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Press release: The UK announces further support in the fight against malaria

As the second largest international donor, the UK has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce the number of cases for many years by investing in treatment, prevention and research, including the fight against the threat of drug resistance.

Today the International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced a £100 million fund to be matched pound for pound by the private sector, which will be used to support priority countries with mosquito nets, indoor sprays and the strengthening of health systems.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We know malaria still causes one out of ten child deaths in Africa and costs economies billions every year. We also know progress on reducing malaria cases has stalled, which is why it is so important it is one of the focuses of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The UK government is a leader in the fight against malaria and has been for many years. We are the second largest international funder in the world and invest in treatment, prevention and research, including fighting against the threat of drug resistance.

Our new commitment will save countless more lives and build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Malaria is a major health issue for the Commonwealth, with 90% of Commonwealth citizens living in affected countries.

The UK's new commitment will distribute 26 million nets and ensure more than

five million households in target areas are reached with indoor spraying. This money will save more lives and help build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all, which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Heads of government will be urged to make a commitment to halve malaria across the Commonwealth by 2023 at a Malaria Summit tomorrow in London co-hosted by the governments of Rwanda, Swaziland and the UK.

Today the Prime Minister supported the pledge to halve malaria in the next five years and re-affirmed the government's commitment in 2016 to spend £500 million a year on malaria for five years.

UK aid has helped Nigeria cut the estimated number of people who die from malaria in Nigeria every year by more than half – from 210,000 to 100,000 between 2000 and 2016. This year the Department for International Development will launch a new £50 million programme to push for further malaria control in the country.

The UK is also committing £9.2 million of research funding to develop two new safe and effective malaria treatments. The programme will be led by the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) which is a collaboration of the University of Oxford, Wellcome Trust and Mahidol University, Thailand.

This comes on top of the UK's leading work in the fight against malaria:

- Since 2011, DFID has distributed 49.7 million long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets – saving up to 808,000 lives.
- In September 2016 DFID announced the UK pledge of £1.1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria over the next three years. In 2016 UK support helped the Global Fund to save 2.2 million lives and avert 50 million new infections from malaria, TB and HIV.
- UK funded research that supported the development of child-friendly malaria drugs has now been used for more than 350 million treatments in malaria-endemic countries.
- The UK also remains committed to its five-year pledge, made in 2016, to spend £500m a year tackling malaria until March 2021.

Notes to editors:

As part of our £500m a year commitment on malaria, today we are announcing a £100 million investment in malaria. This is a match fund which leverages support from the private sector, giving an additional boost to the fight against the disease.

This money will support the Global Fund's work in priority countries. The Global Fund works in 38 of the 53 Commonwealth countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

Tackling malaria not only has a positive impact on improving health services, it also increases economic growth and productivity of affected countries.

Malaria affects economic growth, with the growth rate of the gross domestic

product per capita in malaria-endemic countries as much as 1.3 percentage points lower than in countries without malaria.

It can cost as little as £3.25 to avert a case of malaria – with an astonishing return on investment as malaria control brings £36 in social and economic benefits for every pound spent.

DFID supports research on infectious diseases, such as malaria, through the Ross Fund Portfolio. This follows a pledge in 2016 for the department to invest 3% of its budget in high quality, high impact research across all of its policy areas.

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[Press release: G7 foreign ministers' statement on the Salisbury attack](#)

We, the G7 foreign ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using a nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom, on March 4, 2018. A British police officer and numerous civilians were exposed in the attack and required hospital treatment, and the lives of many more innocent British civilians have been threatened. We express our deepest sympathies to them all and our admiration and support for the UK emergency services for their courageous response.

The United Kingdom has thoroughly briefed G7 partners. We share, and agree with, the [UK's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible](#) for the attack and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We condemn Russia's continued failure to address legitimate requests from the UK government, which further underlines its responsibility. We call on Russia to urgently address all questions related to the incident in Salisbury. The [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons \(OPCW\) has now independently confirmed](#) the findings of the

United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury. Russia should provide full and complete disclosure of its previously undeclared Novichok program to the OPCW in line with its international obligations.

This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War and is a grave challenge not only to the security of the United Kingdom but to our shared security. It is an assault on UK sovereignty. Any use of chemical weapons by a state party, under any circumstances, is a clear breach of international law and a violation of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#). It is a threat to us all. Their use is abhorrent, completely unacceptable and must be systematically and rigorously condemned. We, participating states of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, stand together against impunity for those who develop or use these weapons, anywhere, any time, under any circumstances.

The G7 is committed to protecting and promoting the rules-based international system. We stand in unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom. Our concerns are also heightened against the background of a pattern of earlier irresponsible and destabilizing Russian behaviour, including interference in countries' democratic systems. We call on Russia to live up to its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, as well as its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to uphold international peace and security. In order to bring Russia back into the rules-based international system, we will continue to engage with Russia, as appropriate, on addressing regional crises and global challenges.

The G7 will continue to bolster its capabilities to address hybrid threats, including in the areas of cybersecurity, strategic communication and counter-intelligence. We welcome national action taken to constrain Russian hostile-intelligence activity and to enhance our collective security. The G7 will remain closely focused on this issue and its implications.

[News story: Clean-up work underway in Salisbury in next phase of recovery](#)

Clean-up work is beginning in Salisbury after the appalling nerve agent attack, to bring a small number of potentially contaminated sites back into safe use for the people of the city and its visitors.

This follows the continuing handover of sites from the police investigation to recovery operations, including The Maltings, the cemetery, Zizzi and the Ashley Wood compound. In total nine sites, three of which are in the city centre, have been identified as requiring some level of specialist cleaning.

Today (Tuesday 17 April) a small cordoned area of London Road cemetery was the first area to be reopened to the public after extensive investigations and testing established that it was not contaminated.

All remaining potentially contaminated sites will remain secured and the current scientific assessment is that the remainder of Salisbury is safe for residents and visitors. Public Health England have reaffirmed that the risk to the general public is low.

Work to clean each site will involve a process of testing, removal of items which may have been contaminated, chemical cleaning and retesting. Sites will not be released back into use until test results and the work undertaken has been reviewed and approved by the government's decontamination science assurance group.

The work, which is expected to take a number of months, is being planned and overseen by Defra based on expert advice from Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), Public Health England, Department for Health and Social Care, Home Office, and Ministry of Defence (MOD). The clean-up operation will be carried out in partnership with Wiltshire Council with support from the MOD, who are providing specialist teams to carry out work on the sites. Around 190 specialist military personnel from the Army and RAF will support the operation.

Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser Ian Boyd, who is chair of the decontamination science assurance group overseeing the work, said:

Our approach is based on the best scientific evidence and advice to ensure decontamination is carried out in a thorough and careful way. Our number one priority is making these sites safe for the public, so they can be returned to use for the people of Salisbury.

Thanks to detailed information gathered during the police's investigation, and our scientific understanding of how the agent works and is spread, we have been able to categorise the likely level of contamination at each site and are drawing up tailored plans.

Meticulous work is required and we expect it will be a number of months before all sites are fully reopened.

The public will begin to see more activity in the city as the work gets underway. In the coming days residents can expect to see current cordons around the most public sites replaced with secure fencing, backed by police patrols and security guards. At certain points during decontamination, some cordons will be temporarily expanded to allow workers access to the sites with specialist equipment and ensure public safety as work is underway. Wherever possible this sort of disruption will be kept to a minimum.

As work in the city moves from site to site the local authority will keep businesses and the community informed.

The clean-up work goes hand in hand with the [£2.5m already announced](#) to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury.
Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

We are pleased that work will be starting to decontaminate the sites affected by the shocking attack in our city. Working together with local and national agencies we are doing all we can to help Salisbury return to normal. Our main concern is to ensure that Salisbury is safe for residents, businesses and visitors and that the city can focus on the future, its recovery and that it will go from strength to strength.

[Trade with China is booming – we're working to grow it further](#)

I'm writing this week's column having just arrived home in Glasgow from a successful official visit to China – so this is a good opportunity to share some reflections on what has been a very productive week.

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