthen UK-Poland defence relations

- Defence Ministers sign agreement to work closely on Air Defence Complex Weapons
- UK confirms long-term support for Poland's rapid air defence modernisation programme following the first delivery of Narew
- Nations agreed to collaborate on Poland's procurement of three Arrowhead-140 frigates

At the Zamość Military Base in Poland today, UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Poland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence Mariusz Błaszczak signed an Air Defence Complex Weapons Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This enables the UK and Poland to cooperate in the development and manufacture of current and future complex weapons, further strengthening the relationship built through the [Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty \(2017\)](#) and deepening the interoperability of our Armed Forces.

The Ministers also signed the Arrowhead-140 Statement of Intent which provides a framework for the UK Government and The Government of Poland to collaborate on the procurement and operation of three Arrowhead-140 frigates. The Polish Frigates will be a variant of the Arrowhead-140.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I'm delighted to be in Zamosc today with my friend and close defence partner Marius Balszczak.

We have had a close defence alliance with Poland for over 150 years and as we face the threat from Russia, we need the equipment and

the capabilities to safeguard our people and preserve European stability.

Our new agreements demonstrate that commitment and the UK's support for Poland's defence modernisation plans.

Today's signing took place alongside a ceremony marking the first delivery of air defence equipment, Narew, to Poland produced in partnership with MBDA UK and Polish industry.

The complex weapons MOU provides UK support for Poland's Short-Range Air Defence programme Narew, a key component of Poland's rapid air defence modernisation programme, enabling further co-operation agreements in the future.

Through the MOU, the two nations will strengthen industry and government links, and support Poland in establishing sovereign capabilities for missile manufacture, providing a framework for industrial cooperation and co-development.

Managing Director of MBDA UK Chris Allam said:

To deliver Small Narew to Poland in such an extremely short timeframe is a remarkable achievement, and we're proud that this has been accomplished through our very close partnership with Polish Grupa Zbrojeniowa and thanks to strong support from the UK government.

Today's agreements launch the next step in Polish-UK missile co-operation and underpins the PGZ-MBDA technology transfer proposal on Narew, while also supporting Pilica+, Miecznik, Tank Destroyer, and other vital projects.

The two ministers also agreed a new working group, which will explore the potential for the UK and Polish Armed Forces to cooperate on the development of a Future Common Missile. Though requirements for the missile are still in development, it is envisioned to be a medium-to-long range, surface launched missile that can be used in both Land and Maritime environments and will be a development of the CAMM family of missiles.

Following the signing, the Defence Secretary met UK personnel deployed in Southern Poland operating Sky Sabre Air Defence systems and Challenger 2 Tanks.

During his trip to Poland, the Defence Secretary also attended the Warsaw Security Forum where he took part in the future of the Transatlantic Alliance panel discussion.

North Korea Intermediate-range ballistic missile launch: Minister for Asia statement

Press release

Minister for Asia statement on the launch of an Intermediate-range ballistic missile on 3 October by North Korea.



Lord Zac Goldsmith, Minister for Asia said:

The UK condemns North Korea's launch of an Intermediate-range ballistic missile on 3 October and calls on the regime to immediately stop all activity that violates UN Security Council Resolutions.

This is the first ballistic missile since 2017 that has been launched over Japan and demonstrates North Korea's reckless actions. The UK stands alongside our allies and partners as we confront the growing threat North Korea poses to regional and international security. Once again North Korea shows no regard for its international obligations.

We urge the DPRK regime to put the well-being of its own people ahead of the illegal pursuit of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

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