

Speech: Putting humanitarian issues at the forefront of Security Council discussion

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you, High Commissioner. I think this is clearly a topic that is moving very many members of the Council. So I also just wanted to pay tribute to you, High Commissioner, your staff and all your staff around the world. UNHCR probably see people at the worst point in their lives. And you do an incredible job in the face of increasing insecurity and increasing displacement, so please pass on our thanks. The United Kingdom is a very strong supporter of UNHCR, both in core funding and country funding, and we gave nearly \$100 million last year.

I was also very interested to hear what Anatolio said about the African Union interest in this subject and also desire to establish a humanitarian agency. And it's very good to see humanitarian issues get so much prominence.

I think the principled role that UNHCR plays on returns is very much one that sets the international standard and the standard by which we should judge these major conflicts. And returns are part of a key durable solution and it's important to remember that for the majority of refugees and host countries alike, it's by some margin the preferred option. But as you said, it's not always available and sometimes you end up with some rather pernicious trade-offs where refugees are encouraged to go back in circumstances very far short of safe, voluntary and dignified. So I think you're right to challenge us to be more strategic. And I think if there's any more you can say on that, High Commissioner that would be welcome.

Looking at the individual countries that you mentioned, I think they just show that the reality is difficult. What you said about Libya I thought was worrying. I'm sorry the staff are under pressure. If there's anything more you can tell us about what immediate steps would be helpful there, I think that would feed into the discussions we hope to have later this week on Libya.

In Syria we don't support returns where conditions don't allow and we look to UNHCR to continue to set the standard of the three – safe, dignified, voluntary – principles.

Looking at Myanmar, we have worked hard with UNHCR and UNDP to try and help create conditions. The 34 projects you mentioned are welcome but they're not absolutely not enough. Is there any more you could say about how exactly we could help expand those projects from the Council and what exactly is the state of play on the MoU that you have with the Government? That said, you know we recognize the challenges of a situation like the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh. We're not ideological about how the repatriation process occurs as long as international principles are upheld. And we'll have a discussion tomorrow, Mr President, about Venezuela where the figures you were

quoting, High Commissioner will be very relevant. And I look forward to hearing what Peru has to say on Colombia later in the week about the refugee burden.

I wanted to turn to the Global Compact. I think from our perspective it's a major opportunity to deliver longer-term solutions, looking at jobs, education, infrastructure and opportunities for livelihoods. But it's got to be delivered, as we all know, in a way that supports those host communities and countries who are generous hosts. And the whole society of approach in the Global Compact I think has to be right and get the right mix of actors round the table and also, in doing that, allow UNHCR to concentrate on its core mandate. And we look forward to the first Global Refugee Forum in December and we're ready to play our part.

Lastly, I was struck by what you said about toxicity. I think this is something that this Council ought to return to. As we look at individual countries' situations, we ought to remind everybody of the humanitarian principles in play.

Thank you very much.

Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator publishes further arbitration awards

The office of the PCA has received a positive response to the publication of its initial set of awards at the end of 2018. Putting the arguments and behaviours of pub-owning businesses in the public domain is helping everybody who operates under the Code, and tied pub tenants in particular, to gain an equal understanding of decisions by the Pubs Code Adjudicator and Deputy PCA on what the Code requires. The published awards can be found [here](#).

The PCA and Deputy PCA are encouraged by signs that this exercise in transparency is beginning to create a more Code-compliant environment and one where pub-owning businesses are demonstrating more commitment to the core Code principles. Publication of awards is also facilitating the increased use of alternative arbitrators to resolve cases more swiftly. The office of the PCA will continue to publish awards and urges tied pub tenants and their advisers in particular to use these to keep abreast of issues relating to Code compliance.

The process of publishing awards has, however, been a frustrating one. The office of the PCA has found it extremely difficult in some cases to obtain the consent of the pub-owning business and tied pub tenant to the publication of an award; and there have been lengthy and time-consuming discussions with some parties over what information should be redacted because they consider it is personally or commercially sensitive. In certain cases, redactions have

been proposed that go to the substance and effect of the award itself. All of this has not only delayed the publication of individual awards but has also held up publication plans as a whole.

Paul Newby, the Pubs Code Adjudicator cautioned: "We must be able to publish our findings on the conduct and positions of the parties throughout the whole case, so that the industry can have a complete picture of what constitutes compliance. Transparency by way of publication is the surest way to stop pub-owning businesses from arbitrating the same arguments over and over again."

Fiona Dickie, the Deputy Pubs Code Adjudicator added: "The approach we must see is that claims of 'commercially sensitive' information will not undermine the principle of transparency and go beyond what is required to protect legitimate commercial interests. We have made clear our expectations to pub-owning businesses."

End

Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator publishes further arbitration awards

Today the office of the Pubs Code Adjudicator has published further arbitration awards covering a range of Pubs Code issues – including MRO-compliance, the right to request a rent assessment proposal and the nature of the stocking requirement.

News story: Teachers' Pension Scheme protected to ensure it remains among most lucrative

Schools and colleges in England will receive an extra £940 million to ensure teachers' pensions remain among the most generous in the country.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (Wednesday 10 April) confirmed that the Department for Education will fully-fund increased pension contributions that state-funded schools and colleges will have to make in 2019/20, following a public consultation on funding changes set out in a review of public sector pension schemes that takes place every four years.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is one of only eight guaranteed by the Government; provides additional benefits linked to salary; is inflation-proof to offer teachers a secure retirement; and offers the typical teacher around £7,000 in employer contributions every year.

This makes the scheme one of the most generous schemes on offer – in comparison, Work Place Pension rules require private sector employers to pay a minimum 3% contribution to an employee's pension, which is around £900 a year for someone earning the same salary as a typical teacher.

Employees, employers and the government all contribute to the scheme – and the Education Secretary Damian Hinds has today underlined his belief that it is important that the Teachers' Pension Scheme continues to offer excellent benefits to attract talented teachers.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is, quite rightly, one of the most generous pension schemes in the country. It's one of only eight guaranteed by the Government because we believe it is important that we continue to offer excellent benefits to attract talented teachers. We are providing an extra £940million to cover increased costs for 2019/20 so state-funded schools and colleges can focus their resources on providing the best education.

To illustrate how this scheme compares to others available: a teacher who joins the pension scheme at 23 and follows a typical career path could expect to accrue a pensions product worth around £600,000 – that's £30,000 a year – and the average classroom teacher will benefit from at least £7,000 a year in pension contributions from their employer on top of their salary.

The consultation response also assessed the funding changes for independent schools and higher education institutions that participate in the scheme. State-funded schools and FE colleges were prioritised to be funded.

Today's announcement commits to fully-funding the increases for state-funded schools and colleges in 2019/20 – the end of the current Spending Review period. Beyond that, with the exception of the NHS, all Government funding will be decided as part of the next Spending Review.

The £940 million will be provided to FE colleges based on their individual TPS costs, and to schools on a per-pupil basis with an accompanying Supplementary Fund, as outlined in the accompanying pensions grant documents also published today. This confirms that any school facing a shortfall from the formula grant of more than 0.05% of its overall budget can claim extra money to ensure schools are properly protected.

Speech: British High Commissioner addresses opening of exhibition dedicated to WWII veterans

Mr. President, Dear Veterans, Mr. General Secretary, Mr. Ambassador, Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

Last November the world marked the centenary of the end of the First World War. The Great War was supposed to be the war to end all wars. But less than 21 years later, Europe was at war again, and in September this year we will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

While not a battleground in either of the Wars, Cyprus contributed significantly to the allied effort. Yet in many ways, Cyprus's role in the two wars is an untold story.

The greatest contribution of Cyprus to the First World War was in the form of the Cyprus Mule Corp. Between 13,000 and 16,000 volunteer muleteers, Greek and Turkish speaking, served with the British army on the Macedonian Front.

In the Second World War, Cypriots fought side by side with forces from across the Commonwealth and the allies. Some 20,000 Cypriots from all communities of the island – Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Maronite and Latin – volunteered with the Armed Forces, while another 10,000 Cypriots living in the UK, Australia and US enlisted for service in those countries. Best known among the Cypriot volunteer forces was the Cyprus Regiment, founded on 12 April 1940, and celebrating its 79th anniversary this Friday. And not only Cypriot men joined the allied cause; Cypriot women participated in the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service and Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Members of the Cyprus Regiment saw service not only in Greece, but also France, Italy the Middle East and North Africa. Some 600 men were killed in action, and are buried in 56 cemeteries in 16 countries.

Yet for me one of the most inspiring moments as High Commissioner was to attend the Mayor of Nicosia's Remembrance Day event in November, and to meet and thank the Cyprus WW2 veterans present. It is wonderful to have veterans among us again tonight. Theirs are the living faces of Cyprus in WW2. We owe a great debt to them and the other Cyprus volunteers for their contribution to the allied cause. They fought for the cause of freedom and they were part of the victory over fascism in Europe. Regrettably, the adherents of fascism were to make their presence felt again in Cyprus, with tragic consequences for the people of this island.

Strangely these facts are not well known to ordinary Cypriots. References to Cyprus' contributions in the World Wars in the public schools' curriculum are limited and certainly not sufficient. I wonder how many Cypriots have visited the memorials to the fallen erected in Nicosia, Paphos and Larnaca by the Cyprus Veterans' Association of WWII?

"1940: Faces & Images" is a positive step towards raising the profile of Cyprus in the World Wars. I welcome the fact that this exhibition includes participation from the Imperial War Museum and that a smaller part of it will travel to the National Army Museum in London, bringing the stories of UK-Cyprus co-operation in the Great Wars to the attention of the broader public in both our countries. These testimonies of historic co-operation form an important part of our bilateral links and the history that binds our nations together.

The High Commission is pleased to be working with the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation on some side events to the exhibition in the coming months which will further tell the stories of the Great Wars.

Learning about and from the past is important for every nation. Cyprus has a number of impressive stories to tell from this part of its history: of communities working together side by side for the common good; defending freedom; and providing protection to those in need; and industriousness. Such values are as important today as in the past and central to Cyprus's modern role and vocation as a pillar of stability and European values in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

I congratulate the Bank of Cyprus Foundation for its initiative to hold this Exhibition and like all of you, I look forward to learning more from it.

Thank you and a very good evening.