

North Korea missile test, March 2020: Foreign Office statement

We are disappointed that North Korea has carried out a short range ballistic missile test, a clear breach of UN Security Council resolutions and the fourteenth ballistic missile test in the past year.

We strongly encourage North Korea to change course and to take concrete steps to denuclearise. Until we see credible steps towards this goal, sanctions must continue to be enforced.

UN Human Rights Council 43: UK Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Thank you, Mr President,

We remain deeply concerned about global levels of intolerance, discrimination, and persecution of, and violence against, people because of their religion or belief, or for not having a faith. The UK has stepped up its focus on this issue over the last few years and it is a key UK Human Rights priority.

In September last year, the Prime Minister appointed Rehman Chisthi MP as his latest Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment to this agenda.

During the past 9 months, we have been working to implement the recommendations from an independent, global review into Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians. The report, and its recommendations, are centred around improving the lives of all those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 20 of the 22 recommendations apply to all faiths or beliefs.

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief must be defended, and we believe that working together is the best way to achieve real, positive impact in guaranteeing the rights of all faith or belief communities around the world.

What specific steps can the international community take, to overcome the

barriers, discrimination and persecution which restrict and prevent people from exercising their Freedom of Religion or Belief?

[Next step for new service for benefit assessments announced](#)

Separate organisations currently run assessments for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and the Work Capability Assessments in Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit, using different IT systems. The new system will deliver all assessments using a single digital platform, developed and run by the DWP.

The new system, which will be launched in a region to be confirmed in due course, will mean that people in receipt of more than one benefit will not have to provide the same information multiple times.

Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson said:

We are committed to providing the best possible support for people with a disability. That's why we have listened to feedback from both charities and claimants to bring all assessments under one roof.

It's important we get this right, which is why we'll trial the new service on a regional scale before rolling it out nationally.

These changes show that we are moving in the right direction and the planned Green Paper will go further as we continue to improve the experience for people with long-term health conditions and disabilities.

The new service will be developed initially from 2021 before a national rollout, to ensure high quality and consistent support.

The announcement provides the next steps on a commitment made in 2019 on exploring ways of improving support for disabled people, including reducing the need for face to face assessments and eliminating the need to supply the same information more than once; increasing people's understanding and confidence in the benefits system.

Later in the year the Government will launch its national disability strategy to increase inclusivity in all spheres of life for disabled people.

The Minister for Disabled People's statement to Parliament can be found [here](#).

This single service will deliver the assessments for PIP and also the Work Capability Assessments in Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

Four new Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum appointed.

Allegra Berman

Allegra is Global Co-Head of HSBC's Securities Services. With some USD8 trillion of assets under custody, HSBC has one of the largest Securities Services platforms across the financial industry.

Previously, Allegra was Head of the Financial Institutions Group, EMEA and Global Head of the Public Sector Group. Prior to joining HSBC in 2013, Allegra spent 12 years at UBS, where she co-led UBS's EMEA Debt Capital Markets business, was Global Head of Public Sector Fixed Income and Vice Chair of Global Capital Markets. Allegra was a Non-Executive Director of HSBC Asset Management UK (2016 to 2018) and a Board Member of the International Capital Market Association (2011 to 2013).

Allegra has won numerous industry awards including "Most influential woman in European Investment Banking" in 2011 and has been recognised in the annual "Top 100 women in European Finance" awards every year since 2008. Allegra served on the Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery (2011 to 2019) where she was Chair of both the Gallery's Investment Committee and its Finance Committee. Allegra has an MA in Modern Languages from Magdalen College, Oxford, where she is also a Trustee of its Development Board.

Martin Bartle

Martin is a seasoned Retail and Marketing professional with over 25 years Marketing and eCommerce experience. He has worked with some of the world's leading luxury and fashion retailers at key moments in their development including; Marketing Director at NET-A-PORTER; Matches Fashion and MyTheresa during their transition from boutiques into global online businesses. Bartle was also VP of Business Development at Lane Crawford leading an 18 month project to launch them online in China, Hong Kong and internationally.

As a consultant, he has worked with over 30 brands including Margaret Howell, Mulberry, Paul Smith, Alice Temperley, SpaceNK and Charlotte Olympia. He is also a mentor on the Walpole Brands of Tomorrow programme.

Amanda Levette

Amanda Levette is a Stirling Prize winning architect, and founder and principal of AL_A, an international award-winning architecture studio. Recently completed projects include the Victoria & Albert Museum Exhibition Road Quarter (2017) in London; MAAT (2016) a Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology in Lisbon, commissioned by EDP; Central Embassy (2017), a 1.5 million sq ft luxury shopping mall and hotel in Bangkok; a media campus and headquarters building for Sky (2016) in London.

Ongoing commissions include the Paisley Museum in Scotland; a centre for the cancer care charity Maggie's in Southampton; two buildings for Wadham College, Oxford; three hospital buildings in Cyprus; a headquarters building in Brussels; and a theatre in Barcelona.

Amanda is a regular radio and TV broadcaster, writes for a number of publications and lectures throughout the world. In 2017 she was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours list and made a CBE for services to architecture. In 2018 she was awarded the Jane Drew Prize and in 2019 she was elected an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Amanda Spielman

Amanda Spielman is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted, responsible for the inspection of schools, colleges, apprenticeships, adult education, nurseries, childminders and children's social care.

Before this she was chair of Ofqual, the qualifications regulator, and research and policy director at the academy chain Ark Schools. Her early career was in strategy consulting, finance and investment at KPMG, Kleinwort Benson, Mercer Management Consulting and Nomura International.

She has also been a council member at Brunel University London and the Institute of Education, a director of the Wales Millennium Centre, and a school governor.

These roles are not remunerated. These appointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#) , the process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Ms Berman, Mr Bartle, Ms Levette, and Ms Spielman have not declared any activity.

Foreign Secretary travels to Ankara to underline UK solidarity with Turkey

The UK will demonstrate its staunch support for Turkey's efforts to negotiate an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Syria with a visit to Ankara tomorrow (Tuesday March 3) by Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

The visit will reaffirm the UK's close friendship with its NATO ally and show solidarity towards Turkey as it deals with the Syrian regime's reckless offensive in Idlib.

It follows the emergency UN Security Council session held at the UK's request last week on the rapidly escalating crisis in Idlib.

The Foreign Secretary will hold talks with his counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu during the visit.

For years Turkey has shown enormous generosity in supporting millions of displaced Syrian refugees, which the Foreign Secretary will acknowledge in his meetings.

The UK is a major donor to the Syria crisis. To date, we have committed £3.1 billion, our largest-ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

The UK remains committed to working with international partners to tackle the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Idlib as a result of the merciless and disproportionate campaign being waged by the Syrian regime and its Russian backers.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Turkey is on the frontline of some of the most difficult and serious challenges we face with the Syrian regime and Russian forces continuing to escalate the violence on its border.

We have been clear in our condemnation of the Syrian regime's actions in Idlib and we will continue to raise concerns about its flagrant violations of international law.

As NATO allies and G20 members the UK and Turkey enjoys a partnership built on cooperation in defence, security and trade and I look forward to deepening our relationship even further during my first official visit.

In the emergency UN Security Council session called by the UK on Friday 28 February in New York, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Jonathan Allen criticised Russia's support for the Syrian regime, and their continued disregard for previously agreed ceasefires and agreements, and for

international humanitarian law and the fate of Syria's people.

The visit follows the Foreign Secretary's visit to Oman today (Monday 2 March), during which he held bilateral talks with the new Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. During his time in Muscat, he met his counterpart, His Excellency Yusuf bin Alawi and discussed the UK's commitment to stronger partnerships with Gulf nations.

The Foreign Secretary will be holding talks in Riyadh on Wednesday 4 March with Yemeni President Hadi and is also expected to meet Foreign Minister Prince Faisal al Farhan and Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al Jubeir.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- During the visit to Ankara, the Foreign Secretary will hold a joint press conference with Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
- The UK has provided £118 million this financial year to organisations delivering humanitarian aid cross-border primarily into north-west Syria. This helps to provide vulnerable people in Idlib with food, clean water, shelter and healthcare. The UK will continue to work with the UN to ensure aid reaches the people in need.
- The Foreign Secretary issued a [statement on Idlib](#) on Friday 28 February. He condemned the reckless and brutal nature of the offensive that the Syrian regime and Russia are conducting in Idlib and reiterated the UK's support for Turkey's efforts to negotiate an immediate and lasting ceasefire.

Further information