

# Joint Statement from the UK, Australia, Canada, and United States on Hong Kong

Press release

Joint statement by UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Canadian Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo responding to China's proposed new security law for Hong Kong.



Signatories to this statement reiterate our deep concern regarding Beijing's decision to impose a national security law in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has flourished as a bastion of freedom. The international community has a significant and long-standing stake in Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. Direct imposition of national security legislation on Hong Kong by the Beijing authorities, rather than through Hong Kong's own institutions as provided for under Article 23 of the Basic Law, would curtail the Hong Kong people's liberties, and in doing so, dramatically erode Hong Kong's autonomy and the system that made it so prosperous.

China's decision to impose the new national security law on Hong Kong lies in direct conflict with its international obligations under the principles of the legally-binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration. The proposed law would undermine the One Country, Two Systems framework. It also raises the prospect of prosecution in Hong Kong for political crimes, and undermines existing commitments to protect the rights of Hong Kong people – including those set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

We are also extremely concerned that this action will exacerbate

the existing deep divisions in Hong Kong society; the law does nothing to build mutual understanding and foster reconciliation within Hong Kong.

Rebuilding trust across Hong Kong society by allowing the people of Hong Kong to enjoy the rights and freedoms they were promised can be the only way back from the tensions and unrest that the territory has seen over the last year.

The world's focus on a global pandemic requires enhanced trust in governments and international cooperation. Beijing's unprecedented move risks having the opposite effect.

As Hong Kong's stability and prosperity are jeopardised by the new imposition, we call on the Government of China to work with the Hong Kong SAR Government and the people of Hong Kong to find a mutually acceptable accommodation that will honour China's international obligations under the UN-filed Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)

Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

For journalists

Email [newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)

Published 28 May 2020

---

## [More inquiries and hearings to be held virtually in June](#)

Continuing to decide planning appeals in a timely manner is crucial in supporting the nation's economic recovery. The recent [Written Ministerial Statement](#) laid in Parliament on 13 May outlined the planning system's vital role in delivering housing and economic growth. Our Inspectors and Casework teams have been working hard to continue to progress cases and issue decisions while our office is closed.

We have delivered decisions on just under 2500 cases since lockdown began. We have also been accelerating the work to implement virtual hearings and inquiries across all of our casework types. Further to our successful first virtual hearing on 11 May, and decision issued 27 May, we are now planning to hold at least another 20 hearings and inquiries and an additional 15 hearings

for National Infrastructure projects in June.

Since 13 May when the restrictions were eased, we have restarted site visits where:

- the Inspector can visit the site safely under current physical distancing guidance; and
- the case requires the Inspector to visit the site in person in order to progress the case.

This has meant over 600 site visits programmed for May. Not being able to visit sites and hold public events until this time has clearly had an impact on our ability to deliver at our normal capacity and, consequently, is still impacting our ability to provide meaningful average appeal handling times to our customers. It will take some time for our service to return to normal and customers are likely to experience a slower service than we would like to provide.

## **Applying new technology to our work**

We already have a programme of work in place to make better use of technology in how we work, including running events (hearings, examinations, inquiries) in a virtual way, using digital methods. The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially accelerated our work to do this.

There are two strands to our work. Firstly, cases where site visits may not be necessary and secondly, moving face to face events into a virtual environment.

## **Site visits**

In our last update we highlighted that we are trialling how in some instances we can progress cases without a site visit. This might include prior approval cases where the issue in dispute relates to the interpretation of the General Permitted Development Order or some enforcement appeals depending on the specific grounds lodged and the nature of the evidence.

To date 20 decisions have been issued following this process, and others to follow. However the choice to go down a 'no site visit required' route remains with the Inspector being satisfied that she or he has sufficient information to properly determine the appeal.

## **Virtual events**

We have been scaling up the work to implement virtual events using digital tools in place of face to face events. We have prioritised case that we had postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are learning from each event with the aim of making virtual events our standard option for the majority of events in future. This approach covers all hearings and inquiries for our different types of casework (including planning appeals, national infrastructure, local plans) that are currently held face to face. Our

working definition of virtual includes the use of video technology and phone where necessary.

While social distancing measures remain in place, we will seek to run hearings and inquiries virtually in the first instance to keep our customers and employees safe and to minimise the potential for spreading the virus; and ensure that we keep our hearings and inquiries casework moving.

The implications of running virtual hearings and inquiries have been rigorously considered. As with face to face events, it can take several weeks to arrange and we must liaise with parties and others to agree dates and ensure everyone is able to participate. We are confident that we can maintain professional standards and the Franks Principles while running virtual hearings and inquiries.

The inspector will run the event in the normal way, but with participants invited to join via Microsoft Teams or by phone. Participants will receive details of any requirements, guidance and support, taking into account any representations received.

See our [latest detailed guidance for more information](#).

## **Next month we anticipate:**

- 10 planning appeal hearings in June. We are also working on re-arranging the vast majority of all postponed planning hearings in June to take place as soon as possible in the following months.
- 8 postponed inquiries virtually in June, with the remaining ones to be re-arranged at the earliest opportunity
- 15 hearings being held across four [Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects](#) in June (and more in July). All of these are already notified on the respective project webpages for these schemes.
- One Local Plan hearing to take place via phone conference; one full Local Plan examination to be conducted virtually in July.

Whilst we are progressing virtual events, this is not the end of face-to-face hearings and inquiries. Face-to-face events will continue to be part of our future once the current situation has passed.

For the latest information on casework arrangements in Wales please visit [GOV.WALES](#).

---

## **[OSCE Mission to Serbia: UK statement](#)**

Thank you Mr Chair – The UK welcomes Ambassador Orizio to the Permanent Council. We thank you for the comprehensive Report on the Mission's

activities during the reporting period.

I would like to start by congratulating the Mission and its staff for their continued assistance to Serbia on its reform path, and welcoming their strong focus on media freedom and anti-corruption. The Mission's work has also been commendable in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which the Mission has deftly adapted its programme in order to support Serbia. We welcome the many activities that have enabled immediate support for the most vulnerable groups in Serbia, and for the important monitoring of the impact of the Covid-19 State of Emergency on democracy, human rights, and media freedom.

We welcome the participation of the OSCE and ODIHR in working groups established by the Government of Serbia to improve electoral conditions. However, another immediate challenge of the ongoing pandemic will be the elections scheduled for 21st June. We recognise the importance of independent election observation to the continued democratic development of all participating States, including through the recommendations that form part of the final report. We strongly support election-related activity by ODIHR for the upcoming election, but recognise the practical challenges this will present.

Mr Chair – I would like to comment on a few of the highlights in the Report.

Firstly – on media freedom, the UK welcomes the Government's adoption of the Media Strategy in January this year, the implementation of which, as the report notes, will be crucial in ensuring a healthier media environment. The Mission's focus on safety of journalists is vital, and we are encouraged by the percentage decrease in cases where the perpetrators of crimes against journalists remained unknown, following the Mission's joint training sessions with police, prosecutors and journalists.

Secondly – the UK also welcomes the achievements on anti-corruption, including through your expert support on prevention and repression, backed by the adoption of new pieces of legislation and strategic documents. As ever, the implementation of these laws will be crucial. Your assistance, such as with the development of risk analysis guidelines, and in partnering with the international community to enhance the capacity of the police to investigate cases of corruption, clearly demonstrates the Mission's value on the ground in support of the Government's priorities. Further work and focus in this area will be of continued importance. This approach also saw Serbia's adoption of all relevant Financial Action Task Force (FATF) measures that enabled their removal from the FATF grey list.

Thirdly – We welcome your work on gender. Ensuring gender is mainstreamed into all programmatic activities is essential to enhancing impact and delivering more sustainable results on the ground. It also contributes to greater prosperity and more sustainable peace. In particular, we appreciate your assistance in the implementation of Serbia's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, in this the twentieth anniversary year of the Resolution.

Mr Chair – this reporting period is unique, taking in as it does the challenges of operating during a global pandemic and lockdown situation. We

appreciate that the Mission has risen to this challenge, including through tangible support to vulnerable groups to lessen the compounding impact of the current situation. And we would appreciate hearing more of your plans including, for example, on the increase in the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation that we've experienced during the Covid-19 crisis and the impact on domestic violence.

Finally, but by no means least, the UK welcomes the appointment of the OSCE's former CiO, Miroslav Lajčák as EU Special Representative for the Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, and the contribution he will make alongside international partners as we work together to encourage constructive dialogue, and development of positive relationships across the region. On the dialogue – We hope that a constructive way forward will soon be found.

---

## [More than £1million funding creates jobs and helps communities](#)

Run in conjunction with the [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority \(NDA\)](#), the scheme was established to help build sustainable communities around its former nuclear power station sites across the UK, and mitigate the impact decommissioning those sites has on the surrounding communities.

During 2019/20 it has supported 113 different organisations across the UK – including creating 10 new jobs, safeguarding 30 existing ones and helping to create two new businesses.

Funding has also resulted in 4,000 training opportunities and helped with everything from providing football kits through to organising careers fairs and helping new businesses flourish.

In addition, 532 schools across the UK got help from the scheme along with 60 different STEM (science technology, engineering and maths) activities.

The long list of organisations who successfully applied for funding in the last year include Menter Môn's Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig in North Wales, to continue its rural community enterprise initiative for the next three years, and the Envision project in the South West of England who are supporting students from Brimsham Green School. In Scotland funding has been given to a small business grant scheme run by Dumfries and Galloway Council, and also to North Ayrshire College at Kilwinning.

The scheme has also helped support the creation of new training opportunities, including one run by Dorset Wildlife Trust, in association with Dorset Council, who are offering conservation training which will help three young people take their first steps into employment.

The Magnox scheme also provided grants to gymnastics clubs and town bands; football teams and family fun days; pantomime organisations and village halls – which are a vital part of people’s lives in our communities up and down the country.

The scheme, which is run by Magnox on behalf of the NDA, used the whole of its £1.01m budget last year – supplemented by an additional £910,000 funding made directly available from the NDA.

Nigel Monckton, Magnox Socio-economic Manager said: “Although we are not directly accountable for regeneration in the areas around our sites, the scheme is an important piece of the jigsaw. Last year matched funding for the schemes we were involved with helped leverage a further £3.8 million in support of our local communities. This is equivalent to every £1 invested by the Magnox Socio-economic Scheme helping to secure another £3.80 from other sources.”

You can read a summary of the scheme for the 2019/20 year [in our report](#).

---

## [Health and Social Care Secretary’s statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 27 May 2020](#)

### [Coronavirus press conference \(27 May 2020\)](#)

Good afternoon and welcome back to Downing Street for the daily coronavirus briefing.

I am joined by Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, and by Baroness Dido Harding, the Chair of NHS Improvement and of our Test and Trace programme.

Today we formally launch the NHS Test and Trace service. This is an incredibly important milestone for the country that I know people will want to hear about.

Before I do, I’d like to update you on the latest coronavirus data:

- 3,798,490 tests have now been carried in the UK, including 117,013 tests yesterday
- 267,240 people have tested positive, which is an increase of 2,013 cases yesterday
- of those who tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 37,460 people have sadly died
- and since yesterday, 412 deaths have been recorded

We mourn them and we will not forget them.

As I said yesterday, thanks to your effort and sacrifice we are past the peak. We've flattened the curve, we've protected the NHS.

And the big question that we're all working to answer is this:

Until an effective treatment or vaccine comes through, how can we get back to doing more of the things that make life worth living without risking safety or putting lives at risk?

NHS Test and Trace is a big part – not the only part – but a big part of the answer to that question.

NHS Test and Trace means we can start to replace the national lockdown with individual isolation for those who've been in contact with the virus and local action where it's necessary to respond to a flare up.

The concept is simple. First, through testing, we hunt down the virus, finding out who is infected right now.

And I use 'we' very deliberately. Because we all have our part to play. This is a national effort and we all have a role. If you have symptoms, you must isolate immediately and get yourself a test.

Yesterday, 2,013 people tested positive.

And the next step is that through contact tracing, like detectives, the NHS clinician from NHS Test and Trace and the person who's tested positive work together to identify the possible movements of the virus, where it's been and who else it might have infected.

Then we isolate those contacts who might have been infected so the virus is unable to spread. And we break the chain of transmission.

Think of it like this. The virus exists only to reproduce. That is its sole biological purpose: to make as many copies of itself as possible.

If we can thwart that purpose, we can control the virus and ultimately defeat it.

We must all follow the NHS Test and Trace instructions, because this is how we control the virus and protect the NHS and save lives.

Some people have asked why now? Why not launch this programme earlier in the course of the pandemic?

The answer is because we needed to flatten the curve.

Right at the start of this epidemic, we had a contact tracing system in place.

But, as the virus raged towards its peak, the number of infections grew so large that we needed a national lockdown. This was the only way to get it



under control.

Effectively, everyone in the country was contacted and told to stay at home.

Now we've got the number of new infections each day right down, the number of contacts of those who've tested positive is small enough that we can be in touch with everyone we need to.

And, of course, testing capacity is critical to making this work.

We now have the capacity for 161,000 tests a day. And, because of that increased capacity, I can announce that we're expanding eligibility yet further.

From tomorrow, we are expanding eligibility for testing to include the under-5s so that now every single person who has symptoms of coronavirus can get a test, no matter their age.

And, what's more, to make NHS Test and Trace as effective as possible, it is very important that everyone with symptoms must isolate immediately and go and get a test.

Now, I want to thank and pay tribute to everyone involved in making this big project happen.

Dido Harding who has led the work, the technicians in the labs making mass-testing a reality, the contact tracers manning the phones, the healthcare staff providing expert advice and the companies who've helped us put it together at record scale and pace.

And what really matters is this. To protect your friends and your family, testing and tracing must become a new way of life.

This is being launched today in England.

Northern Ireland already has a system in place and my colleagues in the Scottish and Welsh governments are working to bring in a system as soon as they can. All 4 nations have been working together to make sure we have systems that are co-ordinated across the whole country.

And the instructions to people are clear:

- If you get symptoms, isolate immediately and get a test
- If you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace instructing you to isolate, you must

It is your civic duty, so you avoid unknowingly spreading the virus and you help to break the chain of transmission.

This will be voluntary at first, because we trust everyone to do the right thing. But we can quickly make it mandatory if that's what it takes.

Because, if we don't collectively make this work, then the only way forward

is to keep the lockdown.

Put better, the more people follow the instructions, the safer we will be and the faster we can safely lift the lockdown.

So, do it for the people you love. Do it for your community. Do it for the NHS and do it for all those front line workers, who've gone out every day and put themselves at risk to keep you and your family safe.

And in return for following those instructions, you'll have the knowledge that, when the call came, you did your bit at a time when it really mattered, when the whole country, who are desperate to see their families, were counting on you to do the right thing. You did your bit to bring us all closer together, and closer to that day when we will be reunited.

This system will start tomorrow morning at 9am and the first people who will be contacted will be the people who received a positive result today.

This is a very distinct change on our approach and I just want to take a moment to recap the extent of the change.

Today, we say 'isolate' to anyone with coronavirus symptoms and their households. This remains vital.

From 9am tomorrow, in addition, if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace advising you to isolate, then you must do that, whether you have symptoms or not.

Now, I also know that for those without symptoms who receive that call, I fully acknowledge that this is a big ask and you are going to make a sacrifice.

But this is for a purpose. And that purpose is the safety of everyone. Because we know you can have the virus and spread it to other people without ever having symptoms at all.

And it's not just the safety of all, but the liberty of all that is at stake here.

We are only in a position to re-open primary schools and outdoor markets – if they're COVID-secure – this coming Monday because we've flattened the curve and now we have this system in place.

In the coming weeks, we will gradually and very carefully move away from a lockdown that is national in scope, blanket in application and start moving towards a system that is much more targeted in scope and focuses local action on tackling local flare-ups.

This will help us to restore some of the basic freedoms that matter so much to people, and doing some of the things that people are yearning to do, like seeing friends and family, booking a holiday or getting a haircut, all while controlling the virus and keeping people safe.

It is a brand new service on a scale never seen before. There will be bumps in the road and we will constantly improve it.

And in the weeks ahead we will ramp up the service still further. And once the system's bedded in we will roll out the NHS Contact Tracing App that is being piloted in the Isle of Wight.

And, of course, NHS Test and Trace is only one part of the answer, it's not the whole answer.

All of the action we're taking to get R down and keep R down, it all requires us to keep doing the right thing.

Testing and tracing will help us to hunt down this virus. It is one of the tools with which we can finish the job and we all need to play our part.

So please, stay alert, control the virus and save lives.