

UN Human Rights Council 50: UK statement on Eritrea

News story

The UK delivered a statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea and urged Eritrea to take steps to address longstanding human rights concerns expressed by the Human Rights Council.



Thank you, Mr Vice President.

The United Kingdom thanks the Special Rapporteur for his work and his report on the human rights situation in Eritrea, which remains deeply concerning.

We take this opportunity to again urge Eritrea to take steps to address longstanding human rights concerns expressed by this Council, including prioritising National Service reform, releasing all those in arbitrary detention, and guaranteeing the freedom of religion or belief for all faiths, and the freedoms of expression and association. And we call on Eritrea to cooperate with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

We are also disappointed by the continued lack of progress from Eritrea in implementing recommendations it accepted during its last Universal Periodic Review. We call on them to do so as a priority.

Mr Vice President,

We continue to urge the Eritrean government to engage constructively with the recommendations of the 3 November UN-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission joint investigation report. We also urge them to work both with the Human Rights Council mandated mechanism, of 17 December 2021, to investigate and redress the human rights violations and abuses committed during the conflict in Ethiopia.

We are concerned that the recent increased tensions on the border between Eritrea and the Tigray region of Ethiopia could lead to further conflict, putting already vulnerable civilian populations at even greater risk. We would expect all sides to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia to respect

international human rights and international humanitarian law.

Special Rapporteur,

Will you consider engaging with the International Commission of Human Rights Experts to share best practice, analysis and insight on engaging on human rights in Eritrea?

Thank you

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[Grob G103C Twin III Acro, G-CFWC: Anniversary Statement](#)

News story

Grob G103C Twin III Acro, G-CFWC, Usk Airfield, Monmouthshire, on 13 June 2021.



This statement provides an update on the AAIB investigation into an accident involving a Grob G103C Twin III Acro glider, G-CFWC, at Usk Airfield, Monmouthshire, on 13 June 2021.

A qualified pilot was undergoing a winch launch check with an instructor. During the first planned launch, at a height of approximately 150 feet, the instructor simulated a failed launch. In the resulting manoeuvre, the glider was unable to land back at the airfield. It entered a spin close to the ground and then struck a tree on the airfield boundary. Both pilots were seriously injured.

The AAIB investigation has focused on the actions of both the pilot and instructor, as well as wider safety management issues. The report is nearing completion at which time it will be published.

[PM meeting with Prime Minister of Portugal: 13 June 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal today.



The Prime Minister welcomed Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal to Downing Street today ahead of the NATO leaders summit later this month.

The Prime Minister thanked the Portuguese leader for his decisive action in support of Ukraine in the face of Russia's barbaric invasion.

Putin's actions had fundamentally changed the world, the leaders agreed, and both underlined that NATO allies needed to further build on their strong bonds as like-minded democracies.

The Prime Minister noted that the UK and Portugal shared a common perspective towards NATO and said that it was crucial the alliance remained in lockstep on Ukraine.

Both agreed on the need to increase military spending across the alliance, and said more collaboration was needed on defence equipment development to ensure greater integration in NATO.

The pair welcomed the applications by Finland and Sweden to join NATO, and the Prime Minister shared Prime Minister Costa's view that their presence in the alliance would make it stronger.

Discussing the energy crisis sparked by Russia's barbaric invasion, both leaders agreed that a drive towards alternative energy sources needed to be intensified.

The leaders noted that the UK and Portugal were already working together on renewable energy, which the Prime Minister said was a great example of the countries' close collaboration.

Building on the strong ties between the two countries, including through the large diaspora communities and close tourism links, the two leaders also agreed to further deepen bilateral cooperation through a [Joint Declaration](#).

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[Reiterating our deep concern over the continued illegal Russian presence in Georgia](#)

Thank you Mr President.

Colleagues, thirteen years since the Russian military invasion of Georgia, the UK remains deeply concerned over the continued illegal Russian presence in parts of the country. We fully support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and underline the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on full respect for the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and international law.

Georgia has been under continuous hybrid attack from Russia since the 2008 war that saw 20% of Georgian territory effectively annexed. There are thousands of Russian troops and border guards stationed in the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, some as close as 35 minutes from the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. And the human rights situation in these breakaway regions is of serious and growing concern.

We welcome Georgia's ongoing compliance with the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement. We call upon the Russian Federation to fulfil immediately its clear obligation under the ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, as well as its commitments to allow unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and not to impede creation of international security arrangements on the ground.

We also call upon Russia to reverse its recognition of the so-called independence of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and end all practices aimed at creeping annexation of these territories into the Russian Federation. We welcome initiatives by the government of Georgia to promote reconciliation among the populations separated by the Administrative Boundary lines and urge Russia not to obstruct these valuable peace building and people to people contacts.

The United Kingdom has been a long standing supporter of this annual resolution in solidarity with the Georgian people and all internally displaced people worldwide. As others have said, this year it is even more pertinent following Russia's illegal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine.

The resolution highlights the inalienable right of the forcefully displaced population to safe and dignified return to their homes, acknowledges their property rights, reaffirms the unacceptability of forced demographic changes, and creates a vital mechanism of reporting by the UN Secretary-General about developments on this issue. These are all matters vital to our universally shared interest in human rights, reconciliation, and peace.

We therefore urge all member states to vote in favour of this resolution that aims to protect the most vulnerable in society and to underline the unacceptability of using internally displaced persons as political pawns in conflicts.

Thank you colleagues. Thank you, Mr President.

[UK Government supports top Scottish global affairs experts at London networking event](#)

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack has hailed the launch of new think tank, the Scottish Council for Global Affairs (SCGA), at an event in London today [13 June 2022]

The Secretary of State spoke at an event hosted by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) at its historic Lancaster House venue – giving top global affairs experts from Scotland an opportunity to meet with representatives of governments from all over the world.

The Secretary of State is proud the UK Government is supporting the newly-formed SCGA, which was launched in April by the University of Glasgow, University of St Andrews, and the University of Edinburgh.

Its aim is to provide and develop expertise on international issues, and forge new partnerships with civil society and the business community across the UK.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

I was delighted to speak at the London launch of the new Scottish Council on Global Affairs at the Foreign Office's Lancaster House.

The creation of a new Scottish international affairs think tank is hugely significant. Led by three of Scotland's world-renowned universities, the SCGA will harness the very significant expertise of Scotland's higher education sector, and provide independent analysis and a trusted space for debate and dialogue.

The UK Government is proud to help the SCGA get off to a flying start by hosting this networking event with key international affairs experts from across the UK and the world. I wish it the very best and look forward to seeing its contribution to the public policy debate on global issues.

The FCDO has announced £10,000 of funding for the organisation, which also receives funding support from the Scottish Government.

Diplomats from countries including Australia, Germany, Italy and Spain were amongst those meeting with the Scottish academics at the event held at Lancaster House.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Minister Vicky Ford said:

The UK Government's funding for the Scottish Council for Global Affairs and hosting of this event at Lancaster House reaffirms our commitment to the successful launch of this important new non-partisan think tank. The FCDO looks forward to engaging closely with the Scottish Council for Global Affairs, which will harness Scottish universities' significant global affairs expertise to help the UK to make its mark on shaping a better world.

The SCGA will provide a non-partisan hub for expertise on international issues. It will place this expertise at the disposal of public policy and promote independent, expert-informed debate and discussion of the most pressing international questions.

The SCGA has been set up by a group of Scotland's leading universities, but it will look from the beginning to form new partnerships with civil society and the business community in Scotland and across the United Kingdom. Its creation as a fully independent institute of international affairs has been supported by all major political parties and strong relationships have already been established with the Scottish Government and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

The present war in Ukraine, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing climate crisis have all underlined the need for international co-operation and multi-disciplinary expertise to address the political, economic and public health challenges of the 21st century. The SCGA will contribute to this enterprise by providing an institutional setting for discussion and debate of international questions.

A core mission of the new think tank is to support ambitious research

projects aimed at informing public policy and promoting public discussion. In pursuit of these goals, it will forge partnerships in the UK, Europe and beyond to amplify the global reach of Scottish expertise.

Professor Juliet Kaarbo, Chair in Foreign Policy at the University of Edinburgh and founding Co-Director of SCGA said:

We are delighted at the support from FCDO and The Secretary of State for Scotland and thankful for this event recognising the launch of the Scottish Council on Global Affairs. As an agreement between the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, we are an academically-based, policy-oriented, and global-thinking institute that serves as a hub for a distinct constellation of research on global affairs. We aim to link this research to governments, civil society, and business to address big problems concerning, for example, human rights, military conflicts, climate change, international development and trade, and global health.

Professor Phillips O'Brien, Chair in Strategic Studies at the University of St Andrews and founding Co-Director of SCGA said:

One of the great aims of SCGA is to bring the fabulous, high impact, policy-focussed research done across Scotland to the centres of government in the UK and around the world.

We are therefore delighted to have established an excellent relationship with the FCDO, the Scotland Office and the whole UK Government and believe this link is central to our mission.

Professor Peter Jackson, Chair in Global Security at the University of Glasgow and the first Executive Director of the SCGA, said:

The Scottish Council on Global Affairs is an exciting new initiative to harness the extensive expertise that exists in Scotland on international affairs very broadly conceived.

Forging relationships with government departments and other think tanks in London will enable us to amplify both the scope of our research activities and the breadth of our engagement with policy stakeholders in the United Kingdom and beyond.

We are therefore hugely grateful to the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and to the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office for the reception to celebrate our creation at Lancaster House.