

Quint statement on the eleventh anniversary of the Syrian uprising

A joint statement by France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America ('Quint'):

Today marks 11 years since the Syrian people courageously and peacefully took to the streets to demand freedom, political reform, and a government that respects and upholds human rights. The Assad regime met those demands with a brutal assault that continues today against the Syrian people. After 11 years of death and suffering, it is past time for the regime and its enablers, including Russia and Iran, to halt their ruthless attack on the Syrian people. The coincidence of this year's anniversary with the appalling Russian aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a breach of exceptional gravity to international law and the UN Charter, highlights Russia's brutal and destructive behavior in both conflicts. After more than a decade of conflict, the Syrian economic and humanitarian situation is bleak and millions of Syrian refugees hosted generously by Syria's neighbors, as well as those internally displaced, cannot yet return home in line with UN standards, and without fear of violence, arbitrary arrest, and torture. Continued conflict has also led to space for terrorists, particularly Daesh (ISIS), to exploit. Preventing Daesh's resurgence remains a priority.

We continue to support the UN-facilitated, Syrian-led process outlined within UN Security Council Resolution 2254. We will continue to call for a nationwide ceasefire, respect for international humanitarian law, and unhindered aid access through all modalities, including through the continued authorization of the cross-border mechanism by the UN Security Council. We additionally urge the immediate release of those arbitrarily detained and clarification of the fate and whereabouts of those who remain missing. We do not support efforts to normalize relations with the Assad regime and will not normalize relations ourselves, nor lift sanctions or fund reconstruction until there is irreversible progress towards a political solution. We encourage all parties, especially the Syrian regime, to participate in the March 21 meeting of the Constitutional Committee in good faith and call for the Committee to deliver on its mandate.

Impunity remains unacceptable. We will therefore continue to actively promote accountability, including through support to the Commission of Inquiry, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). This also includes supporting organizations, many of which are Syrian-led, in collecting evidence and documenting the atrocities and serious violations of international law committed in Syria, including the use of chemical weapons. The OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team's (IIT) efforts continue to attribute responsibility for the abhorrent use of chemical weapons in Syria. Despite Syria's lack of cooperation, the IIT has already confirmed the responsibility of the Assad regime in multiple chemical weapons attacks on the Syrian

people. Those responsible for this disregard for the global norm against the use of chemical weapons must be held to account.

We welcome ongoing efforts by national courts to investigate and prosecute crimes within their jurisdiction committed in Syria and encourage increased support for these prosecutions. As their harrowing testimonies show, justice for victims and their families is long overdue. Pursuing accountability and justice is essential to building confidence in the political process called for in UNSCR 2254 and securing the stable, just, and enduring peace that Syrians need and deserve.

[UK helps Honduran youngsters to find solutions against climate change](#)

Local organization Sustenta Honduras developed the Climate Empowerment Forums, a space for the co-creation of climate proposals aimed at Honduran youth, within the framework of COP26.

The British Embassy supported Sustenta Honduras, an organization led by young people, to develop capacities on climate change and propose programmes, projects and policies that address the differentiated needs of youth in the face of the climate crisis.

Honduras was considered in 2017 the most vulnerable country to climate change in the world, according to the climate vulnerability index. After being hit by two storms Eta and Iota in a space of two weeks in 2021, the weakness of the country's infrastructure in the face of extreme weather events was evident.

Sustenta raised the voice in representation of young people and the future generations who will inherit the greatest effects of the decisions made today in regard of climate change.

The forums had the participation of 500 young people who interacted in the development of capacities and co-creation of proposals to foster climate action. Almost 65% of the participants were young women, seeking to provide a gender perspective to regional situations.

Throughout this process, Sustenta compiled the proposals in a document entitled "Proposals for the Inclusion of Honduran Youth in Climate Action", which was presented to the authorities of the Ministry of Environment.

This also contributes to Honduras' government commitment to develop at least two annual forums to promote the social inclusion of youth, indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples, and gender, as stated in the [country's National Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#).

The project also helped Honduras to adhere to the Declaration of Girls, Boys and Youth in Climate Action as part of the COP26 commitments. Sustenta will follow up with the authorities on next steps to keep youngsters included in this dialogue and with the support of the British Embassy.

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[DLUHC Secretary of State's update on Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme](#)

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on our government's response to help those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

This government, this House, indeed everyone in the United Kingdom, continues to be in awe of the bravery of the people of Ukraine. They are victims of savage, indiscriminate, unprovoked aggression. Their courage under fire and their determination to resist inspires our total admiration.

The United Kingdom stands with the Ukrainian people.

My Right Honourable Friend the Defence Secretary has been in the vanguard of those providing military assistance. The Foreign Secretary has been co-ordinating diplomatic support and, with the Chancellor and the Business Secretary, implementing a new, tougher than ever, sanctions regime. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Home Office have also been providing humanitarian support on the ground to Ukraine's neighbours, helping them to cope with the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

But more can, and must, be done.

To that end, My Right Honourable Friend, the Home Secretary, has already expanded the "family route".

She has also confirmed that from tomorrow, Ukrainians with passports will be able to apply for UK visas entirely online, without having to visit Visa Application Centres.

As a result, the number of Ukrainians now arriving in this country is rapidly increasing and numbers will grow even faster from tomorrow.

We also know however, that the unfailingly compassionate British public wants to help further.

'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme

Which is why Mr Speaker, today we are answering that call with the announcement of a new sponsorship scheme, 'Homes for Ukraine'.

I'd like to thank my Right Honourable Friend the Home Secretary, officials in the Home Office, in my own department and across government for their work over the course of the last days and weeks in order to ensure that we can stand up the scheme as quickly as possible.

And in particular, I would like to thank My Honourable Friend Richard Harrington, now Lord Harrington of Watford. His experience in ensuring that the Syrian Refugee Resettlement programme was a success will prove invaluable in making sure that we do right by the people of Ukraine.

The scheme that he has helped us to design draws on the enormous goodwill and generosity of the British public, and our proud history of supporting the vulnerable in their hour of greatest need.

The scheme will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who can offer them a home. There will be no limit to the number of Ukrainians who can benefit from this scheme.

Requirements

The scheme will be open to all Ukrainian nationals or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national who were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022.

They will be able to live and work in the United Kingdom for up to 3 years. They will have full and unrestricted access to benefits, healthcare, employment and other support.

Sponsors in the UK can be of any nationality, with any immigration status, provided they have at least 6 months' leave to remain within the UK.

Payments

Sponsors will have to provide accommodation for a minimum of 6 months and in recognition of their generosity, the government will provide a monthly payment of £350 to sponsors for each family whom they've got.

These payments will be tax free, they will not affect benefit entitlement nor council tax status.

Ukrainians arriving in the United Kingdom will also have access to the full range of public services – doctors, schools and full local authority support.

Security

Of course we want to minimise bureaucracy and make the process as straightforward as possible while also doing everything we can to ensure the safety of all involved.

Sponsors will therefore be required to undergo necessary vetting checks and we are also streamlining processes to security assess the status of all Ukrainians who will be arriving in the United Kingdom.

Launch of expression of interest webpage

From today anyone who wishes to record their interest in sponsorship can do so on GOV.UK and the [webpage has gone live](#) as I speak. We will then send any individual who registers further information setting out the next steps in this process; we will outline what is required of a sponsor and we will set out how sponsors can identify a named Ukrainian individual or family, who can then take up each sponsorship offer.

Phased response

Because we want the scheme to be up and running as soon as possible, Homes for Ukraine will initially facilitate sponsorship between people with known connections.

But we will rapidly expand the scheme in a phased way, with charities, churches and community groups, to ensure that many more prospective sponsors can be matched with Ukrainians who need help. And we are of course also working closely with the devolved administrations to make sure that their kind offers of help are also mobilised.

I know that all concerned want to play their part in supporting Ukrainians who have been through so much to ensure they feel at home in the United Kingdom. I am committed to working with everyone of goodwill to achieve this.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, our country has a long and proud history of supporting the most vulnerable during their darkest hours.

We took in refugees fleeing Hitler's Germany, those fleeing repression in Idi Amin's Uganda and of course those who fled the atrocities of the Balkan wars. More recently we have offered support to those fleeing persecution in Syria, Afghanistan and Hong Kong. And we're doing so again with Homes for Ukraine.

We are a proud democracy. All of us in this House wish to see us stand and uphold our values, and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and to offer a safe haven to people who have been forced to flee war and persecution.

The British people have already opened their hearts in so many ways.

I am hopeful that many will also be ready to open their homes and help those fleeing persecution find peace, healing and the prospect of a brighter future.

And that is why I commend this Statement to the House.

Foreign Secretary announces historic round of sanctions: 15 March 2022

- Foreign Secretary announces more than 370 new sanctions now possible thanks to new urgent Economic Crime Act powers
- After today the UK will have designated over 1,000 individuals and entities under the Russia sanctions regime since the invasion
- Today's designations also include Putin's key political allies, regime spokespeople and Kremlin-backed disinformation agencies

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announces over 370 more Russian and Belarussian sanctions today (Tuesday 15 March), which means by the end of today the UK will have designated over 1,000 individuals and entities since invasion under the Russia sanctions regime.

Today's historic sanctions include more Russian oligarchs and their family members, Putin's political allies and propagandists. The UK is sanctioning over 370 more individuals, 51 of whom are oligarchs and their family members.

The vast majority of today's designations are made possible under the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act – which has Royal Assent. This has given the Government new powers to act in the public interest and immediately designate individuals and entities under an urgent procedure, while evidence is gathered to sanction them under our own standard procedure.

Russian oligarchs now subject to UK sanctions include Mikhail Fridman, Petr Aven, and German Khan. The oligarchs who will be sanctioned today have a combined estimated worth of more than £100 billion*.

Putin political allies now sanctioned include Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and former President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev. Meanwhile, Russian propagandists who have been designated include Putin's Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov and Russian Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, among others. A notorious internet 'troll farm', the Internet Research Agency, has also been sanctioned.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

We are going further and faster than ever in hitting those closest to Putin – from major oligarchs, to his Prime Minister, and the propagandists who peddle his lies and disinformation. We are holding them to account for their complicity in Russia's crimes in Ukraine.

Working closely with our allies, we will keep increasing the pressure on Putin and cut off funding for the Russian war machine.

The UK will continue to tighten the screw on the Russian economy in the coming days, as the Government makes full use of powers necessary to tackle the biggest security crisis in Europe since World War II.

The new provisions brought in by the Economic Crime Act have streamlined the previous legislation so the UK can respond even more swiftly and effectively to the current crisis.

Individuals sanctioned today will have their assets in the UK frozen which means no UK citizen or company can do business with them and they are also banned from travelling to or from the UK.

The UK has led the international sanctions effort, cutting off whole sectors of the Russian economy by targeting its defence companies, its trade and transport sector, and working with allies to exclude Russia from the SWIFT financial system.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Asset freeze: an asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person and which are held in the UK. It will also prevent funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.
- Travel ban: a travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual to be an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

A complete list of sanctions can be found on GOV.UK.

*Estimated net worth based on Forbes.

Prominent persons designated today include:

Oligarchs:

- Mikhail Fridman, founder of Alfa Bank, the largest private bank in Russia. He also owns shares in LetterOne. His net worth is reported as an estimated £11.9 billion.
- German Khan, a business partner of Aven and Fridman in both Alfa Bank and LetterOne. His net worth is reported as an estimated £7.8 billion.
- Petr Aven, who was President of Alfa Bank and co-founder of LetterOne. His net worth is reported as an estimated £4 billion.
- Alexey Mordashov, a member of who are reported to be Russia's richest family. Mordashov's net worth is reported as an estimated £22.4 billion. He is a majority shareholder in steel company Severstal.

- Andrey Melnichenko, the founder of EuroChem Group. Reported estimated net worth of £13.7 billion.
- Viktor Vekselberg, owner of the Renova Group. His net worth is reported at an estimated £6.8 billion.
- Alexander Ponomarenko, chairman of the board of Sheremetyevo, the biggest airport in Russia. His estimated net worth is £2.22 billion.
- Dmitry Pumpyansky, owner and chairman of OAO TMK. His net worth is estimated at £1.84 billion.
- Vadim Moshkovich, chairman of the board of directors of Rusagro Group. His net worth is an estimated £1.84 billion.

Political allies:

- Dmitry Medvedev, a Russian politician serving as deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia since 2020.
- Mikhail Mishustin, a Russian politician and the current Prime Minister of Russia since January 2020. He was the head of the Federal Taxation Service 2010-2020. He was formally the President of the UFG Group (OFG Invest), one of Russia's largest investment companies.
- Sergei Shoigu, a Russian politician serving as Defence Minister since 2021. He was previously appointed Governor of the Moscow Region.

Propagandists:

- Dmitry Peskov, Putin's press secretary and a Kremlin spokesperson.
- Maria Zakharova, the Director of the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. She is the MFA Spokesperson.

361 individuals and 8 entities will be added to the Sanctions List under the new 'urgent procedure' set out in the Economic Crime Act, which has received royal assent.

After today we will have designated over 1,000 individuals and entities under our Russia sanctions regime since the invasion.

All those on today's list have already been sanctioned by our key allies, the US, EU, Canada or Australia and hence were subject to the new mirroring provisions of that act.

We have also sanctioned four individuals under our own standard procedure, building our own grounds rather than relying on those provided by the EU:

- Mikhail Fridman
- Petr Aven
- German Khan
- Russian Duma member and propagandist Oleg Matveychev.