

Foreign Secretary to demand justice for Ukraine invasion victims as he faces Russian counterpart at UN

- Foreign Secretary due to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at United Nations Security Council meeting in New York today.
- James Cleverly will set out how Russian forces continue to commit atrocities across Ukraine and violate international law.
- He will also expose how Moscow plans to fix the results of sham referendums.

The Foreign Secretary is due to meet with his Russian counterpart for the first time today (22nd September) at the United Nations in New York – condemning his country's aggression in Ukraine.

In a special Foreign Minister-level Security Council meeting on Ukraine, James Cleverly will reiterate, in front of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the UK's full and unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary, will commit to working with the international community to seek justice for the victims of this conflict, and hold those responsible to account, ensuring that Russia's actions are not tolerated.

Speaking from the UK's seat at the Security Council, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly is expected to say:

Ukrainians' resilience and spirit of defiance, in defence of their country, continues to inspire all free people and nations.

But every day, the devastating consequences of Russia's invasion become more clear and evidence of Russian atrocities continues to mount...

... We can and must make clear to President Putin that his attacks on the sovereign will of the Ukrainian people – so clearly expressed as they fight for their homes – must stop. His assaults on the UN charter and international norms that protect us will not be tolerated and that he must withdraw from Ukraine to enable a return to regional and global stability.

The Foreign Secretary will expose how Moscow plans to fix the results of sham referendums across their temporarily controlled territories, in a move designed to provide false legitimacy for illegal land grabs.

After Vladimir Putin's Presidential address this week, Cleverly will also reveal evidence of Russian tactics used to subvert Ukrainian democracy and rob Ukrainians of their homes and identity.

Following on from the Prime Minister's speech to the UN General Assembly yesterday, the Foreign Secretary will set out the importance of a Ukrainian victory, saying that their fight for freedom is the world's fight for freedom, because if Ukraine's sovereignty and territory are not respected, no country is secure.

Later on Thursday, the Foreign Secretary will also attend a meeting on delivering justice for Ukraine and holding Russia to account for its egregious acts.

The meeting will feature Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Andriy Kostin, and the International Criminal Court's Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan, who is leading the court's investigation into the situation in Ukraine.

Turning thirty year old commitments on minority rights into reality for all: Lord Ahmad statement at UNGA

Your Excellencies, three decades on from this historic Declaration, members of minority groups in many places, tragically, around the world continue to live in fear.

Citizens in countries face hatred. Why? Because of their race or their religion, the place they were born or their ethnicity, even because of the language they speak.

Members here tonight, this evening, this afternoon, this morning have been united and are committed to change, and today is an opportunity to reflect and make pledges on what we can do collectively.

The United Kingdom's resolve is reflected in our landmark Inclusive Britain strategy, bringing together over 70 preventative and remedial actions to tackle racism or discrimination, be it in education, health, employment and in the criminal justice system, and indeed in public life as well.

And I want to just share two particular examples. When we look at the issue of religious hatred, I am proud of the fact we have supported organisations such as our Community Security Trust, a charity which specifically protects British Jews from racism and antisemitism. And indeed our funding of the Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks programme, which supports victims of anti-Muslim hatred in the UK. And I'm proud of the fact that we have also laws

which protect not only religious freedom or belief, but also allow victims of crimes who have been targeted because of their religion or belief to report them as such. So if you are attacked as a Muslim, a Sikh, a Hindu or a Jew, you can go to your police station and report that crime as a religious hate crime. And as we bolster our efforts domestically to combat hatred at home, we pledge to clamp down on racist abuse online. This is a real challenge we are now facing, and we are doing this through our Online Safety Bill.

And internationally, we pledge to continue working with you, including through the United Nations to uphold international law. But I now wish to touch briefly on country situations as well. There are many parts of the world that tragically we see discrimination rife amongst the country.

Discriminatory provisions within citizenship laws, for example in Myanmar, where the Rohingya community, according to the laws of Myanmar don't even exist. And other minorities face persecution. And in the case of the Rohingya specifically it culminates itself in ethnic cleansing.

The systematic discrimination, harassment, and targeting of members of minority communities in Iran, such as those of the Baha'i faith.

And we see in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have continued to target particular minority communities, including Sikhs, Christians and of course the Hazaras. And we call upon the Taliban to respect the law, respect the rights of their own constitution. Indeed respect the rights of the very faith they claim to follow which safeguards the rights of all minorities of whatever faith or belief they may be.

And if I may finally turn to the former High Commissioner's recent report on Xinjiang. We are deeply concerned, indeed it is a great concern to all of us when we see the harrowing evidence which it provided of China's human rights violations in the region, particularly against the Uyghur Muslims, including actions that, and I quote from the report, "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity". This also includes credible evidence of arbitrary and discriminatory detention, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, and the destruction, tragically, of religious sites. I know there are many in this room who share our concerns and join us in urging China to accept the report's recommendations.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I end by just saying that when we stand here in the United Nations it is incumbent on not just all of us to not just talk but act. Because everyone, everywhere, deserves the freedom to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and speak in their mother tongue. This should be celebrated, and I am therefore greatly encouraged by pledges made by many members and hope that we will collectively work together to turn the words of this Declaration into a reality for all.

Health and Social Care Secretary to set out new plan for patients and call on public to play a part in national endeavour

- Building on the NHS winter plan, Health and Social Care Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister Thérèse Coffey will outline measures across the priorities that matter most to patients – ambulances, backlogs, care and doctors and dentists
- Package of measures will improve access to general practice so all patients who need an appointment can get one within two weeks, with plans to free up over one million appointments per year
- Alongside the government's plan, the public will be called on to do their bit as part of a "national endeavour" to support the NHS and social care

A new drive to improve access to general practice appointments will be the centrepiece of a new Our Plan for Patients that will be unveiled by the Health and Social Care Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister tomorrow [Thursday 22 September].

As the first step in her efforts to put the NHS and social care on a resilient footing, Thérèse Coffey will set out her expectation that everyone who needs one should get an appointment at a GP practice within two weeks – and that the patients with the most urgent needs should be seen within the same day.

The plan will include changing funding rules to recruit extra support staff so hardworking GPs can focus on treating patients – freeing up over one million appointments per year, as well as more state-of-the art telephone systems to make it easier for patients to get through to their GP surgeries.

There will also be more information available for patients, with appointments data published at a practice level for the first time ever.

Pharmacies will help ease pressures on GPs and free up time for appointments by managing and supplying more medicines such as contraception without a GP prescription, which could free up to two million general practice appointments a year, and taking referrals from emergency care for minor illnesses or symptoms, such as a cough, headache or sore throat.

As part of Our Plan for Patients, Dr Coffey will also call on the public to take part in a "national endeavour" to support the health and social care system, calling on the one million volunteers who stepped up during the pandemic to support the NHS to come forward again. This will include a push for more volunteering across the NHS and social care.

Health and Social Care Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister Thérèse Coffey is expected to say:

I will put a laser-like focus on the needs of patients, making their priorities my priorities and being a champion for them on the issues that affect them most.

Our Plan for Patients will make it easier to get a general practice appointment and we will work tirelessly to deliver that, alongside supporting our hardworking GP teams.

We know this winter will be tough and this is just the first step in our work to bolster our valued NHS and social care services so people can get the care they need.

From November, the NHS will accelerate the roll-out of new cloud-based telephone systems to make it easier for patients to get through to their general practice, with more phone lines to take calls from patients and provide information about their place in the queue, or direct them to the right place for help.

As part of the extra staff to support GPs to focus on seeing patients, the government will free up funding for practices to employ more roles, including GP assistants and more advanced nurse practitioners, in addition to the roles they are already able to recruit such as pharmacists, mental health practitioners and nursing associates. This supports the government's commitment to deliver 26,000 more primary care staff to help improve access to appointments.

Our Plan for Patients will build on the NHS winter plan and set out further detail on how the public will receive the care they need this winter and next across the Health and Social Care Secretary's A, B, C and D priorities – ambulances, backlogs, care and doctors and dentists.

Amanda Pritchard, NHS chief executive, said:

I know how much patients value timely, convenient access to GPs and primary care, the front door to the NHS, which is why we are continuing to drive improvements, including new roles to better meet patients' needs and new tech to make contacting your local surgery easier.

NHS staff are working incredibly hard to deliver record numbers of GP appointments for patients, with 11 million more this year so far than the same period last year, and more than four in five people who need an appointment seen within two weeks, including more than two fifths within one day.

We will work with the government so we can support NHS staff to deliver these new ambitions for patients, underpinned by the

development of a long term workforce plan.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the Washington National Cathedral

Madam Vice President; Madame Speaker; Leader McCarthy; Governors; Senators; Justices; esteemed colleagues from Realms and the Commonwealth; and the Diplomatic Corps welcome and thank you all for joining us today.

I would also like to thank Dean Randolph Hollerith and the Washington National Cathedral, the Bishop and Presiding Bishop, for holding this service in honour of Her Late Majesty The Queen. Their consideration and efforts in a short space of time have been outstanding. We salute too and thank the wonderful Colour Guards and musicians.

The Queen was a great friend and admirer of the United States. She paid some 6 official visits in total – many more to the Kentucky stables – addressing Congress as well as speaking to Presidents and attending football and baseball games and commemorative events such as America's Bicentennial and the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement. She well understood the affinity between the US and the UK stressing not just out common heritage and kinship but our common values. To Congress She said that "some people believe that power grows from the barrel of a gun. We have gone a better way; our societies rest on mutual agreement, on contract and on consensus."

The values She personified and the traditions She upheld are fundamentally in their essence the same that underpin America and Her institutions, indeed guide the Commonwealth and all those who cherish democracy. She was proud that the values begun by the Magna Carta had their vivid restatement through the Founding Fathers.

That is why, I think, Her death has touched so many people round the world and especially here. As America celebrated with us The Queen's 70 years on the throne earlier this year, so America has mourned in solidarity. We have been humbled and honoured by the immense number of tributes – from the President and First Lady and you Madam Vice President being some of the first world leaders to come in person to sign the condolence book, through to the two House and Senate Resolutions and the presentation by you Madam Speaker of the Stars and Stripes that flew at half-mast over the Capitol, to the many tributes form Governors and Mayors, the Empire State lit in purple and silver; the Union Jack flag lowered to half-mast at the site of the battle of New Orleans – the last time US and UK militaries fought as enemies – with Her deep sense of history I think She would have liked – to the flowers and

messages from ordinary Americans some of whom queued for hours at the Embassy. Biden State funeral.

This affinity was exemplified by The Queen's ordering – after 9/11, whose anniversary we commemorated recently – the Star Spangled Banner to be played at Buckingham Palace and the Star and Stripes to be flown on the 10 and 20th anniversaries at half-mast.

In a moving reciprocal gesture Mayor Bowser ordered Union Jacks to fly at half-mast along Pennsylvania Avenue. We thank you from King Charles and The Royal Family down for these amazing tributes. That the President was the first sitting President we believe to attend a State Funeral is another deep honour. The tributes from all former Presidents have been very moving.

This is a Service of Thanksgiving. There have been plenty of lively and happy stories about The Queen. Many people in this Cathedral today have met Her whether in America, in the Realms and Commonwealth and other countries or in the UK. You know Her dignity, Her warmth and kindnesses but also Her quick-wittedness, Her mischievous smile. My favourite story out of so many concerns an agricultural Show in the east of the UK. One of the exhibitors went up to a middle-aged lady in a headscarf and tweeds. "Excuse me", said the exhibitor, "but you do look an awful lot like The Queen". "How very reassuring", The Queen replied.

She sought to move with the times. She was the archetypal Bond Girl, parachuting into the London Olympics; she poured tea for Paddington Bear as well as heads of State, and here in the US She was honoured to receive the Ruth Bader Ginsburg award for Women in Leadership – one of the very few times, we believe, that She accepted a non-State award – you can check it out on the Buckingham Palace YouTube entry.

President Biden said that The Queen defined an era. I think that nails it. She was a remarkable woman – coming to the Throne at 25; she saw decades of history and met hundreds of world leaders including 13 of 14 US Presidents during Her reign; She was present at the opening of the United Nations in London. She was very proud to head the Commonwealth. Whenever I met The Queen or even saw her on TV She seemed to embody the whole nation and its long history. The human and the heroic coming together in one extraordinary person, exemplified so well by the majesty and history of Monday's State Funeral.

I would like to close by remarking on that duty and public service. Her now famous pledge at the age of 21 to devote Her whole life "whether it be long or short ..to your service" still has the power to animate us today and has been clearly restated by the new King Charles III. We are grateful for Her long life and, as King Charles said, "we draw strength from the light of her example".

For me personally, it has been an immense honour to serve as Her Majesty's Ambassador from Afghanistan to America, and points in-between. The Embassy and I are now very proud to serve our new King.

Thank you.

Video of the full event is available on [The Washington National Cathedral's YouTube channel](#).

Leaders will build on Glasgow legacy to establish Forests & Climate Leaders' Partnership at COP27

- The COP26 Presidency is inviting world leaders to come together at COP27 to establish a new Partnership, which will accelerate implementation of the unprecedented commitment made at COP26 by over 140 countries to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation, while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation
- The new Partnership will unite action by government, business and community leaders, and shine a spotlight on global progress at COP27 and every year up to 2030
- President Ali Bongo of Gabon, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry and COP26 President Alok Sharma among those to call for the Partnership at the UN General Assembly today, building on commitments made at COP26

COP26 President Alok Sharma is calling on world leaders to join the launch of the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership at COP27, to scale up action to protect, conserve and restore the world's forests while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation. He is also calling on future COP Presidencies to join the UK in maintaining momentum on forests year on year.

Participating countries will meet annually to enhance collective efforts to maximise the contribution of forests and sustainable land use to global and national climate goals.

With the first meeting of the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership taking place at COP27 in Egypt this November, member countries representing a range of regions, forest areas, and economic and financial centres will focus their combined support on transformational areas of action. These include cooperation related to high integrity carbon markets for forests, building robust forest economies that contribute to a net-zero world, securing and protecting applicable forest tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and scaling efforts to conserve and sustainably manage high integrity forests.

Members will work closely with the private sector, civil society and community leaders to implement and rapidly scale up solutions on

deforestation, reforestation and sustainable forest and land use management, that reflect each members' national context and priorities as well as the urgency of the global climate crisis.

At COP26 in Glasgow, more than 140 Heads of State from countries with over 90% of the world's forests committed to work together to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

These actions are fundamental to adapting to climate change and have the potential to deliver up to 10% of the emissions reductions needed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, while securing global biodiversity, economic prosperity and food supplies.

This was backed by over \$19.2 billion in public and private funds, and ground-breaking commitments to shift global systems of production, supply chains, finance and land tenure in favour of forests and forest-dependent people.

The Forests & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) will offer a way to enhance cooperation on delivery of these commitments, to scale ambition and to find innovative solutions to ongoing problems. By joining, countries are committing to lead by example in the implementation of their national goals and striving to be more ambitious over time. They are also committing to work together to advance global forests and climate efforts, and to meet annually to take stock of progress.

Every member country will commit to play a leadership role to drive forward at least one of the FCLP's action areas, which include:

- scaling up sustainable land use enterprises, forest positive economies and supply chains;
- supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' initiatives and applicable tenure rights; and
- mobilising forest-positive public and private finance.

At the inaugural meeting at COP27, member countries will take stock of progress since COP26 and discuss key insights, successes, challenges and priorities for future collaboration. The meeting will include a public event at which member countries will speak alongside business and community leaders to highlight the most ambitious commitments and the strongest examples of progress since COP26.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, said:

"There is no path to fighting climate change and building a healthy future that does not involve forests. At home, Canada is working in partnership with Indigenous communities, while taking historic steps like our commitment to plant 2 billion trees over the coming decade. To bring this work to the world stage, we are pleased to be joining the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership. Together, we can maximize the role of forests in the fight against climate change and in our shared work to build a bright future."

President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, said:

"Gabon is proud to be part of the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership. As a climate pioneer, net absorbing over 100 million tons of CO₂ every year into our forests, Gabon has already achieved and indeed exceeded the Paris objective of carbon neutrality. We have achieved this through development solutions that build a forest positive economy and provide employment, thereby giving our forests true value and ensuring that they remain standing. For these climate services to be maintained, we need to dramatically scale up action and investment, to deliver for people, for our climate and for our forests. The Partnership provides us with a forum to address these major challenges and enact real change before it is too late."

President Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana, said:

"Ambition to protect the world's forests has never been in short supply in forest communities and countries. What has been missing is the means to realise that ambition. The FCLP can rapidly change this situation – by bringing Heads of Government together to focus on practical solutions. Guyana will play its part in highlighting leadership from forest communities and countries. We will put forward solutions that we know can work because of our own experience. The world's people do not need more talk, they need action that converts ambition into results, and I hope the FCLP will be the platform to achieve this."

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of Norway, said:

"We will not reach the goals of the Paris Agreement without halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation by 2030. Achieving this will require unprecedented leadership and collaboration from governments, business, civil society and indigenous peoples. Norway joins the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership committed to work together with tropical forest countries and other like minded countries in pursuit of this goal."

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, said:

"I'm proud to be calling for this important Partnership today. Forests are a precious resource that support sustainable livelihoods and act as the lungs of the world. At COP26 we saw incredible ambition with more than 140 countries committing to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030. This partnership is a critical next step to collectively deliver on this promise and help keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C alive."

John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, said:

"We know forests are a fundamental component of the solution set we need to deploy if we are to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. The FCLP provides us with a new opportunity to spur even greater action to addressing our shared challenges with committed partners, and to holding ourselves accountable for meeting our commitments."

Gustavo Manrique Miranda, Minister of the Environment and Water, Ecuador, said:

“This alliance is an opportunity to implement solutions that reduce deforestation, that increase forest restoration and strengthen the livelihoods of people living in forest areas. Ecuador understands that we must act strategically in our forests at the local and global levels”.

Sung-hyun Nam, Minister for Korea Forest Service, Republic of Korea, said:

“I believe that the FCLP will become a significant global partnership that calls on countries to help to address forest and land use issues as well as climate change with robust political support. Therefore, we, at the ROK, would like to take the opportunity to join the FCLP. Also, as a founding member, Korea will actively participate in activities of the partnership, and join forces with the global community to support forest restoration of developing countries using Korea’s know-hows and experience.”

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