

[Russia: UK expresses concern over worsening health of Alexey Navalny](#)

News story

The Foreign Office has expressed concern over the condition of Russian opposition activist Alexey Navalny, whose health is reportedly worsening in prison.



An FCDO spokesperson said:

The UK is deeply concerned by reports of the unacceptable treatment of Alexey Navalny and the continued deterioration of his health. Mr Navalny must be given immediate access to independent medical care. We reiterate our call for his immediate release from his politically motivated imprisonment.

Published 18 April 2021

[UK supports Czech efforts to expose Russian malign activity](#)

Press release

The Foreign Secretary condemns the reckless and dangerous actions of the Russian intelligence services in Czech Republic.



It has been announced by the Czech authorities that the two GRU Officers that were charged with the attempted murder of the Skripals in Salisbury, Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, were also behind the deaths of two civilians and an explosion in the Czech town of Vrbetice.

In response, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK stands in full support of our Czech allies, who have exposed the lengths that the Russian intelligence services will go to in their attempts to conduct dangerous and malign operations in Europe. This shows a pattern of behaviour by Moscow, following the Novichok attack in Salisbury. My sympathies are with the families of the victims in Vrbetice.

We are as determined and committed as ever to bring those responsible for the attack in Salisbury to justice, and commend the actions of the Czech authorities to do the same. Russia must desist from these actions, which violate the most basic international norms.

Notes to Editors

- The UK was at the vanguard of EU action to impose sanctions on the leadership of the GRU and Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, the 2 GRU officers who have been charged with carrying out the nerve agent attack in Salisbury. The UK has continued to apply sanctions through the UK autonomous chemical weapons sanctions regime.
- On 5 September 2018, charges were brought in the UK against 2 Russian nationals known as 'Alexander Petrov' and 'Ruslan Boshirov' for conspiracy to murder Sergei Skripal; the attempted murder of Sergei, Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey, a UK police officer; use and possession of Novichok contrary to the Chemical Weapons Act; and causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey. Interpol Red Notices remain in circulation for the men.

[UK aid and Unilever reach one billion people with global hygiene campaign to tackle Covid-19](#)

- The world's largest hygiene campaign aimed at tackling the spread of Covid-19 has reached one billion people.
- The UK Government and Unilever partnered to provide soap, sanitiser and surface disinfectants to developing countries, where there is little or no sanitation.
- This comes as the UK-backed COVAX scheme reaches deliveries of vaccines to 100 countries and territories.

One billion people in developing countries have now been reached with advice, hygiene products and access to handwashing facilities in a campaign launched between the UK government and British business Unilever to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Working through the UN, charities and other partners, the campaign has:

- Trained 140,000 staff, including community health workers and teachers, to deliver hygiene skills, including deep cleaning of public buildings and effective handwashing.
- Installed over 500,000 handwashing stations around the world, including in Bangladesh, as well as health care facilities in Iraq.
- Run information campaigns across TV, radio and social media in 37 countries to increase understanding of the benefits of handwashing with soap regularly and disinfecting surfaces to prevent the spread of Covid-19. These campaigns have also reached refugees living in some of the world's worst humanitarian crises, such as South Sudan and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.
- Delivered 75 million Unilever hygiene products, more than three times the original target, to 60 countries, covering South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East. These have been donated by Unilever's leading hygiene brands, including Lifebuoy and Domestos.

The UK has been leading the international response to the Covid-19 pandemic, helping to develop and distribute vaccines support the global economy and bolster health systems around the world. As one of the largest donors to the COVAX AMC, the UK is also helping stop the spread of the disease through global vaccinations. The scheme has reached 100 countries so far.

The Prime Minister has also confirmed the UK will share the majority of any

future surplus coronavirus vaccines from our supply with the COVAX procurement pool to support developing countries.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Minister Wendy Morton said:

This global hand washing campaign has saved lives and protected some of the most vulnerable communities around the world against Covid-19 and other diseases.

No one is safe until we are all safe. That is why the UK has also provided £548 million for COVAX to deliver more than one billion vaccines around the world, as well as lobbying international partners to increase their funding.

As well as the UK Government and Unilever, the campaign, funded by UK aid and Unilever, is also supported by experts from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and 21 partners including UNICEF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who are helping governments around the world on their own Covid-19 responses.

Charities and international organisations have developed new tools to communicate how Covid-19 is spread. Population Services International developed a WhatsApp chatbot to send new training to health workers while remaining socially-distanced and safe.

Rebecca Marmot, Chief Sustainability Officer at Unilever, said:

Our business has a century-long history of promoting hygiene through our brands, but this unprecedented crisis called for an unprecedented response.

Public-private partnership has been critical, allowing us to leverage the influence, expertise and networks of both government and business, and our strong network of NGO and UN partners, at home and overseas. We're pleased to work together with partners to implement initiatives to address the pandemic at scale.

Robert Dreibelbis, from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said:

Handwashing and hygiene are among the most effective ways to help prevent the spread of many diseases. The COVID-19 crisis has shown the important role that hygiene plays in health. Our hope is that this recognition of the vital role of hygiene continues at scale as a key part of COVID-19 recovery.

[Festival Republic joins Government pilot programme with a live gig to trial the safe return of fans](#)

The Sefton Park Pilot, in partnership with Culture Liverpool, will further trial approaches to managing and mitigating transmission risks at outdoor events, building on the evidence collected at today's FA Cup semi-final fixture at Wembley and other events in the programme. The evidence from these pilots will be used to inform and shape government policy to bring about the phased return of fuller audiences to venues and events across England.

Researchers on site will examine the movements and behaviour of the crowd of 5,000 people at Sefton Park, which can host audiences of up to 7,500 at full capacity. The audience will not be socially distanced or required to wear face coverings in the controlled setting of the test event. They will be required to follow existing Government guidance on the use of face coverings when travelling to the venue and adhering to rules set out by the event organisers.

Ticket holders will be required to take a rapid lateral flow test at a local testing centre prior to entry to trial the role these facilities could play in the return of large scale events. All attendees must have proof of a negative test result to ensure the safety of staff and other attendees. Attendees will also be asked to take a test after the event to gather further evidence on the safety of outdoor settings, reduced social distancing and the removal of non-pharmaceutical mitigations like face coverings.

They will also have to provide contact details for NHS Test and Trace to ensure everyone can be traced in the event of a positive test.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We're one step closer to a summer of live events now our science-led programme is underway. Testing different settings and looking at different mitigations is key to getting crowds back safely.

The Sefton Park pilot is an important addition to the programme. After many months without live audiences, Festival Republic are bringing live music back to fans with this very special event and I hope it won't be too much longer until gigs are back for good.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The return of spectators to music gigs and sporting events is a moment we are all looking forward to.

These pilots will inform our approach to ensuring future big events can take place safely. By trialling a range of measures to reduce transmission, we are able to gather vital evidence to inform our plans for allowing events in the future.

I am hugely grateful to scientists and clinicians working hard across the country so we can start to enjoy these events again safely.

Melvin Benn, Managing Director, Festival Republic, said:

Secretary of State Oliver Dowden and his team at DCMS are showing real commitment to making this a reality by launching the Event Research Programme and including the Sefton Park Pilot. I'm delighted to be able to support the Government's efforts to get the live music industry back up and running. This gig is about our absolute commitment to demonstrate that we can and will open on June 21st.

Claire McColgan MBE, Director of Culture Liverpool, said:

This isn't an easy thing to do and I'd like to thank those promoters who have agreed to be part of this massively important research project.

We should all be proud of the fact we're part of this brave endeavour which looks to get this vital sector back up and running and resilient once again.

For many cities, towns and villages events are a major part of the economy, and once we develop resilience through learning, we can look forward to jobs being supported and once again enjoying those much longed for experiences.

The first event as part of the scientific trial began yesterday, with the World Snooker Championships. The Championships are due to run until 3 May, welcoming up to 1,000 spectators a day to the Sheffield Crucible Theatre to test an indoor seated setting.

The information gathered from events as part of the Research Programme will be crucial to how all venues – from major sport stadiums and theatres to wedding venues, conference centres and nightclubs – could operate safely this summer. The programme of pilots will explore how different approaches to social distancing, ventilation and testing protocols could ease opening and maximise participation.

Letter from Lord Evans, Chair of the Committee, to the Prime Minister about Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests

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