

# Moving toward a ceasefire in Yemen

Thank you, Mr President. And let me also thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings. And I think I'd also like to thank the Yemenis who today, through Mark Lowcock, have spoken to the Security Council. It's because the situation is so desperate for Yemenis, like those who have spoken, that this Council and the parties on the ground need to act.

We are extremely concerned that the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to plunge to new depths as the country battles an economic crisis, an increasing risk of famine and a major outbreak of Covid-19. While we assess that Yemen is over the initial Covid-19 peak, we are concerned about the potential for new waves of infections and even more deaths. It is vital that public health mitigation efforts continue, and we call on all Yemeni parties to report cases transparently to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access and facilitate the UN's response.

Mr President, the indirect effects of Covid-19, including on Yemen's fragile economy, will have a far longer lasting impact. Yemen's currency has collapsed to record lows, leading food prices to rise by over 20 percent since January. Urgent external financial assistance to the Central Bank is now needed to stabilise prices and enable more people to afford food.

In light of this economic crisis, recent food insecurity and economic data suggest that conditions in Yemen already mirror or are even worse than those of late 2018, when pockets of famine were last identified across the country. And as we've heard, famine is now a realistic prospect in Yemen this year.

In addition to economic support, the key action that the international community can take to prevent famine is urgently to provide significant funding to the United Nations humanitarian appeal. With the new General Assembly High Level Week fast approaching, the United Nations has received just \$900 million this year, compared to around \$2.6 billion at this point last year. This funding gap is curtailing the humanitarian response and seven million people will stop receiving food if new funding is not in place by October.

In response to this funding crisis, the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary announced an additional \$32 million funding uplift for Yemen earlier this month, in addition to what has already been pledged by the United Kingdom. We welcome other countries' announcements of extra funds, but call on all donors to play their part and urgently provide funding to the UN appeal. And we call on all of those who have given money in previous years to do so again to the same levels this year.

Mr President, a political solution is needed desperately to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and end the conflict for good. And as I've said repeatedly in this Council, the United Kingdom fully supports Martin Griffiths' painstaking and patient efforts. I want to urge today the Yemeni

parties – by which I mean the government of Yemen just as much as the Houthis – to cooperate with him and to agree to his proposals as soon as possible. The window of opportunity to end this conflict will close. It is in the hands of the parties to work with Martin Griffiths and reach an agreement. It is in their hands whether they are ready to act in the interests of their people or only in their own self-interest.

I want to welcome Security Council unity on this issue here and at ministerial level. Later this week we will be co-hosting an event on Yemen with the Secretary-General and others, which will demonstrate our close Council and international coordination. We must stay united, colleagues, in our messages to the parties and our support for Martin Griffiths so that he can reach an agreement.

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned by the situation in Marib. The Houthi offensive is not only leading to a distressing loss of life, but it threatens to derail the political process at this crucial stage. We welcome and fully support the Special Envoy's strong statements on Marib. I urge this Council and the wider international community to send a strong, unified message to the Houthis that they must cease their offensive on Marib and negotiate peace.

Mr President, we should not forget the SAFER oil tanker, which this Council has been briefed upon many times and held an individual session on earlier in the summer. It poses a significant environmental and economic threat to the region. While I welcome progress made in negotiations between the Houthis and UNOPS on the scope of the assessment and repair mission, this mission needs to happen urgently. The Houthis must follow through on their promises by allowing the UN experts to board the tanker to carry out their work as soon as possible.

Mr President, time is running out. The parties need to move quickly to agree a ceasefire and engage in a comprehensive political process. If they do not, this Council should be ready to take action.

Thank you, Mr President.

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## **RAF looks to the future on Battle of Britain Day**

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and in a tribute to the 'Few' who were supported by the 'Many', the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight conducted a flypast over RAF Waddington.

To secure Battle of Britain victory, the RAF, working with industry and global allies, drove a battle-winning technological advance at an

extraordinary pace. This innovation-drive continues with each generation, as the RAF seeks to maintain the ability to operate in the ever more complex, competed and contested multi-domain operating environment of the future.

Together with the UK's world-leading aerospace sector, the campaign to build the Next Generation Royal Air Force codenamed 'ASTRA' is already underway, which will make a leading-edge contribution to the UK's place in the world.

**Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston said:**

As we look to the future, the RAF will continue to be at the forefront of innovation – our enemies and their threats may have changed, but the need to stay ahead of the technological curve remains.

In his speech at RAF Waddington, the home of the RAF's Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) fleets, ACM Wigston touched on a variety of innovative projects including:

**Protector**

Following a £65 million investment, the first three of Reaper's replacement, Protector, are in production to enter service by mid-2024, delivering a step-change in capability for the RAF.

**Team Tempest**

Together with the pioneering industry alliance, Team Tempest, the RAF is developing the next-generation combat aircraft, Tempest, which will deploy new, game-changing technology. Seven new companies have recently collaborated with Team Tempest, and together they will develop ground-breaking concepts and secure the UK's position as a global leader in combat air.

**Orcus**

In response to the changing threats, the RAF has invested in new counter-drone technology, ORCUS, which will be able to detect, track, and defeat hostile drones, which will be vital to protect UK air bases.

Concurrently delivering decisively on operations, whilst preparing for the next, the ACM confirmed that the RAF is always there to deliver air and space power to protect the nation, giving the UK Government choices and options to act on the world stage.

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# Official figures show that the furlough scheme has worked: saving jobs and helping more than half of employees back to work already

At the schemes peak in May, 30% of the workforce across the UK was furloughed. The share of the workforce furloughed fell by more than half to 11% by mid-August – and will likely have fallen further since.

To tackle the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had on people's jobs, businesses and livelihoods, the government introduced one of the most generous and comprehensive packages of support in the world, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The data comes as the Chancellor visited pottery firm Emma Bridgewater, who have recently returned nearly all of their furloughed staff to work. During the visit, he raised awareness of the Job Retention Bonus that will support companies returning staff to work and reward them for keeping them in their jobs.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

As today's official employment figures today show, the furlough scheme has done what it was designed to do – save jobs and help people back to work, where they want to be.

We were clear at the start of the pandemic that we couldn't save every job, but the furlough scheme has supported millions of workers and we want to help employers keep people on. Our Job Retention Bonus will do exactly that, supporting businesses to do the right thing.

Over the summer, ONS data shows that less than 1% of the workforce was made redundant in every 2 week survey period, showing that the scheme is delivering on its aim of saving jobs and retaining the connection between employees and their workplace.

The ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey also shows that the flow of employees off furlough has been steady, falling by 6% in late July and a further 6% in early August.

By the time the scheme closes, it will have been open for eight months, with support continuing in the form of the Job Retention Bonus which kicks in from November and supports the wages of staff brought back to work.

The £1,000 Job Retention Bonus is equal to a 20% wage subsidy for the

employment costs of the average person previously furloughed, but for those on lower incomes, it's 40% of wage costs over the 3-month period to the end of January 2021.

The government is also creating new roles for young people through the £2 billion Kickstart scheme, creating incentives for training and apprenticeships.

## Notes

- the total value of all CJRS claims made up to 31 August is £37.5 billion
- the £1,000 bonus is equivalent to 20% of the median employment costs for furloughed employees
- the figures also show the impact of Eat Out to Help Out and the cut to VAT for jobs in the hospitality and leisure sectors in August, as data shows the proportion of workers furloughed in these sectors fell from over 80% in May to less than 30% in mid-August
- almost 1 in 3 eligible employments have been supported by the scheme in each country and region within the UK at some point during the scheme
- [the 30% is from Wave 6 of ONS's survey](#)
- [the 11% is from Wave 12 of the survey](#)
- HMRC statistics show that the number of employments furloughed peaked at 8.9 million on 8 May, with 9.6 million employments in total furloughed for at least part of the period between March to June. Further information can be found at ['Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: August 2020'](#)

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## [Charity regulator appoints interim manager to Islamic Research Foundation International](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has appointed an interim manager to Islamic Research Foundation International



The Charity Commission has appointed an interim manager to Islamic Research Foundation International ([registered charity 1122086](#)), a charity which aims to advance the Islamic faith via the Peace TV network.

The Commission [opened a statutory inquiry](#) into the charity in April 2020 to examine concerns about its administration and governance, including trustee decision making around continuing to fund Peace TV channels despite breaches of Ofcom's Broadcasting Code.

The regulator continues to have serious concerns about the administration of the charity. It therefore exercised its powers under the Charities Act 2011 to appoint an Interim Manager, Virginia Henley of Hewitsons LLP, on 29 July 2020.

Her role will be to take on the running of the charity to the exclusion of its trustees including acting as manager of the charity's property and affairs. She will also be tasked with considering the future viability of the charity.

Interim managers are appointed as a temporary and protective measure where the Commission has identified misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of a charity, or where there is a need to protect a charity's property.

The Commission's inquiry continues.

**Ends.**

### **Notes to editors:**

1. Section 76(3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission power to appoint interim managers to a charity.
2. This appointment is a temporary and protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further order for its variation or discharge.
3. It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](#).
4. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.

Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

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## **UN Human Rights Council 45: statement under Item 2 – General Debate**

Thank you Madam President.

We welcome the High Commissioner's report.

Two years since President Mnangagwa's inauguration, the human rights situation in Zimbabwe remains deeply concerning. Journalists, civil society activists, and opposition politicians face targeted arrests, violence and abduction. Accountability for human rights violations is absent. Worryingly, it appears COVID-19 is being used as a pretext to ban demonstrations and limit media freedom. We call on the Government to respect the rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution.

The protection of civilians in Cameroon remains a concern. While we welcome the Government's investigation into the events at Ngarbuh in February, we urge accountability for those who violated and abused human rights there, as we do for all such incidents.

We are concerned about restrictions on freedoms of expression and assembly in Vietnam. We call for the better protection of journalists, and for all citizens to have access to free, independent, media.

We remain concerned by the repression of people in Nicaragua who speak out against the government, as well as restrictions on peaceful assembly, harassment, and arbitrary detentions.

In Belarus, we have been shocked by the violence and human rights violations that have been used to suppress peaceful protest.

Finally, we remain deeply concerned about the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran, and the DPRK, and attacks on freedom of religion or belief and media freedom in many countries.

Thank you.