

# Report by OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine: UK response, May 2022

Thank you Mr Chair. I would like to thank Ambassador Villadsen for his briefing on the important work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU).

The UK commends the professionalism and dedication with which you and your team have continued to operate under extremely challenging circumstances. That – as you have said – the PCU has delivered nearly all of its planned projects, across all three OSCE dimensions, is testament to the Mission's enduring relevance and adaptability. It is evident from the breadth of your portfolio and your extraordinary record that the PCU continues to deliver excellent value for money.

Indeed, your work is even more important now than ever. After Russia forced the closure of the Border Observation Mission and Special Monitoring Mission, the PCU is the only remaining field operation in Ukraine, and this Organisation's sole operational mechanism on the ground.

In addition, the problems that the Mission seeks to address are of a greater magnitude and urgency than ever before. It is imperative that the PCU be able to continue to carry out its critical work.

This work includes thematic areas of Rule of Law and Human Rights, Human Security, Economic, Environmental, Military-Politico and Democratisation and Good Governance. The UK wholeheartedly supports PCU projects in all of these essential areas, as well as the wider Strategic Plan. Today, I would like to focus my statement on three priority areas in the post-conflict context: explosive ordnance; human trafficking and social and psychological support during and after wartime. In all of these areas, the PCU's achievements are significant, and its future role will prove even more so.

We share your deep concerns expressed today about risks to citizens posed by unexploded ordnance and other dangerous remnants of war. We applaud the substantial work that the PCU has already done in this area, including increasing Ukraine's mine action capacity and launching an awareness-raising campaign to educate the public on the substantial risks of unexploded ordnance. The OSCE must act, through the PCU, to prevent further unnecessary devastating injury and loss of life, particularly in the context of Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion.

President Putin's war of choice has displaced, according to the latest UN reports, eight million Ukrainians internally, and approximately six million externally, placing them at heightened risk of trafficking. The PCU's work has been integral to mitigating these risks – by informing this vulnerable population about the risks, highlighting available assistance hotlines in various European countries and by conducting consultations with vulnerable groups across Ukraine. But again, while the PCU has made a commendable start, efforts must be sustained and expanded – the need remains considerable.

The UK also recognises the instrumental work begun by the PCU in addressing the psychological impact, particularly on children, of the Russian government's war of aggression. A generation of children have experienced indescribable horrors, the impact of which will endure long after Putin has failed in Ukraine. The PCU has organised and delivered online training sessions, including for psychologists of law enforcement agencies and those who work with families and children. Every single Ukrainian has been psychologically affected by Russia's unprovoked invasion in some way. Our task as an international community is vast, and the PCU will continue to be indispensable in tackling it.

Mr Chair, we have made clear our support for the PCU's mandate, and the prolongation of that mandate. Russian armed forces have retreated from many of Ukraine's cities, but they leave behind them a trail of destruction and human suffering: including unexploded ordnance, widespread displacement and psychological trauma. The PCU, with its present mandate, its expertise and its experience, is exceptionally well-placed to rebuild what Russia has destroyed. It must be allocated the resources to continue its vital work, which the host nation clearly needs and is requesting.

The UK remains committed to the restoration of Ukraine's security, stability and prosperity. We are grateful to the PCU for its tireless commitment to rebuilding Ukraine, and to promoting reform across a broad range of issues. Ambassador Villadsen, please accept our thanks for all of the work conducted by you and your excellent team, in these most testing of circumstances. I wish you continued success.

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## Civil news: extension of HPCDS contracts to 29 April 2023

### News story

Providers are being notified of our intention to extend HPCDS contracts until 29 April 2023.



Extension notices are being issued shortly to tell providers that Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) contracts will be extended.

## **Why is this happening?**

We are extending contracts to enable:

- publication of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) response to the 'Housing Legal Aid: the way forward' consultation
- development and procurement of new contracts by the LAA

This needs to happen now because HPCDS services are currently being delivered through contingency contracts that end on 30 September 2022. So, these contracts, which maintain the 2013 Standard Civil Contract exclusive schedule arrangements, need to be extended.

## **Extension timescales**

All existing HPCDS providers will be offered an extension of their current contract running from 1 October 2022 to 29 April 2023.

## **What do I need to do?**

We will be writing to all current HPCDS contract providers to confirm our intentions and formally issue extension offers over the course of the next month.

Providers will need to sign into the contract extension, or where they do not wish to do so, confirm this to the LAA by the date set out in their letters.

## **Consultation response**

The MOJ consultation on 'Housing Legal Aid: the way forward' ran from 25 November 2021 to 20 January 2022. Publication of the response is expected to happen shortly, and this will be available to view on GOV.UK.

## **Further information**

[Standard Civil Contract \(Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme\) 2013](#) – 2013 civil contract (HPCDS) documents are available on GOV.UK

[Housing Legal Aid: the way forward](#) – to view closed consultation on GOV.UK and the MOJ response when published

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# PM announces new Trade Envoys to boost combined £54 billion of trade

## News story

The new Trade Envoys will use their skills and experience to help UK businesses find new export and investment opportunities and promote UK trade in Canada, Republic of Korea and Turkey.



- Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed new Trade Envoys to Canada, Republic of Korea and Turkey.
- The three countries already represent a combined £54 billion of bilateral trade with UK.
- Trade Envoys promote UK trade, drive green economic growth, and encourage inward investment to help level up every part of the UK.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed new Trade Envoys to boost British business in key markets including Canada, South Korea and Turkey.

The new Trade Envoys – the Rt. Hon. Maria Miller, Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale and Rt. Hon. John Hutton – will use their skills and experience to help UK businesses find new export and investment opportunities and promote UK trade in their allocated market.

Trade Envoys will build on the UK's strong relations with key trading countries and work with the Department for International Trade's global network to break down barriers to doing business, with total trade with Canada, the Republic of Korea and Turkey representing more than £54bn of UK bilateral trade.

They will also promote the major opportunities green trade presents, including the creation of high-value jobs in the UK's low-carbon economy and fuelling technological innovations that can be exported worldwide. The new appointments will extend the total number of Trade Envoys to 40 parliamentarians, covering 80 markets.

UK International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

These new Trade Envoys will play vital role in promoting Global Britain across the world, driving economic growth, and encouraging inward investment across the whole of the UK.

From the UK's accession to CPTPP, to our ambitions for an enhanced trade deal with South Korea and green trade agenda, there is huge potential for our new Trade Envoys to strengthen and grow our trading relationships between the UK and Canada, South Korea and Turkey.

Trade Envoys are parliamentarians appointed by the Prime Minister, drawn from both Houses and across the political spectrum.

Coming from a range of parliamentary backgrounds, the latest round of Trade Envoys will bring experience in the creative industries to their new roles, with both Maria Miller MP and John Whittingdale MP serving as previous Secretaries of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

The full list of new appointments is below:

- The Rt. Hon. Member for Basingstoke, Maria Miller, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Canada
- The Rt. Hon. Member for Maldon, John Whittingdale, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to South Korea
- The Rt. Hon. Lord Hutton of Furness, John Hutton, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey

Background:

- Trade Envoy roles are unpaid and voluntary.
- The UK's green economy is projected to grow by 11% per year from 2015 to 2030, and by 2050 1.4 million people could be directly employed in low carbon good and services sectors – a seven-fold increase from 2018.

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## **British High Commission celebrates Queen's Birthday in Dhaka and vows to boost girls' life chances**

Her Majesty The Queen has ruled for longer than any other monarch in British

history, becoming a much loved and respected figure across the globe. The Jubilee is a central element of an exciting year of UK culture and creativity, including the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and the BBC's Centenary. The Platinum Jubilee will be celebrated in the UK over an extended four-day weekend in June.

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Hon'ble Speaker, Bangladesh Parliament, graced the reception as guest of honour. A wide range of dignitaries from the Government of Bangladesh; representatives from Commonwealth nations, OECD and EU countries; and leaders from the fields of business, trade, social development, academia, arts, culture, media and sports joined the celebration.

In honour of Her Majesty, the theme of the event was Empowering Girls to Change Their World. The British High Commission invited girls and young women from across Bangladesh to join the party and introduce themselves to guests, sharing their dreams for the future. A significant portion of the sponsorship raised for the event will be used to support girls' education across Bangladesh through the British Council's EDGE Programme.

EDGE, standing for English and Digital for Girls' Education, is designed to help adolescent Bangladeshi girls to receive capacity building, career counselling, mentorship, language skills, digital navigation skills and, importantly, how to protect themselves from child marriage, cyber bullying, gender-based harassment and intimidation. Launched in September 2021, the new phase of the programme aims to improve life skills for out-of-school and marginalised adolescent girls and build their self-confidence to enable them to have a greater say in their futures. The programme is currently providing training to 2,400 young girls in Bangladesh and helping to give them economic opportunities and strengthen their voices.

Robert Chatterton Dickson, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said

"I am thrilled to welcome our friends in Bangladesh to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's birthday and Platinum Jubilee marking her 70 year reign – a unique milestone. Her Majesty has been an incredible source of strength for the UK and the Commonwealth through a period of enormous change.

"Today, thanks to the generosity of our partners, we are making a donation to further the causes of girls' education and women's empowerment in Bangladesh. Through this contribution we pay tribute to Her Majesty's exemplary devotion to a life of service and celebrate the international cooperation she has championed throughout her reign."

During the evening, beneficiaries of the British Council's Active Citizens, LEAD Bangladesh, Pathways to Empower Young Women in Bangladesh and EDGE programmes, and students from the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, highlighted the importance of investing in women and girls to build a prosperous, diverse and peaceful world. In Bangladesh, the UK's work provides access to education to marginalised children, especially girls, and works with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen the country's education system and to make education more equitable for girls.

## Notes to editors

The Queen's Birthday Party is celebrated by British Embassies and High Commissions around the world. This year, the Queen turned 96 on 21 April.

More information on Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee can be found on [www.platinumjubilee.gov.uk](http://www.platinumjubilee.gov.uk).

## Further information

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Follow the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh on Twitter: [@RCDicksonUK](https://twitter.com/RCDicksonUK)

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## Growing number of civilian casualties in Russia's barbaric war against Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The people of Ukraine have now endured three months of suffering at the hands of the Russian government and the Russian military, following the latest invasion. As of Monday, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 8,462 civilian casualties, of which nearly 4,000 are fatalities. The true figure is likely to be significantly higher, and rises every day. We may not know the true human cost of this war for years to come. It is nothing short of a tragedy.

As verified by OHCHR, most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by explosive weapons with a wide area impact, including shelling from heavy artillery, rocket systems, missiles and air strikes. As Russian military

operations faltered in the first weeks of the invasion, we saw the indiscriminate and widespread use of weapons in civilian areas. In the Chernihiv region north of Kyiv, an estimated 3,500 buildings were destroyed or damaged during Russia's abandoned advance towards Kyiv. 80% of these were residential buildings. This illustrates Russia's preparedness to use artillery and wide area weapons in civilian areas, with no regard for the men, women and children who live there.

We saw the shocking effect of these tactics against the populations of Mariupol, Kherson and numerous other towns and cities. As President Putin renews his focus on the Donbas region, once again, the commitment to respect international humanitarian law has been thrown aside. Prior to 24 February, the people of Donbas had already suffered eight years of conflict, killing approximately 3,400 civilians and wounding 7,000. Now, the Governor of Luhansk describes a 'scorched earth approach' in and around the city of Severodonetsk, with residents trapped in shelters and basements to shield from relentless Russian bombardment. Inevitably, further innocent lives will be lost.

The Geneva Conventions are clear on the obligations of nations to respect international humanitarian law. We again call on Russia to abide by the principles of proportionality and distinction; and to immediately cease the indiscriminate use of wide area impact weapons in civilian areas, particularly around uniquely protected locations such as medical facilities. We again call on Russia to facilitate safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians and for the distribution of essential supplies. Inaction on the protection of innocent civilians speaks volumes. And ultimately, Mr Chair, we again call on Russia to stop this senseless and strategically failing war and withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

As stated by my Foreign Secretary, "we cannot forget the barbarism inflicted on Ukraine, from the levelling of cities like Mariupol to the slaughter, rape and torture of innocent civilians in towns like Bucha." The Kremlin continues to lie about causing civilian deaths, attempting to distract the world from the horrifying truth of its atrocities. Alongside partners, we will make sure the truth is heard. [The UK is supporting the International Criminal Court Investigation into all allegations of war crimes](#), including through £1m in funding and technical assistance. We are leveraging the UK's significant legal and specialist expertise, including in conflict related sexual violence, to ensure that the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine can pursue domestic prosecutions and seek justice for its citizens.

The UK joins [the OSCE Chair in Office, the Secretary General and international partners in strongly condemning the detention of four OSCE SMM National Mission members in areas of Donetsk and Luhansk temporarily controlled by Russia and its proxies](#). As the Secretary General has repeatedly communicated, functional immunity pertaining to acts performed by SMM staff in their official capacity during their employment with the SMM should continue to be respected following separation, as a principle of international law. All efforts to intimidate, harass and undermine the credibility and impartiality of current or former SMM staff must cease immediately.



Finally, I want to reiterate my comments from last week on the growing threat to global food security. Food and energy prices are rising, pushing the world's most vulnerable to the brink of famine, directly because of Russia's actions. These prevent Ukraine from exporting its wheat, corn, barley and sunflower oil and harvesting future produce. The Russian government is trying to hold the world to ransom in pursuit of its illegal war against Ukraine. The Russian government must not succeed.

Mr Chair, the UK is committed to helping Ukraine uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, to defend itself and resist future attacks or coercion. Ukraine deserves the right to choose its own future and prosper. And we will stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine in ensuring that no one will ever dare attack it again.