

# Pride Month 2022: joint statement to the OSCE

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Since it's Pride Month, I'd like to talk about how dictators use stigmatization in order to hold onto power. We see this in Martin Niemöller's powerful poem, "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

This is why it matters here in the Permanent Council, and this is why it matters that we do speak out – it's not just the stigmatized group that is under threat, these threats spread more broadly.

Unfortunately, the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons remain vulnerable or actively violated in far too many places. LGBTQI+ status or conduct is still illegal in 70 countries around the world including two OSCE participating States. In far too many parts of the world being lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, or simply gender non-conforming means that even the most basic of daily activities such as going to work or to the doctor's office can result in violence, harassment and deep social exclusion.

These are human rights abuses – and we are committed to working towards human rights for all. Human rights are indivisible. Whenever one group of people is targeted, all vulnerable groups are less safe. And whenever one group's rights are protected, all of society can live more freely, secure and prosperous. That's why it's not just enough to stand up for LGBTQI rights at home. We have to continue, and we will continue, to stand up for equal rights everywhere.

In Russia, Patriarch Kirill blamed LGBTQI+ pride parades in Ukraine as a reason to support Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. This coincides with the Russian government's relentless stigmatization of and violence against the LGBTQI+ community. This year marks a decade since President Putin started his legislative attacks on Russian citizens because of their sexual orientation. This began in March 2012 with discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons in St. Petersburg and in 2013 this was extended throughout the whole country. According to Human Rights Watch, after the introduction of the law in 2013, "there has been an increase in the number of attacks on LGBT people throughout Russia, both by individuals and by organized homophobic groups."

Alarming credible reports emerging from the Russian Federation's Republic of Chechnya led 16 participating States in November 2018 to invoke the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism to look into multiple allegations of "serious human rights

violations and abuses'' that allegedly were committed there during January 2017 to November 2018 against LGBTQI+ persons, human rights defenders, members of the independent media, lawyers and others. In December 2018, [the report resulting from the Moscow Mechanism](#) found that "harassment and persecution, arbitrary or unlawful arrests or detentions, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions" had indeed occurred. The report also found "a climate of impunity" surrounding such violations and abuses.

Russia failed to investigate any of the human rights abuses identified in the Moscow Mechanism report. And chilling reports have continued to emerge of further, appalling abuses and violations of human rights being committed in Chechnya with impunity.

Instead of seeking to protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons, Russia is actively curtailing their human rights even further, and in April 2022, it dissolved the Russian LGBT Network, Russia's most prominent LGBT organization. Russia's stigmatization of LGBTQI+ persons is extending to parts of Ukraine held by Russia, where local activists report that LGBTQI+ activists are disappearing.

Mr. Chair, this month, as the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons are under threat throughout the OSCE region, we honor the resilience of LGBTQI+ people, who are fighting to live authentically and freely. We reaffirm our belief that LGBTQI+ rights are human rights. We applaud the progress in recognizing the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons made by participating States across the OSCE region this past year, countering the narrative of a supposed East/West divide on LGBTQI+ rights. We remain committed to ending violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics. We speak out because equality and equity build stronger societies for all.

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## **World Refugee Day 2022: joint statement to the OSCE**

Mr. Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada.

On June 20, our countries joined the international community in recognizing all those who have been forced to flee their homelands, which the UNHCR is projecting at over 100 million in 2022. Escaping conflict and persecution requires strength, courage, and resilience. We acknowledge the profound hardships they have endured and reaffirm our commitment to protect and support them.

This year's recognition of World Refugee Day comes at a time where the OSCE participating States face an unprecedented emergency. According to the UNHCR, more than 4.8 million individual refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe since Russia's invasion on 24 February. This represents the largest cross-border movement in Europe since the Second World War. In addition, more than 7.1 million people are estimated to be internally displaced in Ukraine. This emergency created by Russia's actions adds to the people already fleeing conflict and persecution to the OSCE region from Afghanistan, Syria, and other countries. This year's World Refugee Day slogan is "Whoever, Wherever, Whenever. Everyone has a right to seek safety." Since 24 February we have heard first-person accounts in our Human Dimension Committee and in Supplementary Human Dimension meetings about the immense losses, uncertainty, barriers, risks and trauma that refugees and forcibly displaced people face in that search for a safe place and a new home. In the Security Committee, we have heard about the distress and vulnerability of those crossing the borders in search of refuge, and we have heard about the increased risks of trafficking faced by refugees, particularly women and children. We praise the receiving countries for opening their borders, for showing empathy and care, and for their efforts to protect these individuals as they face this terrible hardship.

This reinforces the importance of inclusion, and ensuring that all people, including refugees from diverse backgrounds, have equitable and appropriate access to the spaces they need to be safe and to thrive. We underscore the importance of inclusion and diversity, and of the positive impact that newcomers can have in our societies. In many parts of our countries refugees are integral to the fabric of our communities; they start businesses, volunteer, and contribute to our economies, and we are collectively better for it.

When addressing the situation of refugees, we must continue to place emphasis on reaching those most in need, including women and girls, and to put forward concrete and timely initiatives to promote human rights, gender equality, dignity, meaningful participation, and peace and security.

The OSCE as a regional security organization recognizes the impact that refugees and other forcibly displaced persons have on our comprehensive security. It is incumbent on us, as participating States, to collectively provide international protection and assistance to refugees, and find durable and dignified solutions for them and other forcibly displaced persons.

Thank you.

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**UK cyber support will help the**

# Commonwealth stand up malign regimes

- Foreign Secretary will announce £15m funding to help Commonwealth countries defend themselves against cyber-attacks.
- Liz Truss will tell Foreign Ministers at a meeting in Rwanda today [24 June] that the Commonwealth has a vital role to play as a counterweight to malign actors.
- Cyber a top security challenge for Commonwealth countries, with attacks in cyber-space and threats to sovereignty and freedom on the rise across the world.

The UK is providing a £15 million package of support to Commonwealth countries over the next three years in the face of the growing threat from cyber-attacks.

The Foreign Secretary hopes to boost Commonwealth nations' resilience to rising threats in cyberspace, empowering the bloc to defend themselves.

Cyber is among the top security challenges that Commonwealth countries face today, with 87% of organisations having experienced an attempt to exploit their existing vulnerabilities in cyberspace.

The Foreign Secretary will tell Foreign Ministers during a meeting today at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda that an expanded Commonwealth, united behind its shared values is a vital counterweight to the growing threat of malign activity.

She will say that alongside other networks like the G7 and NATO, the Commonwealth can and should play a vital role in challenging autocratic regimes and advancing freedoms around the world.

The UK's renewed package of cyber support for the Commonwealth will involve sharing cyber deterrence expertise, building insights into understanding threats, assessing capability and governing effectively to enable agile responses.

And it will support the voices of smaller countries to ensure that we are, collectively, able to stand up as a powerful voice behind our shared values of sovereignty, democracy and good governance in cyber space.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

In an increasingly geopolitical world the Commonwealth is a vital and expanding alliance united behind values of democracy, human rights and sovereignty.

The Commonwealth are collectively taking action to bolster our resilience and security, including in cyberspace, to stand up against autocratic regimes that challenge our freedoms.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a stark warning to us all that our sovereignty and security is increasingly under threat around the world and in cyberspace.

The new UK funding will maximise the influence of every Commonwealth member state in vital international negotiations on cyber governance. It will support the voices of smaller countries to ensure that we are, collectively, able to stand up as a powerful voice behind our shared values of sovereignty, democracy and good governance in cyber space.

Tailored projects with Commonwealth countries will work to empower smaller states and a Commonwealth Cyber Governance network will bring together experts from across the organisation, in addition to increasing in-country cyber attaches and UN Women-in-Cyber Fellows.

Collectively, it will make it harder for malign states to meddle in domestic cyber space across the Commonwealth.

The last CHOGM was held in the UK in 2018, with the UK now handing over the chairing role to Rwanda.

## Background

- [Check Point Software's 2022 Security Report](#) showed that 87% of organizations have experienced an attempted exploit of an already-known, existing vulnerability.
  - The UK made cyber security and resilience a priority for the whole Commonwealth during its period as Chair-in-Office in the last four years. Since CHOGM 2018, every member state has taken steps to improve their cyber security competence and capability. A Commonwealth statement in 2020 called for greater coordination on cyber security and the 2018 Commonwealth Cyber Declaration, agreed by all member states, has strengthened an inclusive and rights-based cyberspace that supports economic and social development.
  - UK funding has helped civil society groups in Belize, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Ghana to engage with national governments and contribute toward national cyber security strategies.
  - Ransomware has become the most significant cyber threat facing the UK this year, with reports of attacks having more than doubled since 2020.
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# PM pledges new support for countries on the food security frontline

- UK to provide an additional £372 million for countries most impacted by rising global food prices
- 47 million more facing acute hunger as a result of climate change, the pandemic, and Russia's assault on Ukraine
- UK funding will support emergency food aid, malnutrition programmes and scientific advances in agriculture

The Prime Minister is today [Friday] committing a significant package of support to help countries hit the hardest by rising global food costs and shortages of fertiliser, including many Commonwealth states.

Driven by the war in Ukraine, global food prices have hit a 50-year high. More than 275 million people worldwide were already facing acute hunger at the start of 2022 – according to the UN that is expected to increase by 47 million people if the conflict continues, with the steepest rises in sub-Saharan Africa. Price spikes are also pushing households into crippling poverty, with a further 1.4 million expected to be driven below the poverty line in Kenya, for example, as a result of the global crisis.

The Prime Minister is pledging £372 million in aid today to provide immediate and longer-term relief to countries on the frontline of this crisis.

The UK is also working with allies to break Russia's immoral blockade of Ukraine's grain exports and address global supply issues. The Prime Minister will commit to look at the UK's own demands on land and use of biofuel ahead of the G7 – globally, the use of grain for biofuel is contributing to reduced availability and increased costs for human consumption.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

While Vladimir Putin continues his futile and unprovoked war in Ukraine and cravenly blockades millions of tonnes of grain, the world's poorest people are inching closer to starvation.

The Government has put in place an unprecedented package of support to help the most vulnerable households in the UK deal with the rising cost of living.

But it is also right that we step up to support countries on the frontlines of conflict and climate change, where an increase in the price of bread can mean the difference between a child living or dying. From emergency food aid to reviewing our own biofuel use, the UK is playing its part to address this pernicious global crisis.

The package announced today includes:

- £130 million for the World Food Programme this financial year, to fund their lifesaving work around the world including in Commonwealth countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas
- £133 million for research and development partnerships with world-leading agricultural and scientific organisations to develop and implement cutting-edge technologies to improve food security, such as new drought-resistant crop varieties.
- £52 million for UN's global emergency response fund, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). CERF allocated \$100 million (£80m) in April for an urgent response to seven countries at risk of famine.
- £37 million for the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], to work with the private sector and governments to address poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries.
- £17.7 million through the FCDO's Green Growth Centre of Expertise to improve the effective use of fertiliser and increase food production in countries including Rwanda, Kenya and Ghana.
- £2 million for the Nutrition Match Fund, which matches governments' national spending on addressing wasting – the most acute and deadly form of child malnutrition – pound-for-pound. The fund was launched last November and has already supported treatments in Commonwealth countries like Nigeria and Mozambique, and the UK is encouraging other donors to step up.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

At least 140 million people across Africa are already suffering from food insecurity, and millions more are facing food shortages as a result of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. Putin is using food as a weapon on a global scale.

The UK's vital funding will provide humanitarian aid to increase access to food across the worst hit African countries, and help protect millions of people at risk from a growing global food disaster.

Ukraine produces as much as half the world's sunflower seeds, a tenth of its wheat and up to a fifth of barley and rapeseed, and many African countries import a significant proportion of their fertiliser, wheat and vegetable oils from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. Russia's blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports is preventing the export of up to 23 million metric tonnes of grain, and the conflict will significantly impact the next harvest.

The African Development Bank claims that shortfalls in fertilizer supply mean Africa could lose a fifth of its food production in the next two harvesting seasons, worsening food insecurity in developing countries already struggling to cope with climate change, the fall-out from the pandemic and domestic conflicts.

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## Thousands of families helped to build own homes

- Help to Build equity loan scheme launches, with 5% deposits backed by £150 million of government funding
- Scheme will boost self and custom build sector, supporting SME builders and creating new jobs
- It is the latest government action to support families onto the property ladder – with over 765,000 households helped into home ownership since 2010

Thousands of people in England will be supported onto the property ladder and given the opportunity to build their own home, with the launch of the government's Help to Build scheme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced today (24 June 2022).

Backed by £150 million of government funding, Help to Build will enable people to overcome prohibitive mortgage costs to build a home that is tailored to their needs and in a community of their choice, with just a 5% deposit towards land and building costs.

Help to Build will open for applications on Monday, making self and custom-designed homes an option for those who don't have Grand Designs size budgets. Most people are currently priced out of this option because it can require huge sums up front – the average for a self and custom build deposit is around 25% of land and building costs.

Help to Build will help level up communities by supporting young people and families into homeownership in places where they want to live. It builds on the success of other government schemes, including Help to Buy and Right to Buy, which have helped more than 765,000 people buy their own homes and will contribute to the one million homes being built by the end of this parliament.

The scheme can help people with specific living requirements, creating homes that are tailored to their needs, including those with disabilities or those who live with large families or elderly relatives.

Help to Build is also part of the government's plan to boost the UK's underdeveloped self and custom build sector, which will create jobs, increase the number of new homes and help grow the economy. The government has today



published its response to Richard Bacon MP's independent review of scaling up self and custom housebuilding, commissioned by the Prime Minister. It sets out how the sector could deliver 30,000-40,000 new homes a year.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP said:

Through the Help to Build scheme we will help thousands more people onto the property ladder by giving them the opportunity to build homes that are perfectly tailored to their needs and in the communities they want to live in.

This innovative scheme will build on our work to break down the barriers to homeownership, as well as creating new jobs, supporting the construction industry and kickstarting a self and custom build revolution.

Richard Bacon MP for South Norfolk, said:

I am very pleased by the government's warm response to my Review. The government recognises the crucial role which custom and self-build housing can play in addressing the nation's housing challenges, including delivering more affordable housing.

Making it easier for people to build or commission their own homes helps to promote a more diverse housing market with more real choice and control for consumers.

There is clear evidence that getting people more involved in decisions about housing helps to deliver houses that are better designed and better built, which are greener and cost less to run and which communities are happier to see built. I look forward to working with the government to progress this important agenda".

Help to Build will help families bridge the gap between their deposit and the cost of building material and land, allowing applicants to borrow between 5% and 20% of their costs across England – and up to 40% in London. Total build costs cannot be over £600,000, or £400,000 if the land is already owned, and applicants must live in the property as a primary home.

The government has also today [set out the measures](#) that it will take forward from the Bacon Review to boost the sector. These include:

- A specialist unit within Homes England to bring forward more self and custom build plots on regeneration projects across the country.
- Bringing forward legislation through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to promote self and custom building, including the review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- The Modern Methods of Construction Task Force (MMC) will promote the use of modular factory-built to boost custom homebuilding.

Andrew Baddeley-Chappell, NaCSBA CEO said:

Greater customer choice should be available to all those seeking a home of their own – not just those with the deepest pockets. Help to Build is key to opening up custom and self build to more people with sound plans and limited deposits. It will enable them to access a home that better reflects their desires and needs and which enriches their lives, as well as those of their community and is better for the environment.

Andrew Craddock, Darlington Building Society Chief Executive said:

I'm delighted that Darlington Building Society is the first lender to offer mortgages under the government's Help to Build scheme.

Self-build isn't the preserve of the wealthy, and Help to Build makes it more practical and accessible than ever before for people to build their dream home. This scheme also opens up the opportunities to first-time buyers. It is a fantastic example of the market moving with the times, and people's changing wants and needs.

The National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) '[Right to Build Task Force](#)' was established to help local authorities, community groups and other organisations help deliver self and custom build housing projects across the UK. Initially funded by the Nationwide Foundation, since 2020 it has been funded by government to provide expertise and support to local authorities on the implementation of the Right to Build and how to secure self and custom build delivery. Today we have confirmed a further £600,000 of funding for the Task Force to enable it to continue the work supporting local authorities delivering self and custom build until 2024/25.

In developing the scheme with Homes England we have used the model proposed by the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) as a starting point. We consulted with NaCSBA and engaged with lenders, brokers and insurers in the development of the scheme. Further details of the scheme have been published today.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme and how to apply, please visit the [OwnYourHome website](#)