

36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Malawi



Thank you Madam President,

The United Kingdom commends the Government of Malawi for the steps it has taken to implement the Access to Information Act, and acknowledges advances in media freedom.

The UK welcomes the draft Malawi Prisons Bill but remains concerned by reports of severe overcrowding and poor sanitation in prisons. We are also concerned that Malawi remains a source, transit and destination country for people subjected to trafficking.

We recommend that Malawi:

1. Intensifies efforts to combat modern slavery, through training, improved co-ordination between law enforcement agencies, and prosecution of traffickers;
2. Adopts an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections; and

3. Passes the Malawi Prison Bill into law and reduces overcrowding in prisons by increasing capacity and the use of non-custodial sentences.

Thank you.

Published 3 November 2020

Building, sustaining and strengthening peace through the United Nations

Mr. President, thank you and good afternoon to everyone from London. You are a dear friend of the United Kingdom and thank you for convening this debate today.

It is indeed timely ahead of our adoption vote in this Council, and indeed in the UN General Assembly of the critical twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace – texts, that St Vincent and the Grenadines have so expertly shepherded.

I also, right from the beginning, wish to thank our three briefers, Ibrahim Miyaki, Sir Hilary Beckles and His Excellency Munir Akram. And of course, it's always very heartening to have the expert insights of the Deputy Secretary-General, my dear friend, Amina Mohammed, who set the scene so excellency with this update.

As the United Kingdom's minister for the United Nations and the Commonwealth, I'm deeply grateful for your country's close partnership with ourselves, especially in these global institutions.

Mr President, whilst power politics, aggression and oppression remain very real factors behind many of today's conflicts we are increasingly aware of new and emerging threats to our peace. One of the contemporary drivers of conflicts is exclusion: exclusion of vulnerable communities, exclusion of religious minorities, exclusion of women from civil, political, economic and social processes, exclusion that leads directly to poverty, desperation, violence and extremism. And it takes no great leap to understand how the strains placed on societies grappling with public health emergencies or the impact of climate change can exacerbate these threats.

2020 is certainly testament to that very fact. They make violent conflict more likely and threaten to roll back hard-won development and peace gains – especially, but not only, in the poorest countries and those already affected by insecurity and conflict. The sustaining peace agenda has brought home to all of us the importance of understanding, how peace, security and

sustainable development are not independent, they're interconnected. Based on this agenda, we have begun to refine our collective approach, building and sustaining peace. And, Mr. President, if I may, I just wanted to make three very brief points.

Firstly, tackling the impact of climate change is critical alongside broader efforts to sustain peace. Secondly, good governance and inclusion are fundamental. And thirdly, we must coordinate our collective efforts to build effective partnerships in order to prevent conflict in the first place.

On my first point, Mr President, climate change is creating structural conditions that multiply conflict risks in countries around the world. The erosion of fertile land is increasing food scarcity and intercommunal tensions. In small island developing states, hurricanes and rising sea levels threaten whole communities and some country's very existence. I saw this myself as Minister for the British Overseas Territories and our relationship with the Caribbean. We must address the manmade causes of climate change, and the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow in the United Kingdom next year, I believe, presents a great opportunity for all of us to agree collective and real, concerted action.

To my second point, I've already referenced the problem of exclusion as a key driver of conflict. Even advanced economies are susceptible to shocks. Development and peace gains can be undone if large parts of the population are marginalised or human rights are not respected, sustained or indeed strengthened. And let us be absolutely clear: a country that protects the rights of the most vulnerable, the rights of the socially excluded, the rights of minority communities, the rights of women, those are the stronger nations. Those are the progressive nations. It is a sign of strength and the unity of a nation when all rights are equally respected.

Strong and inclusive institutions, respect for human rights, access to services, healthy democracy, the rule of law, and the empowerment of women are all essential to building resilience and building sustainable peace.

And to my third point, Mr. President, better analysis provides for better national and international responses. Coordinated planning among national stakeholders, the UN, and other international partners can focus preventive efforts and ensure they are appropriately resourced. This includes the UN and International Financial Institutions working in a more coordinated manner to support peacebuilding objectives.

In New York, the Peacebuilding Commission has increasingly demonstrated its value as a forum for countries and organisations to come together in pursuit of shared peace and development objectives.

Mr. President, it is these approaches that are paramount to more effective conflict prevention, and they must be owned by each and every one of us.

The Council can, of course, play an important supporting role, but it also has a key obligation. Where threats to international peace and security emerge we cannot simply sit back or stand back. The UN Charter, as we've

already heard from other contributors, together with international treaties, places obligations on states to respect human rights and international humanitarian law. And it is this Security Council, which has an obligation to call out violations for what they are, threats to fundamental peace and security around the world.

Mr. President, in concluding the need for international cooperation is arguably greater than it has been for a generation. And poignantly, the United Nations in its seventy fifth anniversary year, can celebrate its unique role it's played in the past in building peace, sustaining peace, in strengthening peace. But most importantly, us, the Security Council, us, the United Nations, which define the United Nation, must look forward to seeing what we can do collectively in building, sustaining and strengthening peace around the world.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[A message to the housing industry on continuing to work securely](#)

The Housing Secretary, Executive Chairman of the Home Builders Federation and Chief Executive of the Federation of Master Builders have written to the housing industry to make clear that house building – and its supply chains that support it – should continue working securely. The government is clear that work can continue if this is done in line with public health guidance.

Earlier this year, the government worked with the industry to produce a clear and simple [Charter](#) on safe working, and updated [Site Operating Procedures](#) have been published by the Construction Leadership Council. Guidance on [moving home](#) must be followed and there is government guidance on working in other [people's homes](#).

[The Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\) fast-tracks grants to help England's ports and fishing industry](#)

News story

Applications invited by MMO for grants to help ports or harbours impacted by Covid-19 pandemic and for health and safety equipment for fishing vessel owners.



The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is inviting applications for grants to help ports or harbours impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and to provide health and safety equipment for fishing vessel owners.

MMO has re-purposed the balance of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and allocated £500,000 to projects for ports or harbours and £300,000 to fishing vessel owners or licence holders for health and safety improvements.

Grants of up to £100,000 each are available for existing projects that are aimed at mitigating impacts of Covid-19 at ports and harbours and bringing benefits to the local area. Applications will be assessed and judged on a competitive basis with grants awarded to those best meeting the criteria and aims of this fund. The closing date for fully formed applications including all required documentation is 29 November 2020.

Awards of up to £50,000 each are available for health and safety improvements on board fishing vessels. This fund is open now and applications will be assessed and awarded on individual merit as and when they are received, until the fund is fully committed. The fund criteria is available [here](#). Applicants are asked to note that their requests will only be considered once all the required documentation is received. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for resubmission.

Tom McCormack, CEO of the Marine Management organisation, said:

We have re-purposed the remaining EMFF funds to be able to provide a rapid response to help mitigate some of the immediate impacts of Covid-19. It is a good opportunity to increase investment in our ports and harbours infrastructure and in vital health and safety improvements on board fishing boats, supporting our fishing community.

For more information see [website here](#) or contact the MMO Grants Team by phone on 0208 026 5539 or email at EMFF.Queries@marinemanagement.org.uk

The MMO has administered the EMFF and other funds investing over £40m in the fishing industry and coastal communities since launching in 2016. This year a further £9m across the industry through the Fisheries Response Fund and the Domestic Seafood Support Scheme.

Published 3 November 2020

Rural crime crackdown in the North East

Press release

The Environment Agency and Durham Constabulary have joined forces in a rural crime crackdown in Weardale.



Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer Mark Snowdon and PC Scott Crowhurst from Durham Constabulary.

Following reports of illegal fishing activity and anti-social behaviour on the banks of the River Wear extra patrols were carried out in key areas last weekend by [police](#) and Fisheries Enforcement Officers.

They targeted locations around Witton Park, Willington and Witton le Wear, where anglers were checked and suspicious activity investigated. Patrols will continue as part of the crackdown.

David Shears, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

The River Wear is one of the country's top sea trout rivers and has also become an important river for salmon. At this time of the year these migratory fish are returning from the sea and heading up

river to their spawning grounds.

Unfortunately they often become the target of those who seek to illegally take them using a range of methods from unlicensed angling to gill nets and prohibited instruments such as 'snares' and gaffs – a one metre long metal hook.

We work closely with our partners to protect our fisheries and environment as a whole. Information from the public is vital and I'd encourage people to get in touch with us about illegal activity in the area.

Risk of prosecution

The Environment Agency has seized a series of illegal gill nets over recent months, including from the River Wear, and are carrying out investigations. Unlicensed nets are capable of taking significant numbers of fish and can have a damaging impact on future fish stocks.

Fisheries is very carefully managed to protect the future of the industry and ensure fish can get to their breeding grounds to spawn.

Those who operate unlicensed nets or fish illegally risk prosecution, with unlimited fines and possible prison sentences available to the courts, and Environment Agency officers can seize equipment and vehicles.

Information about illegal fishing can be reported to the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[You can buy a fishing licence online](#)

Environment Agency officers out on patrol are wearing the appropriate protective equipment and adhering to social distancing measures.

Published 3 November 2020