

Press release: PM meeting with First Minister of Scotland: 3 April 2019

The Prime Minister met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to discuss yesterday's Cabinet meetings and the next steps in delivering the UK's exit from the European Union in a smooth and orderly way.

The Prime Minister made clear that this delay and division across the United Kingdom cannot continue and she is meeting with the Leader of the Opposition to find a proposal that can command the support of the House of Commons to allow the UK to leave the EU as soon as possible.

She added that Brexit is a decisive moment in our history and we must come together to deliver for people in Scotland and the whole of the UK.

Government response: Statement on Brunei from the Minister of State for Asia

I am disappointed that hudud punishments under the Sharia Penal Code were introduced in Brunei today. This is despite the UK and the international community repeatedly raising our deep concerns regarding these laws with the Government of Brunei.

The UK strongly opposes capital and corporal punishment, whatever the crime. We strongly support LGBT+ rights and are clear that nobody should face persecution or discrimination because of who they are or who they love.

The Government of Brunei have reassured us that the Common Law will operate in parallel with the Sharia Penal Code and will continue to be the primary means of administering justice in Brunei. I urge Brunei to ensure that this is the case and to uphold its international human rights obligations.

Press release: Nipping Floating

Pennywort in the bud!

Pilot scheme to remove the fast growing invasive species floating pennywort on River Colne

Press release: Nipping Floating Pennywort in the bud!

This spring, work is underway to control and remove floating pennywort from the mid-lower reaches of the River Colne Valley, which crosses parts of greater London and Buckinghamshire.

The project is part of a joint venture between the Environment Agency and Groundwork South – who are the driving force behind the ColneCAN (Colne Catchment Action Network) partnership, with members including anglers, water companies, local authorities and the Canal and River Trust.

The Lower Colne Catchment Floating Pennywort Management CVFC Plan is a two-year pilot project that aims to use a collaborative approach in improving the local water environment. The plan is designed to unite relevant local groups and organisations to restore and enhance the River Colne network and wider water environment.

Samantha Ho, biodiversity officer for the Environment Agency, said:

We are very excited to be working with our local partners to manage and monitor the spread of floating pennywort. Large rafts of the plant can affect the oxygen content of rivers, smother important habitats and reduce biodiversity. It can also potentially increase flood-risk and spoil amenity use.

Controlling floating pennywort can only be achieved with the continued co-operation from the river community. We need river users and riparian owners to be observant of any new growths and report via the CVFC NNIS App*. This will ultimately help to significantly reduce the spread over the summer when plants can grow up to 20cm a day in the warmer temperatures!

Tom White, Rivers Officer from Groundwork South and host of the Colne Catchment Action Network, said:

I've seen first-hand how floating pennywort affects the valuable

habitats the Colne provides for local wildlife and the impact it has on recreational activities, such as angling.

We have surveyed the range and severity of the species throughout the river network, and now have a management plan that sets out a strategic means of reducing the range of floating pennywort via a programme of annual control. This year, we begin our control programme, and our contractor will be removing pennywort on a monthly basis between Troy Lake and Denham Country Park.

We're also supporting local stakeholders in controlling floating pennywort on their patch. A £10,000 fund will be made at the beginning of April for local partners seeking to deliver volunteer workdays to remove the species. We hope this will help maintain key sites in the lower catchment and enable local people to contribute to the good work being delivered.

Floating pennywort is a non-native species of plant, introduced to this country as an ornamental aquatic plant. It tends to favour slower moving watercourses with slack edges and backwaters. The River Colne has a variety of flow types and wonderfully wild corridors; such a complex set up means floating pennywort has plenty of hiding places.

A new plant population can become established by a single fragment drifting downstream and once present in a waterbody can grow rapidly. This is a prime example of why it is important to dispose of plants correctly, and to follow advice from the national [Be Plant Wise campaign](#)

The Environment Agency is under no obligation to remove floating pennywort. However, we do have discretion to remove it under our statutory powers. Riparian owners are also not obliged to remove it, unless it can be shown that they planted it, though if it is on their land they do have a duty to take reasonable action to ensure it does not cause damage to neighbouring properties.

If you see floating pennywort on the River Colne or its tributaries please report its location via the [CVFC NNIS app](#) Not sure if it is floating pennywort? Visit the Non-native species secretariat [website](#)

Speech: Non-proliferation and International Stability

Thank you, Mr President.

As we embark on another review cycle for the Non-proliferation treaty, it is

important that we as the Security Council, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, take a step back and consider the contribution made by the NPT to international stability. For the past 50 years, the NPT has minimised the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and provided the framework for significant nuclear disarmament. To take the United Kingdom's own example, we have more than halved the number of warheads since the height of the Cold War.

Of course, the NPT has not been about prohibition. It has also provided the framework to develop secure, safe, peaceful uses for nuclear energy globally. This ensures the international community can have confidence in the safety of civilian nuclear energy.

But where proliferation does occur, the NPT also provides the framework for this Council's action to contain it. Under the JCPOA, Iran is subjected to a rigorous programme of inspections made possible by the architecture underpinning the NPT. While this Council continues to demand that North Korea dismantle its nuclear programme, the verification of that will ultimately need to be conducted consistent with the NPT.

As we approach another Review Conference, we should keep in mind that there is more that unites us than our differences, and that we all agree we should strengthen the NPT going forward. The United Kingdom is committed to working with all partners to securing a positive outcome to the Review Conferences. This this means resolving the Chairmanship, as well as agreeing an agenda for the RevCon in 2020, at the Third PrepCom.

Mr President, despite these challenges, it is important that we continue to demonstrate progress on disarmament in a way that strengthens all of our security. This is why the United Kingdom is working on developing disarmament verification solutions, particularly with the United States, Sweden and Norway in the Quad. Establishing an effective verification regime will be vital if we are to realise our long-term goal of multilateral nuclear disarmament. States will need to have confidence that a nuclear-armed state has dismantled its warheads and that, crucially, this is done in a way that makes us safer, rather than spreading nuclear knowledge.

This work has demonstrated that Non-Nuclear Weapon States can play an important role in the development of nuclear disarmament verification while preventing proliferation. We encourage all states to fully participate in this process to continue to grow capacity for verification worldwide – and very much welcome France and Germany's joint verification exercise scheduled for later this year.

Mr President, we must all continue to promote the step-by-step approach, and work for universalisation of the Non-proliferation treaty; early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; and promote the early commencement and conclusions of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me set out some of the steps the United Kingdom is taking to help support a successful Review Conference outcome:

We will be submitting a draft Implementation Report to the PrepCom, setting out how we have implemented the NPT this review cycle, and we encourage all states to do the same.

We intend to use our coordinator role of the P5 process to continue the excellent work that has taken place under Chinese leadership, including continuing the P5's dialogue with all signatories.

We will remain a strong supporter of the IAEA and all the work it does, including efforts related to Technical Cooperation. The UK has made significant extra-budgetary contributions to support the refurbishment of the Seibersdorf laboratories (including just over 1 million euros between 2016 and 2018)

We are pleased to have signed a new Voluntary Offer Agreement and Additional Protocol with the IAEA in June 2018 and the Nuclear Safeguards Act 2018 which enables the UK to establish a domestic nuclear safeguards regime.

We continue to regard the Additional Protocol as the gold standard of safeguards and urge those states who are yet to have done so to agree and ratify these agreements with the IAEA. We strongly support the State Level Concept.

Mr President, I would also note the echoing silence on compliance issues from some of the states which are most eager to promote the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, a treaty that lacks any concrete provisions for verifying compliance. The UK will not support, sign or ratify this treaty.

Mr President, We should not underestimate the challenges facing the Non-proliferation treaty – themselves an indication of the challenges facing international security. Any meaningful discussion on disarmament must take into account the wider security environment. We all have a responsibility to work towards a safer, more stable world, in which those states with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them, and this is where the United Nations Security Council must make its own contribution to the NPT. That must involve remaining resolute in our determination to fully disarm North Korea, and to prevent the escalation of conflicts. And we must give our full political support to the continuation of the NPT process and an agreed, consensus-based outcome to the upcoming review conference.

Thank you Mr President.