

Liz Truss calls on G7 partners to modernise World Trade Organisation

- Trade Secretary uses G7 to call for WTO reform.
- UK will urge G7 governments to rally behind tougher measures against market-distorting practices from nations, including better data-sharing and transparency.
- Truss will push for collective G7 support for creation of rules governing digital and data trade and making international trade greener.

The International Trade Secretary will use the UK-hosted G7 Trade Ministerial meeting this week (27 to 28 May) to rally the world's leading democracies to the cause of WTO reform.

Liz Truss will push for a fully-functioning dispute settlement system, to tackle unfair subsidies in industry and agriculture, to modernise the WTO rulebook, and advance digital and green trade.

She will warn that if real progress is not made to bring the WTO into the 21st century, there is a danger of the global trading system fragmenting.

Truss will urge the G7 to support the WTO's new Director General, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who is working to make progress on reform and create a new framework for action ahead of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC-12) in November.

The UK is seeking agreement at the WTO on the need to tackle harmful industrial subsidies, which distort competition and undermine international trade. As holders of the G7 Presidency, the UK will increase collaboration and cooperation between G7 members on stopping unfair trading practices through methods such as better evidence-sharing and greater transparency from non-market economies.

This week's trade meeting provides an opportunity to push for G7 support for sustainable supply chains, a crucial aspect of the UK's commitment to promoting greener trade, ahead of the COP26 Summit in November.

During the meeting the International Trade Secretary will also call for collective action to boost production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and medical goods.

Speaking at the opening session of the G7 Trade Track, International Trade Secretary Liz Truss is expected to say:

It really is now or never for the World Trade Organisation. International trade only works when it is fair and when countries submit themselves to a common set of rules, and for that to happen we need a more modern and dynamic WTO.

We want to use our G7 Presidency to address the fundamental issues facing global trade, and support Dr Ngozi in her work to bring the WTO into the twenty-first century. Like-minded democracies need to lead the charge on trade reform, because if we don't then there is a very real danger that global trade fragments and that fewer countries end up playing by the rules.

The International Trade Secretary will be joined at the second virtual G7 Trade Track meeting by trade Ministers from the member countries of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, US, and the EU, as well as Dr Okonjo-Iweala, members of the Business 7 group, the Gender Equality Advisor Council (GEAC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The third and final G7 Trade Track meeting is due to take place in person in October where the UK will be looking to finalise our shared agenda with our G7 partners.

[Improving humanitarian response and ensuring political process in line with resolution 2254 in Syria](#)

Thank you very much, Mr President. And also my thanks to Special Envoy Pedersen and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings and, through them, to all of their teams for their hard work in difficult circumstances ongoing.

Colleagues, we have a Security Council Resolution which should govern all of our efforts: that is resolution 2254, passed unanimously, passed with the consent and full agreement and the approval of every member of this Council. Full implementation of that resolution is the only sustainable solution to the conflict in Syria. That resolution is clear on the sequence of steps needed to achieve a political settlement.

Syrians are to convene to draft a new constitution, facilitated by the United Nations. Following this, there are to be free and fair elections administered under the supervision of the United Nations, as an objective, impartial, neutral and independent party, to ensure the elections satisfy the highest international standards of transparency and accountability.

The charade taking place today is not part of that process. It does not come close to meeting those requirements. It is not in line with resolution 2254. The exercise taking place today is presumably designed to sustain Assad's dictatorship, but it is hard to see how it helps. Only countries which take a similar approach to their own people – depriving them of the opportunity to choose their leaders, denying them the right to participate freely in politics or even to speak their mind – will consider these to be “elections”. And judging by the company the Syrian regime keeps here in the United Nations, those countries are already in the bag.

For the rest of the UN's membership, it is a grotesque joke, perpetrated by a man who has far worse crimes to answer for, having gassed, tortured and starved a people who still will not accept him as a legitimate leader.

So what should the regime be doing, once today's distraction is out of the way? It should actively participate in the political process set out in resolution 2254. The first step should be genuine and constructive participation in the Constitutional Committee. And the regime need not wait to take confidence-building actions such as the release of political detainees or providing information to the families of the missing. My Russian colleague mentioned the very limited amnesty of 2 May; that amnesty did not include tens of thousands of Assad opponents and political detainees held for years without trial. There is rather further to go.

Mr President, let me turn now to the humanitarian situation. When this Council authorised the United Nations to deliver cross-border aid in 2014, over 10 million people required assistance. Since then, the mechanism has enabled over 46,000 trucks to deliver cross-border assistance to many millions of Syrians dealing with the worst impacts of this terrible conflict.

Seven years later, certain members of this Council suggest that the humanitarian situation has somehow moved on. And yet, there are now 13 million people in need in Syria: an increase of 2 million in just one year and 3 million higher than when we first mandated the UN to deliver cross-border aid.

We were all warned. In his report of December 2019, the Secretary General warned that the UN did not have an alternative means of reaching people in the absence of cross-border assistance. The impact has been clear.

The closing of the crossing in Yaroubiyah in 2020 means that 1.8 million people are now in need of assistance in the north east, an increase of 38% in one year. Cross-line assistance has made some progress, but has not come close to filling the assistance gap. Aid workers in the north east have faced severe shortages of PPE and COVID-19 tests, which could have been resolved quickly by the WHO through a cross-border response.

The loss of Bab al-Salam has led to a more dangerous, less efficient and less direct response in the north west. Aid and supplies must now travel across lines of control, multiple checkpoints and areas still facing conflict. Deliveries that once took six hours can now take as long as 25 days.

2.4 million people depend on aid delivered through the only remaining mandated crossing at Bab-al-Hawa. This includes food assistance for 1.4 million people monthly, nutrition assistance for tens of thousands of mothers and children, education material, and critical medical items. As we set out last month, closure of this crossing would cause the COVID-19 vaccination response to cease, directly contradicting resolution 2565, not only unanimously passed but co-sponsored by all members of the Council.

The UK welcomes continued efforts to negotiate cross-line access in the north west – all modalities, both cross-border and cross-line, need to be pursued. But as the Secretary-General set out in the General Assembly in March, cross-line convoys cannot replicate the required size and scope of the cross-border operation. Given that no cross-line mission has arrived in the north west from Damascus, cross-line assistance is not yet a viable alternative. It is reckless to suggest otherwise.

In order to meet escalating humanitarian needs in Syria, the UK therefore calls on this Council to renew the Bab al-Hawa crossing and re-authorise the Bab al-Salam and Yaroubiyah crossings, for a period of 12 months. In the time of COVID, it is our moral imperative to do so.

Mr President, my Russian colleague said that need donors should invest in reconstruction. But who will pay the huge amounts needed? Those who support Assad and protect him? Russia will not. Humanitarian aid is not a priority for Russia; according to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service, since 2018 Russia has contributed only \$36 million to the UN's Syria humanitarian appeal. That represents 0.42% of the total donated in that time. Contrast that with the huge amounts spent on military activity in Syria. Even if Russia wanted to, it may not be able to afford to. And I believe China prefers bilateral aid, tied to infrastructure and loans. I don't know, therefore, whether Syria is an attractive investment destination for China.

Since 2018, four donors – the USA, Germany, the European Union and the UK – have contributed over \$5.5 billion, or 65% of that donated to the UN appeal. They provide food, clean water, shelter, medical care, education for Syrians – wherever they are. In Assad-controlled areas. In opposition areas. In neighbouring countries. All have been clear that they cannot move to fund reconstruction without a sustainable political solution; the risks are just too high of conflict destroying investments made.

Mr President, this is the last time I will address this Council as I reach the end of my time in New York this week. It has been a great honour to serve my country here, alongside you all and others who have left the Council. I am particularly grateful for the personal friendship you have shown me. Our debates and private conversations are often not easy, but they are always essential. When this Council comes together and acts, it has real power. We should never forget or underestimate that in our daily frustrations. I hope that in-person meetings and consultations can restart soon: our conversation, our interaction and our understanding of each other is all poorer through a screen.

I would like to conclude by thanking SCAD, led so ably by Hazmik; our

interpreters, who are so professional and patient; and last but not least, the technical officers who have made it possible to meet over the past 15 months. I pay tribute particularly to the calm patience of Brian and his colleagues as I wait for the bridge to disconnect me one last time.

Finally, I want to thank my own colleagues in the UK Mission who are the most knowledgeable, innovative, hard-working and fun people you could hope to lead. None of us could operate here without the experts who sustain us all – my thanks to all of them across all our missions.

Thank you, Mr President.

Voter Identification – FAQs

What is voter identification and what will voters need to know?

Voter identification will require voters to prove their identity by showing a form of photographic identification, before being given their ballot paper in a polling station across Great Britain at national UK-wide elections, and at local elections in England.

A broad range of documents, both in date and expired, will be accepted in order to prove your identity to vote.

Why are we introducing this policy?

In our current electoral system, there is inexcusable potential for someone to cast another's vote at the polling station. All you need to do is say a name and address when you go to vote.

Stealing someone's vote is stealing their voice. Voter fraud is a crime that we cannot allow room for, so the government is stamping out any potential for it to take place in elections.

Showing identification to prove who they are is something people of all walks of life already do everyday. It is a reasonable and proportionate approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone.

It will also bring the rest of the UK in line with Northern Ireland, where a form of voter identification has been in use since 1985, requiring photo identification since 2003, with no adverse effect on voter participation.

Reports say that there is little evidence that electoral fraud takes place in the UK?

An independent review of electoral fraud conducted by Lord Pickles

highlighted the events of cases such as Tower Hamlets – in which the 2014 Mayoral election was declared void by corrupt and illegal practices – as evidence of vulnerabilities in our system which must be addressed.

Personation – assuming the identity of another person with the intention to deceive – is very difficult to prove and prosecute but it is by no means a victimless crime. There are frequent anecdotal reports of personation, including most recently during the 2021 local elections. Often, it only comes to light if and when the real voter tries to vote later after the crime has been committed.

That is why voter identification is so important – it virtually eliminates the risk of it occurring in the first place.

The perception that our electoral system is vulnerable to fraud is damaging for public confidence. Data from our pilot evaluations in 2018 and 2019 show that the requirement to show identification increased voter confidence in the process.

What identification will be acceptable?

There will be a wide range of photographic identification which will be acceptable.

These include:

- Various concessionary travel passes
- PASS cards
- Ministry of Defence identity cards
- Photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme
- Driver's licenses
- Passports
- Free Voter Cards, provided by local authorities

Expired photographic identification will also be accepted if the photograph is of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder.

Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification

What if I don't have any of those documents?

Everyone eligible to vote will continue to be able to do so. New research published by the Government shows that 98% of electors already own a photographic document that is on the list of acceptable types of identification under this policy.

Local authorities will be required, by law, to provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification. A similar provision will be established for anonymous

electors who will be able to apply for a free anonymous elector Voter Card should they wish to vote in person.

What if identification is out of date?

This does not matter – expired forms of identification will be accepted as long as the photograph is a good enough likeness.

Who will pay for the free Voter Cards, will local authorities have to find the funds?

The Cabinet Office will cover costs of Voter Cards for local authorities. We continue to work with the sector to consider implementation in Great Britain in a sensible way and the next steps, including implementation costs, will be set out in due course.

How will voters know about this in time?

It is vital that such an important policy is implemented properly and with sufficient time for voters and the electoral sector to understand the new requirements.

As is the case before any election, or change requirement for the public, a comprehensive communications campaign will advertise the requirements in plenty of time and across a broad range of channels before the policy is implemented nationwide.

When will voter identification be required in future elections?

It is vital that such an important policy is implemented properly and with sufficient time for voters and the electoral sector to understand the new requirements.

We continue to work with the sector to consider implementation in a sensible way and the next steps will be set out in due course.

Will this additional measure put people off voting altogether?

Showing identification to prove who they are is something people of all walks of life already do everyday. It is a reasonable and proportionate approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone.

If the public are more confident in our democratic system, they are more likely to participate in it. Data from our pilot evaluations in 2018 and 2019 show that the requirement to show identification increased voter confidence in the process.

What other countries use identification?

Most European countries, include France, Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, as well as Switzerland and Canada.

It has been claimed that two million people won't have the right to vote under these plans?

That's not the case. Everyone who is entitled to vote must and will be able to.

We have published [research](#) that shows that 98% of electors already own a photographic document that is on the broad list of acceptable types of identification, and the 2% that currently do not, would not equate to two million.

Local authorities will be required, by law, to provide anyone without one of the wide range of accepted documents with a free, local Voter Card.

It has been reported that 19% of those with no recognisable identification would be put off voting based on the research published?

The 19% figure relates to an extremely small group of respondents who held a form of ID that they believed was non-recognisable and not overall respondents. This equates to 0.25% of overall respondents.

A further 6% with no recognisable identification said they would be more likely to vote.

The same research showed that 98% of all respondents owned one of the photographic documents on the list of acceptable types of identification, either in date or expired.

The Electoral Commission report claims that 7.5% of the electorate don't have access to photo identification?

The Electoral Commission report was published in 2015 and does not cover the breadth of documents, or expired documents, that the government's voter identification policy will accept.

New research shows that 98% electors already own a photographic document that is on the list of acceptable types of identification under this policy. The research, carried out by IFF Research, draws on the most comprehensive data available to date.

Recent media reporting suggests that people from ethnic minorities are less likely to have photo identification. Is this the case?

This is not what our research suggests, which draws on the most comprehensive available to date. The data shows that 99% of ethnic minorities had a form of identification that would be accepted under our proposals, as did 98% of people who identify as white. Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification.

We will continue to work with a wide range of civil society organisations to ensure voter identification will work for everybody.

What about elderly people, are they less likely to have recognisable photo identification?

This is not what the research suggests, which draws on the most comprehensive available to date. It shows that 99% of 18-29 year olds hold the relevant identification, as do 98% of those aged 70 and above. Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge to anyone who does need it. We will continue to work with charities and civil society organisations, including those who advocate for older people, to ensure that voter identification will work for everybody.

What about disabled people, will this make it more difficult for them to participate?

Everyone who is entitled to vote must and will be able to.

We will continue working constructively with charities and civil society organisations to help people understand these changes and make sure that everyone who is eligible to vote will be supported to do so.

As well as steps to increase protections and tackle fraud, the Elections Bill also includes wider measures to make our polls more inclusive, such as:

- extending the list of people who can support disabled people to vote at the polling station
- requiring Returning Officers to consider the needs of voters with a wide range of disabilities

Isn't there a bigger problem with fraud taking place in postal voting and intimidating people into appointing a proxy vote?

Fraud, and the intent to intimidate or coerce a voter, are crimes. So this government is stamping out the space for such damage to take place in our elections – in any form.

Following the announcement of the Elections Bill in the Queen's Speech, the government has set out further details on measures to tighten the rules for absent voting and prevent voter intimidation [here](#).

[Quarter of a million now plugged in to](#)

security advice through ACT App.

As we pass another key milestone in the easing of lockdown restrictions and people are able to enjoy indoor hospitality and attend larger events, now is the time to assess whether your staff and customers are primed to remain vigilant and ACT if they see or hear something that doesn't feel quite right.

Similar to tackling coronavirus, defeating terrorism requires a collective community effort where police, security staff, venue stewards and the public come together to help keep everyone safe.

We're delighted to announce that 250,000 individuals have now downloaded the ACT App to access up to date security information and guidance from the National Terrorism and Security Office direct to their mobile phones.

Are you playing your part to make sure you're protecting your staff and customers from more than just COVID? It's not too late to ensure your organisation is prepared to combat the threat of terrorism. These simple actions could save lives:

- Be security-minded when planning and providing briefings to staff and volunteers ahead of opening up venues and hosting events – they can be crucial eyes and ears in support of our 24/7 policing efforts
- Whilst you ensure your spaces meet Covid public health regulations, please risk assess your existing sites and any new premises such as outdoor spaces with security in mind too; and consider both [NaCTSO's protective security advice](#) and [CPNI's Personnel Security advice](#)
- Ensure your staff and volunteers are educated by signing them up to [ACT e-learning training. It is free and takes just 45 minutes](#). Staff could benefit from [See, Check and Notify training](#) covering hostile reconnaissance, vigilance and the power of hello, and reporting suspicious activity
- Download the ACT App as an individual or through a large-enterprise rollout – contact ct@highfieldelearning.com for an individual username and password or to find out how to deploy to all employees in your organisation
- Promote the messaging and materials in our toolkit to your staff and customers via your communication channels e.g. internal bulletins and on your external website.
- Display our campaign posters in high footfall areas and at events to

encourage your customers and staff to stay vigilant and report suspicious behaviour

- Share our social media assets on your social media channels using the hashtag [#CommunitiesDefeatTerrorism](#)

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) has updated its [Easing Lockdown Vigilance Campaign Toolkit](#) to ensure relevance for events planned across the summer. With all the messaging and materials that a business may need to help keep everyone safe, it now includes situationally specific messaging and bespoke assets designed for use surrounding the EUROs championship football games, UK music festivals and indoor hospitality.

If you have any further questions regarding the toolkit or you are interested in working in partnership with CT policing and NaCTS0, please email NCTPHQMailbox@met.police.uk.

Would you like to learn more about how Counter Terrorism Policing's free training & awareness products can work within your organisation?

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office's (NaCTS0) Business Engagement Team, working closely with colleagues from Marks & Spencer's Business Continuity Team, now host bi-monthly, one hour lunchtime workshop sessions to provide more detail around the free ACT eLearning programme and ACT App. These sessions, during the first 8 weeks have seen 235 senior business representatives from 128 organisations join us to learn more about playing their part to defeat terrorism.

To join one of these sessions or to find out more, please contact; NaCTS0Mailbox-.EngagementUnit@met.police.uk

Any piece of information could be a key piece of the jigsaw. This summer, it's important that people know they won't be wasting our time if they report suspicious behaviour to staff or the police. As the UK continues to open up, help us make it known that sharing concerns won't ruin lives, but it might save them. Encourage your staff and customers to trust their instincts and ACT.

Sign up for the ACT App

The ACT App provides useful guidance on all aspects of protective security and is also being used for COVID-19 messaging in addition to CT specific messaging.

1. Download the Urim app from the [Google Play](#) or [Apple Store](#).
2. Email ct@highfieldelearning.com to request a user name and password.

Please note access is for business/professional use only.

Government to open technical consultation on fairer parking charges

News story

Consultation will seek views on the level of private parking charges, to help deliver a fair, proportionate and consistent system across the country.



The government is holding a further technical consultation on its proposed changes to parking charges, seeking views from motorists, parking operators and landowners on the level of private parking charges, to help deliver a fair, proportionate and consistent system across the country.

This is part of the government's drive to introduce a fairer, clearer system for millions of motorists, with the introduction of a new Code of Practice for private operators.

Currently, private parking charges are capped at £100 by the industry, regardless of how serious the breach of terms and conditions. Following a consultation last year, government is proposing a tiered system for parking charges, similar to the local authority model, which is based on the severity of the offence and will cut excessive fines for motorists.

Local Government Minister Luke Hall said:

This government is making life easier for motorists as we get back to life as usual and build back better from the pandemic.

I encourage motorists and parking operators to share their views on our proposed Parking Code of Practice.

These changes will bring in a fairer system for drivers, creating a simplified appeals process and curbing excessive charges for millions of motorists.

The further technical consultation will run for four weeks during the summer.

The government understands that this will mean some changes for the private parking industry and will carefully consider all consultation responses when making a final decision.

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