

UN Human Rights Council 44: Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Report on Venezuela

Thank you, Madame President.

We welcome the High Commissioner's work on the human rights situation in Venezuela. We urge the Maduro regime to follow all recommendations and facilitate the establishment of an OHCHR office in Venezuela.

Our deep concern about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation remains. The degraded justice system is used as a weapon to imprison and intimidate as well as to strip political rights from the National Assembly and any opposition to Maduro. The Defence Minister declared on 5 July that the military would never allow any opposition to gain power in Venezuela. The report details continued systematic violations of human rights by Venezuelan police, pro-government civil armed groups, security services and military intelligence bodies. We urge the Maduro regime to dismantle the FAES Special Police, suspected of extrajudicial killings, and to guarantee victims access to justice.

The World Food Programme assesses that one in three Venezuelans is food insecure. This has been caused by hyperinflation, food scarcity and a failure in public services, which all pre-date the sanctions to which the country is now subject. With the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, what steps does the High Commissioner think are needed to ensure unimpeded access for all humanitarian actors, and to facilitate the work of non-governmental organisations?

Government bans old coach, bus and lorry tyres from roads in new measures to improve road safety

News story

Tyres aged 10 years and older will be banned.

Improving Road Safety

Tyres aged 10 years and older will be banned from lorries, buses and coaches on roads in England, Scotland and Wales.



- tyres aged 10 years and older to be banned to help improve road safety
- clearly visible date of manufacture mandatory on each tyre, ensuring older tyres are easy to spot
- latest action follows years of work by the government and determined efforts of campaigners

Tyres aged 10 years and older will be banned from lorries, buses and coaches on roads in England, Scotland and Wales in a boost to road safety, Roads Minister Baroness Vere announced today (15 July 2020).

The ban follows an extensive investigation, including [research](#) commissioned by the Department for Transport, which indicates ageing tyres suffer corrosion which could cause them to fail.

The move will make it illegal to fit tyres aged 10 years or older to the front wheels of lorries, buses and coaches, and all wheels of minibuses.

The secondary legislation will be laid in the autumn and will also apply to re-treaded tyres – with the date of re-treading to be marked – making the age of the tyre clearly visible.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

In the same way that you wouldn't drive a car with faulty brakes, ensuring your tyres are fit for purpose is crucial in making every journey safer.

Taking this step will give drivers across the country confidence their lorries, buses and coaches are truly fit for use – a safety boost for road users everywhere.

This change is in no small way the result of years of campaigning, particularly from Frances Molloy, to whom I thank and pay tribute.

Frances Molloy's son Michael died in a coach crash in 2012 when the vehicle had a 19-year-old tyre fitted to the front axle. Since the accident, Mrs Molloy has campaigned to see the law changed.

Drivers, owners and operators are responsible for the safety of their vehicles. This will also now include ensuring vehicle tyres meet the new

requirements. The government will also be asking DVSA to continue checking tyre age as part of their routine roadside enforcement activities and adding an additional assessment to the annual test scheme (MOT test).

Today's announcement is the latest step taken to improve road safety, following the launch last year of the [Road Safety Statement](#) and two-year action plan, which set out more than 70 measures to reduce the number of people killed or injured on roads around the country.

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Building regulations and fire safety procedural guidance: circular letter 15 July 2020

The purpose of this circular letter is to draw attention to revised procedural guidance published by Local Authority Building Control (LABC) with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) through the Joint Regulators' Group of the Building Safety Programme.

This guidance sets out how building control bodies should consult with fire and rescue services on plans for building work.

It also covers arrangements for the handover of fire safety information.

New board members to strengthen oversight of HS2 as it enters next phase of delivery

- three Non-executive Directors appointed to the HS2 Ltd board, strengthening accountability and oversight of project
- Ian King to provide direct updates to the Secretary of State on HS2, instilling greater discipline to protect taxpayers' interests
- delivers on government's commitment to strengthen grip of HS2 programme by improving transparency and cost and schedule control

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (14 July 2020) announced the appointment of three Non-Executive Directors to the HS2 Board to strengthen oversight and scrutiny of the UK's largest infrastructure project.

Elaine Holt, Ian King and Tom Harris will respectively take up the roles of infrastructure specialist, government representative and community engagement leader, to improve the way that HS2 Ltd is managed and instil greater discipline of the project.

These appointments are the latest step in the government's commitment to reset the HS2 programme, strengthen the leadership team and instil greater accountability to ensure decisions made by the company deliver on the government's priorities.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

When we gave HS2 the go-ahead, we made a clear commitment to draw a line under past problems and to move forward with a strong grip of the project and a laser-like focus on cost control and transparency.

The appointments of Elaine Holt, Tom Harris and Ian King to the Board of HS2 Ltd will deliver on this promise and ensure this vital project has the robust leadership it requires as it drives our country's economic recovery from COVID-19 and delivers better connectivity to level up communities across the north and Midlands.

Ian King will represent the government's interests on the HS2 Ltd board, bringing with him more than two decades of senior leadership and project delivery experience. He will provide advice to the HS2 Ltd Board on the government's approach to issues and will report to the Transport Secretary and HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson.

Elaine Holt joins as a railway and infrastructure specialist, having had experience in executive and non-executive roles in the transport sector, project delivery and railway operations.

Tom Harris, a former parliamentarian, will strengthen the company's focus on community engagement, further ensuring that those impacted by the project continue to be listened to and treated with the respect they deserve.

Allan Cook CBE, Chair of HS2 Ltd said:

I am looking forward to working with Elaine, Tom and Ian as they join the board of HS2 Ltd. The scale and complexity of the next phase of the project – which is already making a vital contribution by supporting thousands of jobs all over the country – requires increased levels the expertise and oversight to further strengthen the excellent experience we have on the board.

Elaine, Tom and Ian have a huge wealth of experience in each of their specialist areas. I am certain they will make a valuable contribution to the success of the HS2 project as we progress through the construction phase and ensure that, with the other members of the Board, we meet our commitments to Government and UK taxpayers.

The appointment comes as the project enters its construction phase and increases its activity and scale along the route and across the business.

HS2 Ltd has recently awarded £14 billion of contracts and is hiring close to 500 new employees in a range of skills.

The supply chain's presence on site is also set to rise from 10,000 to 16,000 workers in the next 18 months, providing a boost to the construction sector and wider UK economy.

UK Government welcomes announcements by eight Overseas Territories to tackle illicit finance

Ministers updated Parliament today on a major step forward by the UK's Overseas Territories to help improve global corporate transparency. The written statement welcomes commitments from eight Overseas Territories to introduce publicly accessible registers detailing who owns the companies in their Territory.

The announcements demonstrate the positive action the UK's Overseas Territories are taking to help tackle illicit finance and follows work by Gibraltar, earlier this year in March, to make their company register publicly accessible. The Government expects that beneficial ownership information on businesses registered in the Overseas Territories will be accessible to the public by 2023.

The eight UK Overseas Territories which have committed to implement this measure are; Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Montserrat, the Pitcairn Islands and St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

This is an important step forward by governments from across the Overseas Territories. I welcome the leadership to improve corporate

transparency, and the message it sends about the need to tackle illicit finance globally.

The UK Government has led an international campaign to make such registers a global norm by 2023 and is hopeful the only remaining permanently inhabited territory not to make an announcement, the British Virgin Islands, will make a similar commitment soon. The FCO is continuing to work with their Government in encouraging them to take this action.

The UK Government already has arrangements with the Overseas Territories whereby they provide UK law enforcement authorities access to information on the ownership of companies in their jurisdictions. This information improves the ability of law enforcers to detect money laundering and financial crime.

- WMS statement available by clicking [here](#)

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