

Human rights situation in Belarus: joint statement

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 46 partners.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

We welcome your most recent report and have taken careful note of its recommendations. Allow me further to express our unequivocal and full support for your mandate.

More than a year has passed since the people of Belarus saw their hopes to elect a democratically elected leader of the country brutally dashed

Since then, they have bravely stood up for their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the face of well-documented, violations and abuses of their rights, repression and intimidation. There are more than 800 political prisoners, over 1,500 reported cases of human rights violations and torture – including through sexual and gender-based violence -, and the headquarters of over 200 CSOs, independent media, and opposition parties have been liquidated. We condemn the recent escalation of violations of human rights law, including reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders.

The regime made serious attacks on international law and flouted international norms. We condemn the forced landing of Ryanair Flight 4978 in Minsk for the apparent purpose of arresting a Belarusian journalist and his companion, and we also condemn its, attempt to forcibly repatriate a Belarusian Olympian from Japan to Belarus and the instrumentalisation of migrants in vulnerable situations for political purposes. Belarus state-sponsored illegal crossings at EU external border deliberately puts at risk and endangers the lives of third country nationals. We are deeply concerned by the regime's lack of cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the total impunity of those having committed human rights violations.

We seize this opportunity to call on the Lukashenko regime to end its repressive practices, and to immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been arbitrarily detained. We further call on Belarusian authorities to stop instrumentalising migration for political purposes and other hybrid threats that put people's lives in danger, including by blocking access to humanitarian aid. The only way to end the political crisis is through an inclusive national dialogue resulting in free and fair elections under international and impartial observation. We call on the Belarusian authorities to enter into genuine dialogue with representatives of civil society, in particular the Coordination Council.

We are steadfast in our support for the people of Belarus. We will continue

to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained in Belarus and to support international initiatives to hold all perpetrators to account, including through the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its examination and accountability mechanism on Belarus and the International Accountability Platform for Belarus.

Lastly, Madame Special Rapporteur, we stand ready to assist you in your efforts and would welcome your comments on how Member States can better support the people of Belarus and your mandate?

Thank you.

*Albania, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Ukraine, and the European Union.

[PM call with President Putin of Russia: 25 October 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Russian President Putin this afternoon ahead of the COP26 Summit.



The Prime Minister spoke to Russian President Putin this afternoon ahead of the COP26 Summit.

He welcomed the steps Russia has taken in recent days to commit net zero by

2060. The Prime Minister expressed his hope that Russia will raise that target to achieving net zero by 2050 as well as making further progress on ending deforestation and an ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution.

President Putin expressed his regret that he would not be able attend the COP26 Summit in person in the light of the coronavirus situation in Russia.

The Prime Minister was clear that the UK's current relationship with Russia is not the one we want. He said significant bilateral difficulties remain, including the poisonings in Salisbury in 2018. The Prime Minister also underscored the importance of Ukrainian sovereignty.

The Prime Minister said that as fellow permanent members of the UN Security Council and major world economies with a long, shared history, the UK and Russia have a responsibility to work together to tackle shared challenges like climate change and safeguard international agreements like the Iran Nuclear Deal.

The leaders also discussed the current situation in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of any recognition of the Taliban being conditional on their behaviour, including respect for human rights.

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[UK Emergency Medical Team deployed to Papua New Guinea](#)

A small team of specialist medics from the UK's Emergency Medical Team has arrived in Papua New Guinea on 24 October in response to an urgent appeal for international assistance.

Papua New Guinea's health services are under severe pressure from the rapid spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19.

The team of 10 experts will provide direct clinical care and mentorship to support local health care workers who are battling a sharp surge in cases.

The team members, including 4 NHS doctors and nurses, will be deployed for up to 6 weeks and will work closely with the country's National Control Centre for COVID-19, National Department for Health, World Health Organisation and other partners.

Minister for the Pacific, Lord Goldsmith said:

I am pleased that the UK has been able to respond quickly to Papua

New Guinea's urgent appeal for medical assistance.

The deployment of a UK Emergency Medical Team brings British expertise to where it is most needed. It will help save lives and build healthcare capacity in PNG for the future and demonstrates the vital role the UK is playing in the region.

Team Leader of the Emergency Medical Team, Pete Sykes said:

UK-Med are proud to represent the UK Emergency Medical Team in Papua New Guinea. Our expert team will be providing critical medical care to patients suffering with COVID-19 and support to health staff, at a time when their national health service has been overwhelmed by the rapid spread of a third wave of the virus.

The UK Government-funded deployment includes experts in emergency medicine, critical care and logistics and is managed by the British NGO UK Med.

The team arrived in the capital Port Moresby, following a direct request for assistance from the country's National Pandemic Controller and will focus on capacity building as well as helping to tackle the current surge in cases.

The UK is committed to working in the Indo-Pacific to address global challenges. This deployment builds on the millions of vaccines the UK has already donated to the region and supports our close Commonwealth partner, Papua New Guinea.

It is also in addition to the UK's donation of over £400,000 for vital medical equipment for Papua New Guinea and work through COVAX to provide hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 vaccines to the country.

Notes to Editors

- The UK Government's Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT), which has World Health Organization (WHO) classification, is a rapid medical response capability funded by the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).
 - Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the UK EMT has supported the WHO and health ministries in deployments of over 100 medical experts to Armenia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Lebanon, Namibia, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.
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FCDO Minister at UN to discuss the future for Afghan women and girls

News story

FCDO Minister of State for the UN, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon visited the United Nations Headquarters in New York last week for a series of meetings.



He told the UN Security Council during an open debate on women, peace and security, that the rights of women and girls must be central to any discussions with the Taliban. He called for the international community to ensure women are part of the conversation on the nation's future. He also said that negotiating teams and national delegations must include women and gender expertise.

The UK is a champion of girls' education and empowerment, including in Afghanistan where women's voices have been much less prominent since the Taliban takeover, and girls are not yet able to return to secondary school throughout the country.

FCDO Minister of State for the UN, Lord Ahmad said:

We will judge the Taliban by its actions not its words, and we will work through diplomatic, economic and development channels to help the Afghan people.

The Taliban must ensure and declare that girls of all ages will be able to attend school. All Afghan women and girls deserve to live in safety, security and dignity. This includes their right to education and to work. We have been clear that the Taliban will be held accountable for their actions, including on human rights.

Whilst in New York, the Minister also attended a high-level event with the Qatar Mission, UN Women, and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. During that event, he heard from a panel of Afghan women leaders,

and civil society representatives, and was able to discuss with them directly how the UK can best support Afghan women and girls.

During his time in the US, the Minister also visited Washington DC for bilateral discussions with counterparts. Whilst there he met Assistant Secretary Lu to discuss how the US and UK are working to safeguard the rights of women and minority communities in Afghanistan. In addition he spoke to Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya about human rights priorities shared by the UK and US, and met with the think tank community to talk about a better future for the Afghan people.

Notes to Editors

- The UN Security Council debate marked the 21st anniversary of the UN's first Security Council resolution on women, peace and security

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[UK COP26 Presidency publishes Climate Finance Delivery Plan led by German State Secretary Flasbarth and Canada's Minister Wilkinson ahead of COP26](#)

The UK COP26 Presidency is today (25 October 2021) publishing a Climate Finance Delivery Plan to provide clarity on when and how developed countries will meet the \$100 billion climate finance goal.

Based on the analysis from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the delivery plan shows that developed countries will make significant progress towards the \$100 billion goal in 2022, and provides confidence that it will be met in 2023. The data also provides confidence that developed countries can mobilise more than \$100 billion per year thereafter through to 2025.

Climate finance plays a critical role in helping developing countries fight climate change and adapt to its impacts. In 2009, developed countries agreed to mobilise \$100 billion in climate finance per year by 2020, and in 2015 agreed to extend this goal through to 2025. While developed countries have significantly scaled-up their support over the last decade, new analysis shows the \$100 billion goal was unlikely to have been met in 2020 and is likely to also fall short in 2021 and 2022.

Ahead of COP26, COP President-Designate Alok Sharma asked Jonathan Wilkinson,

Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Jochen Flasbarth, Germany's State Secretary at the Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, to work together to produce a Delivery Plan on the \$100 billion commitment, to demonstrate how and when developed countries will deliver on their promise.

Building on assessments of progress on the \$100 billion goal to date, the Delivery Plan sets out an estimated trajectory of climate finance from 2021 through to 2025 – taking into account new climate finance pledges from individual developed countries and multilateral development banks. It also sets out principles on how to improve the delivery of climate finance.

Whilst it is disappointing that the goal has not been met so far, the redoubling or significantly increased efforts from a large number of developed countries – including the UK, Canada, Germany and others – means we are now much closer to the target and are delivering funds to support countries on actions against climate change.

Private climate finance has also underperformed against expectations, the plan makes clear that more needs to be done in this respect, but does not rely on a significant improvement in this for the goal to be met by 2023.

Furthermore, based on consultations undertaken by Minister Wilkinson and State Secretary Flasbarth, additional pledges from developed countries may be expected this year but are not yet ready to be included in the analysis at the time of publishing. These are likely to further increase the projections outlined in the report.

The Plan lays out a set of guiding principles for collective actions of developed countries, including increasing financing for adaptation, addressing barriers in accessing climate finance, and improving private finance mobilisation.

Developed countries will continue to engage with developing countries and with civil society to ensure climate finance is delivered effectively, efficiently and at scale.

The OECD supported the work on this Delivery Plan with its expert analysis that provides aggregate, forward-looking estimates of an increase in climate finance from 2021 to 2025.

Climate finance will be key at COP26 in Glasgow later this month. Providing clarity on the timing and sources of funding is only the first step on the path towards delivery. Robust conversations will continue at COP26 on ways to ensure countries are collectively doing what is needed to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

The Delivery Plan sets out how developed countries will deliver the \$100 billion goal that has long been promised to developing nations.

Scaling up climate finance has been one of my top priorities as COP President. This plan recognises progress, based on strong new climate finance commitments. There is still further to go, but this Delivery Plan, alongside the robust methodological report from the OECD, provides clarity, transparency and accountability. It is a step towards rebuilding trust and gives developing countries more assurance of predictable support.

We can and must do more to get finance flowing to developing nations. So in the lead up to COP26, it's vital we see further pledges from developed countries and action on key priorities such as access to finance and funding for adaptation.

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change said:

It is critically important for developing countries to be able to trust that the developed world will make good on its promises, starting with the \$100 billion climate finance goal. Earlier this year, our Government doubled its climate finance commitment and is proud to have taken on this leadership role with Germany, at the request of the COP26 President-Designate. While more work needs to be done, I hope that today's report can instill confidence and trust that developed countries will deliver on their promises to the developing world, and that Canada will continue to be a constructive player to this end internationally.

German State Secretary Jochen Flasbarth, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Conversation said:

Developing countries have been rightfully disappointed that so far developed countries have not delivered on the \$ 100 billion pledge that was already given in 2009. Hence, I am glad that the process I was honoured to lead jointly with Minister Jonathan Wilkinson has created momentum to help complying with the finance commitment overall in the period up to 2025. We are very aware that also after today's release of the Delivery Plan, a lot of work remains. However, it is my strong hope that with this plan, we can show the international community that developed countries remain committed to deliver on their promises.

I can assure you that Germany is strongly committed to the \$100 billion target. In 2020, we provided in total 7,8 billion EUR for international climate finance. We intend to increase the fraction of our climate finance coming from our national budget from 4 billion EUR in 2020 to prospectively 6 billion EUR in 2025. Thus, we will continue to provide our share in the years to come.

- In 2009, developed countries committed to a goal of mobilising jointly \$100 billion a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation. This collective goal was reaffirmed under the Paris Agreement in 2015 as Parties committed to continue delivering on this goal through 2025[A7] .
- In June 2021, the Prime Minister of Canada announced that Canada will double its international climate finance commitment, to \$5.3 billion over the next five years. Canada's increased commitment to climate finance includes an increased focus on adaptation and recognises that urgent action is needed to address the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, which disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Since 2015, the Government of Canada has invested over \$100 billion in clean growth. The Government of Canada's existing climate actions put Canada on a path to exceed its previous target and allowed the government to set an ambitious new target of 40-45% reductions below 2005 levels by 2030 earlier this year.
- Greenhouse gas emissions in Germany fell by 40.8 percent from 1990 to 2020. Germany is to become climate neutral by 2045 and has outlined a path to achieve this with binding targets for the 2020s and 2030s
- The interim target for 2030, currently 55 percent, is being increased to a 65 percent greenhouse gas reduction compared to 1990. A new interim reduction target of 88 percent has been set for 2040.
- Climate action efforts up to 2045 will thus be more appropriately distributed across the current and future generations. Germany is moving away from coal during the 2030s. Coal-fired power generation is set to end by 2038 at the latest.
- By its Climate Change Act Germany has retained the system of year-specific permissible emission levels for the individual sectors for this decade, with these levels significantly reduced.
- The new German 2030 climate target also takes account of the new, higher EU climate target for 2030, which all member states agreed on at the end of 2020 during Germany's Council Presidency.
- The EU and its Member States, acting jointly, are now committed to a binding target of a net domestic reduction of at least 55% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. In July 2021, the European

Commission tabled the “Fit for 55” package which has the aim of aligning EU climate policy with the new NDC of the EU and its Member States.

- With new 2030 mitigation targets this year from the Canada, Japan and the U.S., combined with ambitious action from the EU and U.K., countries accounting for more than half of the world’s economy have now committed to the pace of emission reductions required globally to limit warming to 1.5°C.
- The financial support for international climate action has been consistently increasing and on a high level in recent years. In 2020, Germany provided in total 7.83 billion EUR for international climate finance. As part of that, Germany was significantly surpassing its pledge to double climate finance from budgetary sources to 4 billion EUR by 2020. As announced at the G7 summit, Germany also wants perspective to further increase its climate finance from budgetary sources, from 4 to 6 billion EUR annually by 2025 at the latest.
- The United Kingdom holds the Presidency of COP26, this year’s international climate meeting and negotiations. Climate finance is one of the four COP26 goals, a key priority for the UK’s COP26 Presidency.
- In 2019, the UK doubled its climate finance commitment to £11.6bn between April 2021 and March 2026, compared with the previous five year commitment of £5.8bn between April 2016 and March 2021. These amounts follow on from the £3.8bn ICF spent between April 2011 and March 2016.
- [Climate Finance Delivery Plan: Meeting the US\\$100 Billion Goal.](#)
- [OECD Technical Note: Forward-looking Scenarios of Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2021-2025.](#)
- [COP26 Presidency Compilation of 2021-2025 Climate Finance Commitments \(as at October 2021\).](#)