

Press release: International Development Secretary calls for aid to reach Burma

Following the UN Security Council's meeting on Burma yesterday, International Development Secretary Priti Patel has continued her calls for humanitarian access into Burma to ensure that further lives are not lost.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am appalled that more than half a million Rohingyas have been forced to flee their homes because of the horrific violence in Burma. Those who escaped, carrying little or nothing, have had to make the treacherous journey across the border into Bangladesh to seek safety, with countless people dying or losing loved ones.

I implore the Burmese authorities to ensure immediate and sustained humanitarian access into northern Rakhine State so that UK aid can provide a lifeline to all those who have been left to suffer and who are in desperate need of food, water, shelter and healthcare.

The relentless denial of aid is a matter of life and death for those still in northern Rakhine. It is utterly intolerable that the military who are responsible for this inhumane catastrophe have not heeded calls for restraint and pleas to allow those who are now refugees to return safely to their homes.

Britain is leading the way as the largest bilateral donor to the crisis in Bangladesh and UK aid is already making a difference on the ground, providing food for 65,000 of the most vulnerable victims, health care for 50,000, and emergency shelter for up to 26,355. We are also supporting 7,500 children, many of whom have suffered traumatic ordeals and are at risk of sexual violence and trafficking.

The world must follow the UK in helping the Rohingyas, not just now but in the long-term.

Notes to editors:

The UK is deeply concerned by the violence taking place in Rakhine State, particularly by the hundreds of thousands of people fleeing that violence and the reports of grave human rights violations taking place.

As of 29 September 501,800 people have fled the violence into neighbouring Bangladesh. Numbers are rising.

The UK has been a leader in responding to the crisis – in speed and size – to help meet the urgent humanitarian needs of vulnerable men, women and children in both Bangladesh and Burma.

Prior to the latest violence which began on the 25 August 2017, we committed £5.9 million to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and the host communities who support them.

In response to the latest influx we have provided a further £30 million of support.

Our existing work in the region meant that we were already in position to provide life-saving support when the crisis flared – without this, aid would have taken much longer to reach those in need. And we are sending more aid to Bangladesh.

In Rakhine State in Burma, aid workers have been getting British-funded humanitarian assistance to many tens of thousands of people. DFID's partners are ready to provide emergency food to 30,000 people and to treat more than 3,000 severely malnourished children and pregnant women, but the Burmese authorities must stop refusing to grant access.

This lack of access on the Burma side means vital needs will not be met and lives lost. Britain urgently calls upon the Burmese military to end the violence in Rakhine and the Government of Burma to allow immediate and full humanitarian access and support for the people and communities affected.

We have raised the situation in two UN Security Council meetings and led work in the Council to develop an international response. The Foreign Secretary also held a Ministerial meeting of General Assembly members at the UN General Assembly this month to drive this process forward.

Mark Field, Minister for Asia at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, visited Rakhine State in Burma on Wednesday, 27 September. He held talks in Burma with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to press for an urgent resolution to the crisis in Rakhine.

On Thursday, 28 September Minister Burt and Minister Field hosted a series of high-level talks in Dhaka, Bangladesh with key Government officials and aid agencies to identify how best to provide lifesaving support to the large influx of refugees in Bangladesh.

Britain is ready to support the recommendations of the Kofi Annan led Rakhine Advisory Commission to assist the long-term development of all people in Rakhine state, but right now the immediate action is for the security forces to end the violence and the Government of Burma to allow humanitarian access.

[News story: BPS 2017 payments exchange rate set](#)

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has confirmed the exchange rate for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2017 payments made in sterling.

The euro exchange rate for calculating BPS 2017 payments has been set. The rate, an average of the European Central Bank exchange rates set in September, will be €1 = 0.89470.

BPS payments for England are set in euros and then converted into sterling. The previous year's exchange rates for BPS were:

- BPS 2016: €1 = £0.85228
- BPS 2015: €1 = £0.73129

RPA will make full payments on BPS 2017 claims from the beginning of December.

RPA makes all payments directly into bank accounts by BACS transfer.

[Press release: Appointment of Matthew Rycroft as Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Development](#)

Matthew Rycroft, currently UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has been appointed as DFID Permanent Secretary with effect from January 2018.

The Cabinet Secretary, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced that Matthew Rycroft, currently UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has been appointed as the new Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Development (DFID) with effect from January 2018.

Welcoming Matthew's appointment Sir Jeremy Heywood said:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Matthew Rycroft as the Permanent Secretary for the Department for International

Development. He is doing an excellent job as the UK Permanent Representative to the UN and will bring to the role a wealth of relevant experience from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Number Ten. I look forward to working with him as he starts his work delivering DFID's important mission. I would also like to thank Nick Dyer for his excellent custodianship of the Department pending Matthew's arrival in January 2018.

Priti Patel, Secretary of State for International Development, said:

I look forward to welcoming Matthew Rycroft as DFID's new Permanent Secretary. Matthew's track record throughout his career, and his interest in international development, mean that he brings to the role a global perspective and understanding. This is central to my ambition that we continue to lead the UK's work to end extreme poverty and to build a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK.

Matthew Rycroft said:

It is a huge honour to be given the opportunity to lead DFID and support Priti Patel and her ministerial team at this exciting time for the Department. I look forward to working with my new colleagues and across Whitehall: to ensure that the UK remains a world leader in the fight against poverty; to support the delivery of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development; and to tackle other global challenges.

Notes to Editors

Arrangements for appointing a successor to Matthew Rycroft will be announced in due course.

[Press release: Minister hosts 'Call for Evidence' roundtable to improve accessibility of elections](#)

Minister called on the campaigners, who attended a roundtable hosted by the Minister, to share his Call for Evidence on how people with disabilities experience registering to vote and voting itself.

At the roundtable held during National Inclusion Week, the Minister highlighted his visits to every part of the United Kingdom as part of his Every Voice Matters Tour, which have helped him understand how to tackle barriers to voter registration.

As a direct result of this, changes have been made to the Certificate of Visual Impairment so it can be used by local authorities to support blind and partially sighted people to vote at elections, once their consent has been provided.

The Call for Evidence will ask people to provide information that will: * enhance the Government's understanding of the experiences of disabled people in registering to vote and casting their vote; * help identify if current mechanisms to support disabled people to participate in the democratic process are sufficient; and * identify examples of good practice provided by Electoral Service Teams to disabled people at elections.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

This Call for Evidence is part of the process to help ensure that every disabled person is able to have that equal chance and that equal right, to participate in our democracy, and to have their say.

We want to ensure that our elections are as accessible as possible, and to remove any barriers that exist to democratic participation – every voice matters and we want ours to be a democracy that works for everyone.

Press release: New protections for lobster stocks

New protections to improve the long-term sustainability of England's shellfish industry and support the next generation of fishermen have been announced by Fisheries Minister George Eustice.

From Sunday (1 October), fishermen will no longer be able to land egg-bearing ('berried') lobsters and crawfish in English waters – a move that will protect the species until their eggs have hatched.

England's shellfish industry is worth £117 million, and over £22 million worth of lobster and crawfish were landed in ports in 2016. But with stock assessments indicating the species are being fished at more than twice the rate scientists consider optimal, taking action now will make stock levels

more sustainable and provide long-term benefits for the fishing industry.

The UK is leading the way in Europe in providing this new protection for shellfish – with a proposal for similar action to ban the landing of berried lobsters across the EU currently in discussion.

Fisheries Minister George Eustice said:

We do not have quotas for lobsters but it is important to harvest shellfish sustainably. Ensuring that all egg-bearing lobsters are returned to the sea is an obvious step to allow populations to regenerate.

These new regulations will ensure a consistent approach around our coast and help protect our marine environment and the future of our shellfish industry.

The changes come after the government [consulted on introducing a ban in May](#), with respondents overwhelmingly in favour of proposals put forward and agreeing stocks are being over-exploited.

Local bans on landing berried lobsters and crawfish are already in place in certain Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), but a coordinated national ban around England will provide a consistent framework to sustain these important species.

The move follows a similar ban on catching and keeping berried edible crabs – part of the UK's continued work to champion sustainable fishing.