

UN Human Rights Council 50: UK statement on Burundi

World news story

The UK delivered a statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Burundi.



UK Government

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The United Kingdom congratulates the Special Rapporteur on his appointment and we thank him for this update. As this is the first Interactive Dialogue since the end of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank the former Commissioners for their important work.

Madam Vice President,

We note that there have been some positive developments in Burundi since the last report of the Commission of Inquiry. We welcome in particular the progress made on media freedom, including the easing of restrictions on some local and international news outlets.

Despite these positive steps, the UK remains concerned by the overall human

rights picture in Burundi, particularly the targeting of political opposition figures, and we call on the Government to make further progress. We also urge Burundi to: undertake to cooperate fully with the Special Procedures Mandates of the Council, including the Special Rapporteur; re-engage with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and agree to the re-establishment of the OHCHR country office.

Special Rapporteur,

We would welcome your views on how the international community can best play its part in supporting the Government of Burundi to promote and protect the rights and freedoms of its people.

Thank you.

Published 29 June 2022

[Transport update: investment in the East Coast digital programme](#)

I am pleased to announce over £1 billion investment in the East Coast digital programme, which aims to introduce the European train control system (ETCS) to the Southern section of the East Coast Mainline.

European train control system, also known as digital signalling, brings signalling onto a screen in the train's cab.

This provides drivers with continuous real time information, for example maximum allowable speeds, and removes the need for line-side signals.

Trackside sensors are retained to track the train on the network and support adaptive decision-making, through assessing and understanding that particular train's characteristics such as speed and braking distance.

This investment will fund the fitment of trains and lineside technology on the stretch of line from London King's Cross to Stoke Tunnel, just north of Peterborough, as well as the integration of this technology into the network and its operating companies.

This will be the first deployment of European train control system on a mixed-use mainline in the UK rail network, increasing punctuality and reliability for both passenger and freight services across the whole line.

Trains will be able to run closer together safely, enabling more services to run on the same stretch of track. Fewer signalling failures and faster recovery from any delays will make the service more reliable for the

customer.

This programme of work presents a unique opportunity to enable a positive step-change in technology on the network, with a move away from systems of signalling that emerged from Victorian times, and towards a high-performing digital alternative.

As the rail sector continues to recover from the pandemic, it is vitally important that capacity and reliability are both increased in a financially viable way as demand returns.

This large upfront investment in the rail sector also presents an opportunity for savings in the long run, as maintenance of these assets is more affordable across the whole life of the signals. Furthermore, this programme will create approximately 5,000 highly skilled jobs in the rail industry.

Initial enabler projects have already begun, including the fitment of trains and some infrastructure on the Northern City Line, with works to continue through the 2020s.

This major investment is symbolic of this government's ongoing commitment to modernising our railways, making them fit for the 21st century.

Deployment of this innovative technology for the first time on a mixed-use mainline in the UK will deliver improvements for the user, support the creation of a financially sustainable railway and also grow and level up the economy by delivering an upgrade to this vital economic artery which stretches along the spine of this country.

See [£1 billion technology investment to bring railway into 21st century](#) news story, published 29 June 2022.

PM meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö: 29 June 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö at the NATO Summit in Madrid today.



The Prime Minister reiterated his staunch support for Sweden and Finland's NATO membership aspirations. He described their accession as a great step forward for NATO and welcomed the progress made since his visits to Sweden and Finland last month.

The Prime Minister said that the membership of two more pro-peace democracies will permanently strengthen our defensive Alliance, helping to keep us all safe.

The Prime Minister updated on his recent visit to Kyiv. The leaders discussed the need to oppose Russian threats and intimidation in all its guises. That includes by ensuring that the people of Ukraine have the tools they need to turn the tide in Putin's futile war of aggression – they agreed that Putin is offering Ukraine no other option.

Published 29 June 2022

[Commission opens inquiry into The Potanin Foundation as founder sanctioned](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into The Potanin Foundation, after the charity's founder Mr Vladimir Potanin was sanctioned by the UK government.



The Potanin Foundation was registered in 2006 and is a grant-making charity supporting its sister charity in Russia, the Vladimir Potanin Foundation. It has broad charitable objects which include advancing the education of the public in Russia and elsewhere.

Mr Potanin is the charity's only member and has controlling rights, including trustee appointment and removal.

On 29 June 2022 the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office sanctioned Mr Potanin under the UK's Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Mr Potanin is now subject to a full asset freeze and his name appears on the 'UK Sanctions List' as a designated person.

The Commission's position is that individuals subject to UK financial sanctions cannot control a charity.

The Commission opened an inquiry on 29 June 2022 to:

1. Consider the viability of the charity and how to safeguard its assets;
2. Examine the management and administration of the charity by its trustees including the role of Mr Potanin, as the charity's founder, if any, in decision-making;
3. Review the relationship between the charity and the Vladimir Potanin Foundation in Russia and the management of grants awarded and associated risks.

The regulator has issued orders restricting certain actions without its prior consent, including restricting the charity's bank account, preventing the charity's trustees from parting with the charity's assets, and restricting Mr Potanin's ability to use his powers as the charity's founder.. According to [the charity's most recently filed accounts](#), it has assets in excess of £95million.

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. On 29 June 2022, Mr Vladimir Potanin was named by Her Majesty's Treasury ('HMT') as a 'designated person' for the purposes of the Russia

(Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

2. The effect of designation with an asset freeze by the UK government, means it is prohibited to deal with the frozen funds or economic resources, belonging to or owned, held or controlled by a designated person. It is also prohibited to make funds or economic resources available, directly or indirectly, to, or for the benefit of, a designated person. Matters relating to sanctions should be directed at the [Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation](#).
3. Prior to the opening of the inquiry and following Mr Potanin's designation by the Canadian and Australian governments, the charity's Chair of trustees contacted the Commission to discuss the implications of this on the charity. At the Commission's encouragement the Charity's trustees submitted a serious incident report to the Commission and has continued to provide further information as requested.
4. The charity's most recently filed accounts can be found on [the register](#).
5. 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](#).
6. 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.

Published 29 June 2022

[Gender recognition application modernised](#)

News story

Minister of State for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, has today (29th June) launched a new service which modernises the process of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate.



The Government committed to modernising the application process in response to the public consultation on the Gender Recognition Act, where respondents highlighted how burdensome and unaffordable the existing procedure was.

Last year, Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, announced the first step of this process by reducing the fee for applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) to £5, a move that has helped an increased number of people apply.

Today's announcement will see all aspects of the GRC application moved onto one [GOV.uk portal](https://www.gov.uk), removing the administrative burden on individuals and centralising the process.

Minister of State for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, said:

"We want transgender people to be free to live and to prosper in modern Britain.

"Those that responded to the Gender Recognition Act consultation asked for a simplified and centralised process, which is why I am delighted to launch this improved service today.

"This government will continue to prioritise initiatives that can improve the lives of LGBT people across the country."

The new online service has been carefully developed and rigorously tested with trans people to ensure that it meets the needs of applicants and removes the barriers highlighted in the consultation. With this in mind, the guidance has been simplified and the process made more transparent and less bureaucratic.

Applicants without online access will still be able to apply through a paper-based route, in line with Government Digital Service standards.

Published 29 June 2022