

[Foreign Secretary statement on violent crackdown on peaceful protests in Myanmar](#)

News story

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab condemns the violent crackdown by Myanmar's military on peaceful protests in Mandalay.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab statement:

The UK condemns the shooting of peaceful protesters, which only places the military regime further beyond the pale. We will consider further measures, with our international partners, to hold to account those responsible for crushing democracy and choking dissent.

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[Foreign Secretary reaffirms UK's solidarity with Ukraine on seventh anniversary of illegal annexation of Crimea](#)

Press release

The UK will remain at the forefront of international efforts to end Russia's illegitimate control of the Crimean peninsula.



- UK announces new project to improve lives of Ukrainians living in Crimea
- UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission has received nearly £700,000 from the UK over the last year for vital work monitoring and exposing human rights abuses committed by Russia in Crimea

The UK has reaffirmed its unwavering support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its support for Ukrainians whose lives have been impacted by Russian aggression, seven years after Russia illegally annexed Crimea and began its ongoing campaign to militarise the peninsula.

To mark the seventh anniversary of the illegal annexation, the UK is announcing funding for a new project to improve access to vital services for Ukrainians living in Crimea. The UK will contribute £168,000 to this project, which will support the local authorities in the neighbouring Kherson region to help those who are struggling to visit hospitals or apply for Ukrainian passports.

The UK also welcomes the new International Crimean Platform which will bring together the international community to support the return of Crimea to Ukraine.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK stands with Ukraine against the illegal annexation of Crimea and we will continue supporting those whose lives have been impacted by Russia's illegitimate aggression.

Russia is trying to cover up its human rights abuses by preventing access to Crimea for international monitors. But we will work closely with the UN and international partners to ensure Russia is held to account.

The UK calls on Russia to immediately release all Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and Russia – currently known to be over 100 - who are often kept in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and refused access to proper medical treatment.

The UK has contributed nearly £700,000 to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission which monitors and documents human rights abuses on the peninsula, while also providing human rights expertise to promote the right to a fair trial for political prisoners in Crimea.

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Care home residents to be allowed one visitor as part of cautious easing of lockdown

- Visitors to be allowed to hold hands, with tests required before entry and PPE to be worn on site
- Scheme designed to be the next, cautious step in bringing families back together

Care home residents will be able to be visited indoors by a single, named individual from 8 March as part of the Prime Minister's roadmap to ease lockdown restrictions.

The scheme will allow a single visitor to hold hands indoors with their relative or contact in a care home, and make repeat visits under carefully designed conditions to keep residents, staff and visitors safe.

Every resident will have the opportunity to name one individual, who will be required to have a test beforehand, wear PPE during the visit and avoid close contact.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I know how important visiting a loved one is and I'm pleased we will soon be in a position for people to be carefully and safely reunited with loved ones who live in care homes.

This is just the first step to getting back to where we want to be. We need to make sure we keep the infection rate down, to allow greater visiting in a step-by-step way in the future.

Restrictions on visits have been in place during national lockdown to protect vulnerable residents. While coronavirus cases remain high, the number of infections is falling. The UK's vaccination programme has seen every care home resident offered a jab, with almost 17 million vaccinations carried out in total.

Outdoor, pod and screen visits will be able to continue in line with the published guidance which has been in place during lockdown, meaning there will be chances for residents to see more than just the one person they nominate.

The clinically led approach has been designed in partnership with the Deputy Chief Medical Officers and Public Health England and is the next step towards regular indoor visits resuming.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

One of the hardest things during this pandemic has been seeing families desperate to be reunited with their loved ones kept apart and I absolutely want to bring them back together.

Throughout this pandemic we have sought clinical guidance on how visits can be conducted safely.

We had to restrict the majority of visiting when the new variant was discovered but we have done all we can to enable visits to continue in some form. That includes providing funding towards costs of screens and PPE.

As we begin to open up we will move step by step to increase visits while remembering we are still in the grip of a global pandemic.

All visitors will receive a lateral flow test and be required to follow all infection prevention and control measures.

These measures, based on the science, represent a balance between the risk of infections and the importance of visiting for the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and their families.

Professor Deborah Sturdy, chief nurse for adult social care, said:

I know how much people want to visit, hug and kiss their loved ones but doing so can put lives at risk so we would ask people to continue to follow the rules.

This is a first step towards resuming indoor visits and we all hope to be able to take further steps in the future.

I am pleased that, as a result of so many people following the rules, we are in a position to increase visits and I hope this is just the start.

Close-contact care will be restricted to visitors who provide assistance – such as help dressing, eating or washing – which is essential to the immediate health and wellbeing of a resident. Existing guidance already enables these visits under exceptional circumstances.

We are providing extra support for these carers by providing them with the same regular PCR testing regime and PPE arrangements as care home workers to further reduce the risk of infection to themselves and those for whom they provide vital care.

All care home providers not experiencing an outbreak will be asked to follow the updated guidance and continue to work together with families and local professionals to ensure visits are possible while continuing to limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The government will continue to provide free tests and PPE to support the scheme and has already distributed £1.1 billion from the infection control fund, an additional £149 million to support rapid testing and visits and £120 million to increase staffing.

- The person nominated will remain unchanged while this step is in place
- There will be discretion for care homes to allow more than one named visitor in exceptional circumstances
- Home testing of single, named visitors will not be allowed during the start of the scheme but will be reviewed
- Hand-holding is allowed but named visitors will be asked to avoid any closer contact
- Vaccination is not mandatory and will not be a condition of visiting
- In terms of visiting out, the rules and guidance will remain unchanged at this stage
- Visiting will be suspended during local outbreaks in individual homes
- Further guidance will be published before the launch of the single, named visitor scheme on 8 March

[Jenrick confirms Housing Department Wolverhampton HQ in historic move](#)

Communities Secretary confirms dual headquarters in Wolverhampton.

In a key milestone for the government's levelling up agenda, Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP today (20 February 2021) confirmed that the government will create a second headquarters in Wolverhampton with at least 500 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Group roles set to be based across the West Midlands by 2025 – with further increases planned by 2030.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is leading the way and the new HQ in Wolverhampton will include the presence of ministers – making it the first such ministerial office outside of London with a regular ministerial presence. Senior civil servants will also be based in

Wolverhampton, ensuring this becomes a centre for policy development and decision making.

This historic move signals a culture change in civil service to give a stronger voice to communities in our mission to level up opportunity and prosperity across the regions. This is a significant increase on the 300 roles currently in the region and is part of plans to have at least 800 roles outside of London by 2030 – including 50% of the most senior positions. This will ensure that more local voices are reflected in the creation of government policy.

These moves will help provide an economic boost to these areas, bring a greater variety of voices and experiences into the Civil Service and provide improved career paths outside of Whitehall.

Recruitment is already underway, with 40 roles already relocated to the region in the last 12 months. A further increase in the number of roles is set to occur by 2030.

MHCLG will be working in partnership with other government departments to improve collaborative working and develop greater career options outside London so we retain talented civil servants based outside of London. We expect to announce the new building for the headquarters in the spring.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

As Communities Secretary, I am determined to spread opportunity and prosperity to every part of our nation. That is why I am delighted to be taking the historic step of moving significant numbers of senior roles out of Whitehall and creating the first ever ministerial office outside of Westminster in Wolverhampton – increasing the jobs in the Midlands to over 500.

With a dual headquarters in Wolverhampton my department will not only change where we work but how we work, signalling the end of the Whitehall knows best approach. All of us at the department are looking forward to having the opportunity to work there.

This government knows that by having more local voices at the heart of our policy development and delivery, we will support our communities more effectively, and we will continue to develop greater career options in government outside of London.

In choosing the city of Wolverhampton we are also backing our great smaller cities, some of which have been neglected for too long. We want to raise their stature, encourage civic pride and commercial success.

MHCLG will be working in partnership with other government departments to improve collaborative working and develop greater career options outside London

Further information on the building in Wolverhampton that will house the new second HQ in the region will be announced later this year.

Government announces boost for women's sport in latest round of Sport Winter Survival Package

- £2.25 million confirmed for Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship
- £4.2 million to netball, which has allowed the Vitality Netball Superleague to begin
- Combined £4 million funding also confirmed for badminton and basketball
- Women's sport to be prioritised for 250,000 free Covid-19 testing kits being made available to elite sports, worth £1.5 million
- Initial 19 National League Step 1-2 clubs to be offered loans worth up to £5.4 million

The Culture Secretary has announced the latest tranche of funding from the Government's Sport Winter Survival Package, providing a boost to women's sport.

The Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship will receive a combined £2.25 million of grant support for essential league costs, in addition to a proportion of 250,000 free Covid-19 lateral flow testing kits being made available by the Government to elite sports, with women's sport designated as a priority.

In netball, England Netball and the Vitality Netball Superleague will receive a total of £4.2 million in grants, which has already provided the expanded league with the confidence to start its 2021 season on 12 February.

In basketball, British Basketball League clubs – including Women's British Basketball League clubs – will receive £2.5 million in grants and loans, whilst Basketball England will receive a £200,000 grant.

Badminton England will also receive a grant worth £1.3 million. The grant funding for England Netball, Basketball England and Badminton England is designed to cover essential costs to ensure the survival of these organisations.

This is the second tranche of funding to be announced from the Government's [£300 million Sport Winter Survival Package](#) that is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter.

It follows [the first announcement in January confirming that Steps 3-6 of the National League system will receive up to £10 million to protect the immediate future of approximately 850 clubs over the winter period.](#)

Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board](#), supported by Sport England.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We are committed to helping our treasured sports through these challenging times. And today's announcement is more evidence of our support for them.

In particular, Women's sport has faced acute pressures. The past few years have seen fantastic progress – with greater participation, employment, commercial opportunities and visibility in the media. I am determined not to let it take a back seat again.

This targeted funding will enable sports to keep playing and inspire many more stars of the future.

Chair of the independent Board, Sir Ian Cheshire said:

Following thorough conversations with each party to assess their individual needs, the Independent Board is pleased to be able to confirm a substantial package of survival funding for netball, badminton, basketball and women's football, totalling over £10 million.

For those confirmed as recipients of support as part of this second tranche, this funding is vital in helping keep their respective clubs and leagues operational at this time.

Meanwhile an initial 19 clubs across Steps 1-2 of the National League system will be offered loan packages worth up to £5.4 million. Whilst discussions remain ongoing with other clubs across the system, clubs in Step 1 will also receive free Covid-19 testing kits from the Government.

It follows a [provisional £11 million in low interest, long term loans being offered to clubs in Steps 1-2.](#) Clubs are being assessed as quickly as possible to help those most in need.

In all, 250,000 free lateral flow Covid-19 testing kits worth £1.5 million are being made available to selected elite sports in need, due to the financial impact of testing on their ability to continue competitions as planned. It will ensure that the health and safety of elite athletes remains a priority, any Government funding directly benefits clubs and resources are not diverted to testing.

In addition to women's football and National League Step 1 clubs, England Netball, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Rugby Football League (RFL) women's competitions are in discussions with the Government to take delivery of testing kits which will allow clubs to maintain their competitive schedules should they choose to do so.

It follows the Government recently acquiring new testing capacity. Testing kits will be distributed through the same channels as the Government-wide asymptomatic testing programme, with the current supply expected to support sports through to the end of March 2021. The offer will be extended to more potential recipients in due course.

On testing, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden added:

We promised to support our national sporting life when we had to postpone the return of fans. Once again, we are doing just that. These free testing kits will help ensure the health and safety of elite athletes in competition remains paramount and mean resources can be focused on protecting the future of sports as we recover from the pandemic.

The Sport Winter Survival Package is a sector-specific intervention that is on top of the multi-billion pounds worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs to survive.

Further confirmations of funding from the Sports Winter Survival Package will be made in due course.

Notes to editors:

A [detailed factsheet](#) on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been published by Sport England.

[In a press conference at 10 Downing Street in May 2020, the Culture Secretary said:](#)

given the deserved momentum that had built up behind women's sport after the football, cricket and netball world cups, I will be working hard with the Sports Minister to make sure we don't lose any of that progress. Visibility matters. Our daughters deserve to see female athletes on the main stage.

On top of the Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship receiving a combined £2.25 million of grant support for essential league costs, any women's football clubs can apply for grants and loans to the main Sports Winter Survival Package through Sport England, should they require urgent financial support to survive through to the end of March 2021.

National League Step 1-2 clubs will be notified of their individual decisions early next week.

Kelly Simmons, FA Director of the Women's Professional Game, said:

This grant will help provide vital financial support to give the best possible opportunity to complete both the Barclays FA Women's Super League, and FA Women's Championship campaigns. Starting during pre-season last summer, we have carried out COVID-19 testing for players and staff every week in the top two divisions to ensure they can take to the field safely. With this grant from the Sport Winter Survival Package, we will be able to continue to do this right through to the end of the 2020/2021 season.

Fran Connolly, CEO of England Netball, said:

This funding has come at such a critical time for our sport, and will allow us to return visibility, momentum and continued opportunities at all levels of the game. This money has already helped us to restart and deliver the Vitality Netball Superleague 2021 season, which without it wouldn't have been possible. It's provided security and protection for our clubs within the league who are currently without the usual income from ticket sales. We have been particularly concerned about the significant impact COVID has had on women and girls who play the game at a community level, particularly on women's mental health and physical wellbeing. It's vital that we get them back on courts as soon as it's safe to do so, and the Sports Winter Survival Package will help us do that. We are delighted we have this support and are excited about the future of our game.

British Basketball League Chairman Sir Rodney Walker said:

We were very pleased with the outcome from our negotiations, which will go a very long way to sustaining the top flight of our great game, and to sustaining our associated community programmes. We know the Government recognises the impact of basketball, and the work of many BBL WBBL Clubs, through their Foundations and Community Interest Companies, goes well beyond sport. These activities by our clubs go to the heart of the challenges faced by our young people in our disadvantaged communities, including related to physical activity, healthy eating, education related, social cohesion and mental health. This support will be very important in sustaining these programmes when the Covid pandemic is behind us.

Adrian Christy, Chief Executive at Badminton England said:

We are delighted, and extremely appreciative of the award made to badminton and the YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships. Because of the Sport Winter Survival Package, and the incredible support and understanding of colleagues at the DCMS and Sport England throughout this extraordinary time, we can proceed with our plans to stage this world leading event under strict Covid precautions whilst at the same time begin to plan for the restart and rebuilding of community badminton.

Grassroots sports clubs also have access to £220million in emergency funding from Sport England.