

Press release: Statement on lifting of Ethiopia's State of Emergency

Harriett Baldwin said:

I welcome the decision of the Ethiopian Cabinet and Parliament to lift the country's State of Emergency early. Combined with other steps taken towards reconciliation, including the release from prison of British National Andargachew Tsege, this sends a positive signal about Prime Minister Abiy's intention to broaden political space in Ethiopia. I hope this will be followed by inclusive efforts to reform other legislation that has limited legitimate debate, including the anti-terrorism, mass media and civil society laws. Ethiopia remains a key partner for the UK and I look forward to continuing our dialogue on such reforms, as well as on crucial matters of economic development, regional and international security.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow Foreign Office Minister Harriett Baldwin [@hbaldwin](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email
newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk
020 7008 3100

News story: Crime news: prison law

scope changes to 2017 crime contract

We are making updated 2017 standard crime contract documents available for download. This follows recent changes to the scope of prison law.

The documents have been updated following consultations with representative bodies.

The amended regulations will come into effect on 12 June 2018. Guidance will also be updated.

Further information

[Standard Crime Contract 2017](#) – to download amended contract

[Criminal Legal Aid \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#)

News story: Looking after our environment

The team kitted out in protective clothing and armed with litter grabbers, took part in a clean-up operation with a difference recently.

Mike White, head of Infrastructure, Sellafield Ltd said:

We wanted to do a litter pick to reinforce our nuclear professionalism standards and raise awareness of how we can all help in improving our environment.

Like many community groups who are inspired to tackle the increasing problems with litter and waste, we wanted to do our bit on site. We want our employees to be proud of Sellafield and the environment they work in and a big step is to keep it as litter free as we can – with everyone doing their bit to maintain the standard.

Around 80 team members from Sellafield Ltd and Mitie took part. During the 2 hour pick, teams gathered around 100 bags of waste from a pair of flip flops to a tea towel to the most common cans etc.

Liz Spedding, head of Facility Services, Sellafield Ltd, added:

Teams in Infrastructure have specific jobs looking after and recycling waste but it's all of our responsibility to discard of waste appropriately.

We're all very aware of the impact rubbish has on our environment. The recent BBC 'Blue Planet II' documentary highlighted the devastating consequences and impact waste is having on our planet and our oceans.

"This is just one day but hopefully it will encourage everyone to take pride in your workplaces. We have litter kits available and will offer them out through normal networks if teams want to help keep their areas tidy.

News story: Government agrees final proposal for Heathrow expansion

Today (5 June 2018) ministers have set out final proposals to back [Heathrow expansion](#) – moving Britain a significant step closer to more flights, more jobs and greater economic growth.

Marking an important milestone in building a global Britain, the government has published the proposed [Airports National Policy Statement](#) (NPS), backing Heathrow expansion through developing a new north-west runway.

[Airports National Policy Statement on a proposed a new runway at Heathrow](#)

Under the proposal, expansion will be delivered in a cost-efficient and sustainable way, with a comprehensive package of measures to support affected communities and protect the environment.

Heathrow will be privately financed and costs will not fall on the taxpayer. To make sure expansion is delivered with consumers' interests at heart, the government has asked the Civil Aviation Authority to ensure the scheme remains affordable while meeting the needs of passengers.

A photograph of two construction workers in blue hard hats and high-visibility yellow vests working on a construction site. They are using tools to work on the ground. In the background, there is a large piece of heavy machinery, possibly a concrete pump or mixer, and a dirt embankment. The sky is clear and blue.

#HeathrowExpansion

MORE JOBS

Heathrow expansion would create tens of thousands of new local jobs

 Department for Transport

A new runway at Heathrow would provide benefits of up to £74 billion to passengers and the wider economy and create tens of thousands of local jobs. It will better connect the UK to the rest of world with an extra 16 million long-haul seats available by 2040.

Heathrow is already the UK's biggest airport for passengers and freight and the north-west runway will almost double the airport's capacity for goods, allowing businesses across the country to increase their exports and take advantage of new global customers.



#HeathrowExpansion

MORE EXPORTS

Expansion would almost double freight capacity at Heathrow

 Department for Transport

The benefits of expanding Heathrow will be felt across the country as there will be more flights around the UK, better connecting Scotland, Northern Ireland, the North and the South West to new global markets via London.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Expansion at Heathrow presents a unique opportunity to deliver a multi-billion pound boost to our economy, strengthen our global links and maintain our position as a world leader in aviation.

As we leave the EU, the UK must remain one of the world's best-connected and outward-looking countries and a third runway at Heathrow is the best option to deliver this.


We have listened to views through our consultations and will ensure a world-class package of measures to help any local communities affected by the expansion.



#HeathrowExpansion

MORE UK CONNECTIONS

Other UK airports would have more access to Heathrow

 Department for Transport

The NPS takes into account public and industry feedback and recommendations made by the Transport Committee to ensure that airport expansion in the south-east will be delivered in a way that is cost-efficient, sustainable and in passengers' best interests.

This includes a world-class package of compensation and mitigation measures to support those affected by the expansion, with up to £2.6 billion for compensation, noise insulation and community amenities, which could include improvements to parks and leisure facilities.

These are reinforced by plans for a 6.5 hour scheduled night flight ban and noise restrictions which will be legally enforceable.



#HeathrowExpansion

LOWER FARES

More competition between airlines at Heathrow would help keep ticket prices low

 Department for Transport

The government has also announced the creation of a new Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise, which will be an independent expert voice on noise issues, acting as a link between airport operators, airlines and local communities.

To protect the environment, development consent would only be granted on the basis that the new runway is delivered within existing air quality obligations.


Over the next few weeks Parliament will have the opportunity to debate and vote on the NPS.



#HeathrowExpansion

MORE CHOICE

Heathrow expansion would open up new destinations for travel

 Department for Transport

The government has also today committed to [supporting all airports beyond Heathrow making best use of their existing runways](#), including those in the south-east, as long as they address economic and environmental planning issues.

Aviation and maritime media enquiries

Media enquiries
020 7944 3021

Out of hours media enquiries
020 7944 4292

Switchboard
0300 330 3000

[Statement to Parliament: Update: Media Mergers](#)

Mr Speaker, with permission, I would like to make a statement about the

proposed merger between Comcast and Sky, and the proposed merger between 21st Century Fox and Sky.

In my quasi-judicial role I have considered these mergers separately, on their own merits, and want to set out my decisions taken on the basis of the relevant evidence.

Mr Speaker, I would first like to update the House on Comcast's proposed acquisition.

On 7 May Comcast notified an intention to acquire Sky. As Secretary of State, I am required to consider whether the merger raises public interest concerns that meet the threshold for intervention, as set out in Section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002.

As required, I considered:

- The need for a sufficient plurality of people with control of media enterprises
- The need for a wide range of high quality broadcasting
- And the need for a genuine commitment to broadcasting standards

Last month I informed the House I was minded not to intervene in the merger on the basis that it does not meet the threshold for intervention.

I gave interested parties time to make representations and I received no further representations.

As a result, I have concluded that the proposed merger does not raise public interest concerns and so I can confirm today that I will not be issuing an intervention notice.

Turning to Fox's proposed acquisition of Sky.

In March 2017 my predecessor issued an Intervention Notice on public interest grounds, due to concerns about media plurality and the genuine commitment to broadcasting standards.

The Intervention Notice triggered Phase 1 investigations by Ofcom and the CMA.

In September, having considered these reports, along with further advice from Ofcom, she referred the proposed merger to the CMA for a Phase 2 investigation on both grounds.

The CMA published its interim report in January, and provided its final report to me on 1 May.

I have today published this report, and deposited a copy in the Libraries of both Houses.

The report confirms, as previously set out, that the proposed merger does pass the threshold for a relevant merger situation, and provides

recommendations on both public interest tests.

On broadcasting standards, the CMA carried out a thorough and systematic assessment, taking into account:

Fox and Sky's approach to broadcasting standards, both in the UK and outside.

And the approach of Fox and News Corp to wider regulatory compliance and corporate governance.

The CMA concluded in line with its interim findings that the merger may not be expected to operate against the public interest on the grounds of a genuine commitment to broadcasting standards.

And Mr Speaker, I agree with this finding.

On the question of media plurality, the CMA's final report confirms its interim findings that the proposed merger may be expected to operate against the public interest.

The CMA found cause for concern in two areas.

First, the potential erosion of Sky News' editorial independence which could in turn lead to a reduction in the diversity of viewpoints available to and consumed by the public.

And second, the possibility of an increased influence of the Murdoch Family Trust over public opinion and the UK's political agenda.

The CMA has used a clear and logical approach, and taken into account Ofcom's media plurality framework.

They have taken great care to obtain a wide range of written and oral evidence.

And Mr Speaker, I agree with this finding too. Where the CMA makes a finding that a merger is likely to operate against the public interest, they are then required to consider what remedy would be appropriate.

To address the media plurality concerns, the CMA considered a range of options, including those proposed by the parties.

Specifically, these were:

First, a firewall of behavioural commitments to insulate Sky News from the influence of the Murdoch Family Trust;

Second, a ring fence, where Sky News would be separated structurally from Sky, but still owned by Fox. Along with the same behavioural commitments;

Third, divesting Sky News to a suitable third party;

And fourth, prohibition of the transaction as a whole.

I have considered the CMA's detailed assessment and their conclusions on how effective and proportionate the different remedies are.

I agree with the CMA that divesting Sky News to Disney, as proposed by Fox, or to an alternative suitable buyer, with an agreement to ensure it is funded for at least ten years, is likely to be the most proportionate and effective remedy for the public interest concerns that have been identified.

The CMA report sets out some draft terms for such a divestment, and Fox has written to me to offer undertakings on effectively the same terms.

The proposals include significant commitments from Fox. But there are some important issues on the draft undertakings which still need to be addressed.

I need to be confident that the final undertakings ensure that Sky News:

- remains financially viable over the long-term
- is able to operate as a major UK-based news provider
- and is able to take its editorial decisions independently, free from any potential outside influence

As a result, I have asked my officials to begin immediate discussions with the parties to finalise the details with a view to agreeing an acceptable form of the remedy, so we can all be confident Sky News can be divested in a way that works for the long term.

Under the legislation, I am required to consult formally for 15 days on the undertakings.

Subject to the willingness of the parties to agree the details, I aim to publish this consultation within a fortnight.

I am optimistic that we can achieve this goal, not least given the willingness 21st Century Fox has shown in developing these credible proposals.

However, if we can't agree terms at this point, then I agree with the CMA that the only effective remedy now would be to block the merger altogether. This is not my preferred approach.

Mr Speaker, we have followed a scrupulously fair and impartial process, based only on the relevant evidence and objectively justified by the facts.

I would like to thank Ofcom, the CMA, the parties, my predecessor and my fantastic team at DCMS for all of their hard work. I hope we can reach a final agreement very soon.

Mr Speaker, I want to see a broadcasting industry in Britain that is strong and effective and competitive. And I commend this statement to the House.