

[PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 5 May 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel.



The Prime Minister spoke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel this afternoon, ahead of the Petersburg Climate Dialogue tomorrow.

They discussed the importance of all countries making concrete commitments to reduce carbon emissions and supporting developing countries to do the same, including by raising contributions towards climate finance. They resolved to work together on this, including through the G7, and in the run up to the UK-hosted COP26 Summit.

The Prime Minister looked forward to welcoming Chancellor Merkel to the UK for the G7 Summit in June.

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[Urging meaningful progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Thank you, Mr President. I would also like to congratulate China on its assumption of the Security Council presidency and wish you all the best for the month. I should also like to thank and congratulate Vietnam on its excellent stewardship of the Council in April.

I add my thanks to the High Representative for his briefing and the latest

comprehensive report.

As we have heard, like many other countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the grip of COVID-19. Now, more than ever, is the time for political leaders across the country to come together to fight the pandemic, to lead the country in its recovery, and to take the necessary collective steps to ensure a future that benefits all citizens.

We urge all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reinvigorate action to agree and implement required electoral and limited constitutional reforms.

There needs to be real political will and compromise from all sides in order to find a lasting solution. We urge the authorities to work closely with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Venice Commission. The authorities should redouble their efforts to address outstanding judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, most notably the rulings in the Sejdic-Finci set of cases.

Successes are possible. We welcome the holding of local elections, especially those in Mostar – the first elections there for over 12 years. And we congratulate the Bosnia and Herzegovina Central Election Commission for successfully organising two consecutive elections under challenging circumstances.

We also congratulate the Office of the High Representative for its work in Brčko District, on good governance, infrastructure development and private sector growth.

What is not helpful, and indeed a real threat to peace and stability, is the current political rhetoric around the "peaceful dissolution" of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This poses a serious threat to peace and stability and as such undermines the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina need their political leaders and representatives to instead focus their efforts on urgently combating the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening the rule of law, and implementing economic and other reforms that would move the country forward on its European path.

We reaffirm our unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign state comprising two entities, in which all three constituent peoples, others, and all citizens are equal.

The UK continues to support reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans more widely, including through our project programming and our role in the Berlin Process and Peace Implementation Council.

We would like, once again, to remember the many thousands of victims, and acknowledge the suffering on all sides of the Balkans conflicts. It is only through meaningful reconciliation across communities that the painful legacies of the past can be overcome. We once again call for an end to the glorification of convicted war criminals and the denial of the Srebrenica

genocide. This definition has been officially recognized by two international tribunals as well as domestic judicial bodies, and denial merely serves to reinforce the deep societal divisions which threaten to block Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress.

Finally, Mr President, as is clear from the High Representative's report, the international community's role remains vital. In particular, the Office of the High Representative continues to have an essential role in maintaining the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, and its work is central to supporting action by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including through implementation of the 5+2 criteria, to create this future.

The Office of the High Representative, and its use of executive powers, should the situation require it, continues to have the UK's full support.

Thank you.

[ESFA Update: 5 May 2021](#)

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[Foreign Secretary meeting with Marise Payne, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 5 May](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne during the G7 Foreign and Development Ministerial Meeting.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne this morning.

During the meeting, the Foreign Secretary outlined the UK's expanded commitment to the Indo-Pacific region and our close co-operation with Australia on regional security challenges, including maritime threats, and climate change.

The Foreign Secretary welcomed continued Australian cooperation on Xinjiang. They also discussed the situation in Myanmar and further UK-Australian collaboration on sanctions.

Both the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister agreed to work closely together on our mutual priorities. They also discussed the international Covid-19 response and the need to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines.

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[North Yorkshire rapist jailed for longer](#)

News story

Dariush Behdarvandi-Aidi has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A double rapist has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Dariush Behdarvandi-Aidi, 34, raped two women on two separate occasions in April and December 2017. Both rapes took place while the women were asleep.

The first offence took place in April 2017. Following an evening socialising the first victim fell asleep on the sofa in a flat where Behdarvandi-Aidi was also staying, along with some other friends. Behdarvandi-Aidi sexually assaulted the unconscious victim before being warned off by a mutual friend. Later that night the friend found the offender raping the sleeping victim and ejected him from the flat.

The second offence took place in December 2017 when Behdarvandi-Aidi again stayed in the same house as his victim. She awoke to find the offender raping her and called the police, who promptly arrested him. His arrest for that offence led to his first victim coming forward.

Behdarvandi-Aidi was found guilty of two counts of rape and one count of sexual assault by penetration. On 16 November 2020, Behdarvandi-Aidi was sentenced to 6 years and 10 months' imprisonment at Leeds Crown Court.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme by the Attorney General, on 15 April 2021 the Court found the sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 14 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal, the Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Behdarvandi-Aidi raped two women who were asleep and defenceless. I welcome the Court's decision to increase his sentence and hope this brings some comfort to his victims.

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