

# Facilitating democratic processes and tackling human rights challenges in Haiti– UK Statement at the Security Council

- UK expresses concern for “political gridlock” in Haiti and urges cooperation on democratic processes
- UK condemns human rights violations in Haiti and urges international community and UN to tackle challenges

Remarks by Ambassador Jonathan Allen at the Security Council briefing on Haiti, 22 February 2021

The United Kingdom welcomes the work of BINUH and SRSG La Lime, not least your efforts to ensure a more integrated UN response to Haiti’s multifaceted challenges.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned by the political, social and humanitarian landscape, and the entrenchment of the problems faced by the Haitian population.

The persistent political gridlock is deeply troubling. In what should be a year of democratic renewal for the Haitian people, we call upon all political actors to work together to find common ground in order to build the right conditions for the successful conduct of democratic processes.

In this context, we welcome the commitment of BINUH to supporting and facilitating democratic processes in 2021, working closely with key Haitian institutions. We echo the calls made in the Secretary-General’s report encouraging the national authorities to spare no effort in surmounting the logistical challenges to elections, particularly the registration of citizens.

We share the Secretary-General’s concern about the deteriorating human rights situation, particularly the worrying increase in kidnappings and gang related violence. I echo the concerns of my colleagues over recent reports of kidnapping of citizens of the Dominican Republic. Any impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses risks undermining the stability of the country, and puts Haitian lives at risk.

We remain worried by the humanitarian situation, particularly the acute vulnerability of women and children, compounded by the economic and health threats presented by COVID-19. We encourage all actors to work in cooperation with the international community and the United Nations to tackle these

challenges for the benefit of the Haitian people.

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## Ensuring the delivery of timely and inclusive elections in Somalia

- UK urges Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States reach an agreement to ensure timely elections
- UK highlights international cooperation crucial to seeking long-term stability in Somalia

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on Somalia

I'd first like to express on behalf of the United Kingdom, our condolences to the government of Italy and to the World Food Programme following the attack on the World Food Programme convoy in the Democratic Republic of Congo earlier today, which resulted in the deaths of three people, including the Italian ambassador. Our thoughts are with their families and those who were injured.

Turning to the subject of Somalia, I'd like to start by thanking our briefers today.

The UK strongly condemns the terror attacks launched by Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu in recent weeks. These incidents have increased, as the prospect of national elections draws closer – a clear attempt to destabilise and disrupt the process. We express our condolences to the families of victims and stand in solidarity with Somalia in their fight against terrorism.

The UK welcomes the agreement reached by the technical committee on 16 February on the implementation of the electoral process in line with the 17 September agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States. This is the only legitimate basis for elections.

We are concerned by the violent clashes in Mogadishu on 19 February. Somalia's leaders must arrive at a consensus on the implementation of the electoral process without delay. That requires all parties to demonstrate flexibility. It is vital that inclusive national elections can take place as soon as possible. Any alternative outcomes, including partial elections or any unilateral actions that lack broad agreement will not receive support from the international community, risks further violence and may result in great instability.

Timely delivery of the electoral process would also allow Somalia's leaders to refocus on critical issues that require urgent attention, such as the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The UN has made an appeal for \$1 billion in 2021. Millions of Somalis experiencing severe food insecurity. The UN estimates the number of people in humanitarian need will increase to 5.9 million by the end of 2021.

Concerted support from the international community is essential to supporting Somalia's long-term stability. Our partners in the African Union and the AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries have made huge sacrifices in supporting Somalia as it works to retake control of its own security. The UK looks forward to constructive dialogue between members of this Council towards agreeing a mandate that sets a path towards greater Somali leadership on security.

To conclude, I want to emphasise three points:

First, it's vital that the Federal Government and Federal Member States reach an agreement to ensure dialogue to ensure the delivery of credible and inclusive elections.

Second, longer-term cooperation between FGS and FMS is essential to address issues critical to Somalia's stability, security and development.

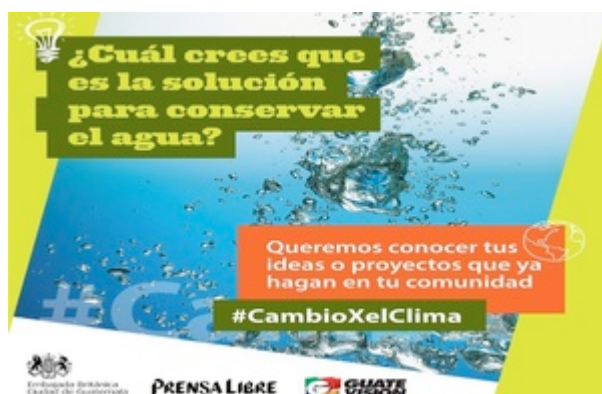
Finally, the continued support of the international community is crucial to realising long-term peace and security in Somalia.

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## [Campaign seeks innovative ideas to protect the environment](#)

World news story

Prensa Libre, Guatevisión and the British Embassy invite Guatemalans to send their innovative ideas to protect the environment.



With the hashtag #CambioXelClima, Guatemalans are invited to send their ideas of small things that they are doing and that work to stop the deterioration of the environment.

We want to know what is new in specific actions on:

- WATER Conservation
- Management of GARBAGE-WASTE-PLASTICS
- Protection of FORESTS-GREEN AREAS
- Efficient use of TRANSPORTATION
- Energy saving-FUELS

Proposals will be received from February 22 to 28, a jury will select the best five, and the winners will be announced from March 15 to 19 through reports.

Initiatives should be sent to the email [embajadabritanicagt@gmail.com](mailto:embajadabritanicagt@gmail.com) where they should explain, with text, photos or videos, the ideas they are putting into motion.

The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, said:

I am very excited to participate in this project, first because the creativity of Guatemalans has no limits. An idea can be very simple and functional. In addition, if we can apply that to combat climate change and share it with the population, we will be making a big difference. And also, because the new generations are more aware of the need to avoid climate change.

This year in November, the United Kingdom will host the Global Summit on Climate Change (COP26), where nations, including Guatemala, will meet to agree on commitments to reduce emissions, implement national prevention policies and evaluate long-term projects to help the planet.

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## **Proposals for unitary local government in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset**

A consultation on proposals for unitary local government submitted by councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset has been launched by government today (22 February 2021).

Following a [formal invitation from government](#) last October to councils in these areas to submit proposals for reorganisation, the Local Government Secretary has received 8 locally-led proposals for consideration: 4 from councils in Cumbria and 2 each from councils in Somerset and North Yorkshire.

The proposals outline how the councils who have responded to the invitation want to restructure local government in their area to establish unitary local government. This means moving from a two-tier system of county and district councils, to a system where there is a single tier for any given area.

The consultation asks a number of questions about each proposal around value for money, proposed geography of the council and impact of the proposal on local services.

As a result of today's consultation launch, the district and county council elections due to be held in May this year in the 3 areas will be rescheduled to May 2022.

Rescheduling local elections avoids the possibility of the electorate being asked to vote for councils while at the same time they are being given the opportunity to express their views on the possible abolition of those councils. It also avoids members potentially being elected to serve short terms.

The elections for local Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as elections to any town or parish councils, will continue to take place in May 2021.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

I have always been clear that any restructuring of local government must be locally-led and will not involve top-down solutions from government.

Now that councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset have submitted their proposals, I am pleased residents, businesses and service providers will have the opportunity to have their say on what will work best for their area.

Where there is local support, changing the structure of local government can offer better value for money and improved services for residents.

Residents, councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships, public service providers, businesses and voluntary organisations will now have the opportunity to have their say on which proposal, if any, they see as the best fit for their area.

The Local Government Secretary will consider all proposals following the consultation before making a decision about which option, if any, to implement in each of the 3 areas. This would be subject to Parliamentary approval.

The consultation period will run for 8 weeks until Monday 19 April. Those responding may do so on the department's online platform 'Citizen Space' or by email or post.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, we would expect any new unitary council to be fully operational from April 2023 with transitional arrangements expected to be in place from 2022, including elections in May 2022 to the shadow or continuing councils.

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## [British Embassy strengthens health response efforts to tackle COVID-19 in Sololá](#)

World news story

Families in San Juan and San Pedro La Laguna will receive health services, medication and food to face the impact of COVID-19.



COVID-19 has had a negative impact in communities surrounding Lake Atitlán, as livelihoods such as tourism and local commerce have stopped abruptly, leaving many families struggling to survive.

The British Embassy, together with the Organization for the Development of the Indigenous Maya (ODIM), is currently supporting around 24,585 people in San Juan and San Pablo la Laguna.

The project, which began in June, aims to increase COVID-19 resilience in vulnerable communities, identifying families with lack of water supply and providing them water filters. They received education on the importance of using clean drinking water, and how to properly maintain the filters.

ODIM also provides food baskets to 307 families including 42 vulnerable community members that have health issues. The food baskets contain products

that are nutritious and last for at least 2 weeks.

The project also ensures that ODIM's clinics can give medical attention to pregnant women, their babies, and people with diabetes; this has allowed a better communication and coordination with local public health authorities.

The project has allowed a group of children in the communities to become young entrepreneurs, working on their leisure time on the production of handcrafted hand sanitizers, providing a new income for their families. Over 1,000 bottles of this sanitizer have been sold and more than 50% of the families living in San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna had access to hand sanitizer in 2020.

The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, said during the visit to the project:

The UK continues to be committed to support vulnerable communities in Guatemala that have been impacted by COVID-19. This project will give resilience to hundreds of families during these challenging times, who are facing unemployment, and are struggling to support their families.

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