

UN Human Rights Council 46: Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic

Thank you, Madam President,

The UK is deeply concerned about the volatile security situation in CAR in the aftermath of presidential and legislative elections. The number of reported human rights violations and abuses have significantly increased since the first round of voting, and throughout the state of emergency.

Armed groups, in particular the Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement, are responsible for killing and abducting civilians, as well as the deaths of seven UN peacekeepers. They have burned down polling stations, destroyed election materials, and threatened and intimidated Central Africans, preventing them from exercising their right to vote. This is unacceptable.

We urge all sides to cease all attacks on civilians, humanitarian actors and peacekeeping personnel immediately, and to engage in political dialogue in good faith. The UK stands ready to agree appropriate measures, including UN sanctions in line with Article 35 of the Peace Agreement, in response to continued violence or further human rights violations and abuses.

Madam President,

The UK would welcome the Independent Expert's assessment of the state of the Peace Agreement, and any steps the CAR government, regional partners and the international community can take to strengthen peaceful and inclusive dialogue in CAR.

Thank you.

Defence outlines 2030 vision for the armed forces

- Billions to be invested across land, sea, air, space and cyber domains
- Forces adapt to counter hybrid and conventional threats
- £85-billion on equipment over next four years
- Huge benefits to British industry across the UK.

The Defence Secretary has set out the future vision for the UK Armed Forces ensuring the military is prepared for new and emerging threats and challenges.

Outlined in 'Defence in a competitive age', the UK Armed Forces will become a threat-focussed integrated force with a continued shift in thinking across land, sea, air, space and cyber domains.

Defence will spend over £85-billion on equipment over the next four years so our armed forces can adapt, compete effectively, and fight decisively when needed. This will support 400,000 jobs across all four nations of the UK.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:

This Defence Command Paper ensures our armed forces are threat-focused, modernised and financially sustainable. Our military will be ready to confront future challenges, seize new opportunities for Global Britain and lay the foundations of a more secure and prosperous Union.

We will continue to work with allied partners to address future global security threats whilst also enhancing critical outputs in the battlespace domains.

Our people and their expertise are at the heart of what we do and further investments into training, welfare and support facilities will be reflective of this and ensure our armed forces are well equipped to face tomorrow's threats today.

The British Army will receive significant investment to become more agile, integrated, lethal and expeditionary. The service will receive an additional £3-billion on new vehicles, long-range rocket systems, air defences, drones, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities.

£120-million will create new Ranger Regiments; four battalions will form the Regiment that will support Special Forces in collective deterrence activity. This will range from training to accompanying personnel on the ground. The Army will also introduce a new Warfighting Experimentation Battlegroup that draws on elements from across the entire Army designed to fight prototype warfare, focussing on hybrid and conventional threats.

The Royal Navy will develop a new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance ship to help protect vital underwater maritime infrastructure and protect from maritime threats, aiming to come into service by 2024. The fleet of frigates and destroyers will grow through this decade with shipbuilding investment doubling over the life of this Parliament rising to over £1.7-billion a year. The Royal Marines will also benefit from a £200-million investment over the next ten years to form the Future Command Force, a Commando force that is persistently forward deployed conducting specialist maritime security operations.

UK air capabilities will be bolstered with an injection of over £2-billion in the Future Combat Air System which will deliver a pioneering mix of crewed, uncrewed and autonomous platforms including swarming drones and the ultra-modern Tempest fighter jet. This programme has already created over 1,800 highly-skilled jobs in over 300 companies across the UK. The Typhoon fleet will be upgraded with a suite of new weapons and state-of-the-art radar.

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter said:

For the first time that I can remember we have an alignment of the ends, ways and means to modernise and transform the posture of our nation's armed forces to meet the threats of a more uncertain and dangerous world.

The ends were set out by the Prime Minister with the publication of the Integrated Review last week, the ways were confirmed by our new Integrated Operating Concept which was published in September, and finally the means, which were confirmed last year when Defence was given a significant multi-year settlement of £24-billion.

This gives us the certainty to plan for the long term and deliver the Integrated Force Structure for 2030.

£6.6-billion will also be invested into research and development projects, helping to provide a strategic advantage that, facilitated with science, will lead to cutting-edge equipment capabilities. £60-million over the next four years to develop a programme to develop novel weapons, artificial intelligence, synthetic/digital systems and space-based capabilities. Further to this, £500-million will be invested in capabilities to enable our forces to respond in a growingly contested electromagnetic environment.

Space is fundamental to military operations, so the success of our forces greatly relies on control of that domain. We are investing £5-billion over the next decade in the Skynet 6 satellite communication programme. This will be complemented by £1.4-billion allocated to the new Space Command, National Space Operations Centre, Space Academy and a UK-built Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance satellite constellation. Space Command will officially launch on 1 April 2021.

Strategic Command will invest £1.5-billion over the next decade to build and sustain a 'digital backbone' to share and exploit vast amounts of data, through the cloud, and across secure networks that are resilient to cyber-attacks from state, proxy and terrorist adversaries.

With its people at its forefront, Defence is set to invest £1.3-billion into improving Single Living Accommodation (SLA), as part of an accommodation strategy, and £1.4-billion into wraparound childcare giving personnel more childcare options, as part of a revised families strategy.

The UK will also enhance its global outlook with an investment in overseas training and will add to its Defence Attaché network which supports our integration with allies and overseas partners.

The Integrated Review addresses the challenges and opportunities the UK faces in a more competitive world, where new powers are using all the tools at their disposal to redefine the international order and seeks to examine how the UK uses its capabilities to respond to these threats.

Read the full [Defence in a Competitive Age report](#).

[Joint Statement – Canada, UK and US statement on Xinjiang](#)

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UK statement to Ottawa Group

Thank you Minister Ng for welcoming the UK to the Ottawa Group. I am delighted to be attending our first of these meetings today. Thank you also to Dr. Okonjo-Iweala for your encouraging and challenging remarks.

The WTO, the global trading system, and free and fair trade remains at the heart of our shared prosperity. However, the WTO is under strain and the rules of global trade need to be reformed: it is vital that we work together to ensure that the twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) secures the real change we all want to see. It is important for us all to build back better by supporting our ongoing recovery and future prosperity through free and fair trade.

We need to face up to the fact that the WTO has failed to keep pace with the opportunities and challenges of 21st century trade, and it is crucial we reform the WTO. That is why the UK is using its G7 Presidency this year to place WTO reform at the heart of our discussions.

We must also show that the WTO can deliver the results our people expect. At MC12 we must conclude the multilateral fisheries negotiation and make substantial progress in the Joint Initiatives. Covid has demonstrated the importance of digital trade and making substantial progress on e-commerce should be a high priority for us.

Our citizens can't believe in free trade if it is not fair. We need to tackle the gaps in the WTO rulebook so we can stamp out pernicious trade practices such as unfair subsidies which give trade a bad name.

We should explore how we can take forward the work of the EU-US-Japan trilateral on trade distortive practices, bringing it to a wider range of WTO members to ensure we can have real impact as we move towards MC12. We also need to acknowledge the forward-looking risk of carbon leakage, its implications for the global trading system, and how best to tackle it together.

We need to get the WTO dispute resolution system fully working again, and it is very important that the 'big' players do not get to set the rules. It is critical that the WTO dispute settlement is binding, enforceable and impartial.

We should recognise the concerns raised by parties regarding the Appellate Body, but we must also have a roadmap agreed for how the WTO can resolve the current impasse. The UK will use the G7 Presidency to seek common ground on this issue.

Turning to Covid, we have seen the failings of our global trade system exploited during the pandemic by nations raising barriers to trade, which the UK completely rejects. The need to keep free trade flowing has never been greater.

We must avoid beggar thy neighbour policies – this is a global challenge we must work together to overcome. The UK is committed to this agenda. At the height of the Covid crisis, we championed transparency on trade restrictive measures and encouraged the withdrawal of such restrictions at the G20 and WTO.

The UK noted the Ottawa Group's Covid-19 Action Plan with interest in June. We are supportive of its approach and wish to continue working with the group as it evolves. It will be important that Ottawa Group members follow the principles set out, and lead by example.

This is crucial year for the global trading system. We know the challenges and what we need to do. The UK looks forward to working closely with all of you to ensure we collectively meet that challenge.