

# Missing but not forgotten

Today marks the ninth “International Day of the Disappeared”. This is a day for people across the world to pause and think of those who are missing.

To lose any loved one is painful. But to lose a loved one and never know their fate or resting place is heart-breaking. This has been the agonising reality for many families across the Western Balkans for more than two decades

As many as 40,000 people disappeared during the conflicts of the 1990s on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Some 11,000 are still missing. This remains one of the most painful legacies of those conflicts.

As we remember the Disappeared, we pay tribute to all those who have worked so tirelessly to find and identify the victims of the conflict and to bring some comfort to their grieving families.

Amidst the prolonged pain and suffering there is also a remarkable story. More than 70 percent of those reported missing at the end of the fighting have been accounted for. No other post-conflict region has achieved such a high rate of identification.

One reason for this is the use of new technology that has revolutionised the process of identifying human remains. This uses DNA samples from extended family members as well as immediate family, and will enable further progress in closing this painful chapter of the legacy of conflict.

The United Kingdom has been privileged to support and work with government bodies and local and international organisations. They endeavour to give families hope that their loved ones will be found and identified, and give them closure.

Families of the missing have a powerful story to tell. Their voices and actions have continued to help support others who are dealing with this issue. We remain humbled by their courage and determination. As His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales said when meeting them in London, “their dignity and humanity is a lesson to us all, and a reminder that reconciliation is not simply a theoretical abstract concept”.

At the Western Balkans Summit in London in July 2018, in a [Joint Declaration](#) regional leaders committed to ensure impartial and effective investigations into missing persons cases; resolve as many cases as possible; actively engage families in the process; and refrain from politicising the issue. We remind everyone of these commitments today.

We remain committed to helping intensify efforts to locate and identify those still missing. Ever closer bilateral and regional cooperation will be crucial to resolving outstanding cases. A key part of this is the Missing Persons Group established by the Missing Persons Institutes of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia with the International

Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP). The Group's plan sets out actions that the countries will undertake to account for the remaining missing persons cases, including the launch of a landmark public database.

We commend the Missing Persons Institutes' determination to work together across borders and to put families at the heart of the process. We urge them to maintain this sense of purpose and urgency, to bring comfort to families still searching.

As we remember today, we recommit to supporting the significant work that still needs to be done. We keep our eyes firmly on the goal of resolving the remaining thousands of outstanding cases. We will continue to work for justice for the victims of conflict, for peace of mind and closure for their families, and for enduring reconciliation across this beautiful region.

Co-authored by Nicholas Abbott, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kosovo, Matthew Field, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sian MacLeod, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Serbia, Karen Maddocks, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Montenegro and Helen Walker-Flemming, Chargé d'Affaires, British Embassy in Croatia

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## [Joint Statement on the use of violence and repression in Belarus](#)

World news story

Joint Statement by the Missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the European Union on behalf of the EU Member States represented in Minsk on the use of violence and repression in Belarus



Recalling our earlier comments and statements, we stand in solidarity with the people of Belarus who demand respect for fundamental freedoms and basic human rights through free and fair elections. We are struck by the continued peaceful demonstrations across Belarus. They show the determination and

courage of the Belarusian people to seek democratic change.

Since the elections, we have witnessed the brutal and disproportionate use of force by the law enforcement authorities against peaceful protesters and ordinary citizens. We have seen evidence of numerous injuries stemming from such use of force. We have been made aware of countless incidents of abuse and humiliation of detainees. We stand in solidarity with all the victims of violence and abuse. We join the families of the victims in their sorrow. It is with grief and in disbelief that we have witnessed the loss of life, the suffering, and violations of human dignity and justice in Belarus.

We condemn the disproportionate use of force and urge the Belarusian authorities to stop the violence and the threats to use military force against the country's own citizens and release immediately and unconditionally all those unlawfully detained. Intimidation and prosecution based on political grounds need to stop. We call on the Belarusian authorities to respect the country's international obligations on fundamental democratic and human rights. We expect a complete and transparent investigation into all alleged crimes and abuses in order to hold those responsible to account. Only this will pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis based on an inclusive national dialogue.

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## **Foreign Secretary commits to more effective and accountable aid spending under new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

Taxpayers will see more value from aid spending following reforms to the independent body that scrutinises UK aid, the Foreign Secretary announced today (29th August). Following the merger of the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) will be told to prioritise producing tangible, evidence-based recommendations to ministers to drive effective overseas development spending.

Dominic Raab has commissioned a review of ICAI to begin this autumn, almost ten years after the body was first established. The review will make sure ICAI's remit, focus and methods are effectively scrutinising the impact of UK aid spend, in line with the aims of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which launches this Wednesday (2nd September).

The merger of the UK's diplomacy and development offices was announced in June as an opportunity for the UK to have even greater impact and influence on the world stage as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic, and prepare to hold the G7 presidency and host COP26 next year.

The Prime Minister has committed to giving UK aid new prominence within our international policy under the new department. Following the merger, the Foreign Secretary will be empowered to make decisions on aid spending in line with the UK's priorities overseas, harnessing the skills, expertise and evidence that have earned our reputation as a leader in the international development community.

The Foreign Secretary said he wants ICAI to become "a committee for what works" in development. The FCDO will use the rigorous evaluation conducted by ICAI to determine how UK aid can be better spent, based on what the evidence shows is most effective for tackling poverty and global challenges like diseases, climate changes and humanitarian disasters.

The review will also look at how ministers can engage more with ICAI, to make sure the watchdog's independent recommendations lead to better decision-making and significant, lasting change at every level of the new department.

ICAI's remit will continue to include UK aid spent by other government departments, such as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

"We are integrating our aid budget with our diplomatic clout in the new FCDO to maximise the impact of our foreign policy.

"That's why I want to reinforce the role of ICAI, to strengthen further transparency and accountability in the use of taxpayers' money and relentlessly focus our Global Britain strategy on policies and in areas that deliver the most value."

The review, expected to start later in September, will be carried out by senior FCDO officials in consultation with ICAI, alongside independent external experts. It will also take into account the outcomes of the Integrated Review, which is currently looking at the UK's foreign, defence, security and international development policy. The findings of the ICAI review are expected to be published at the end of 2020.

ICAI was established in 2011 to provide additional assurance to the UK taxpayer that UK aid is being spent well, has an impact globally and provides value for money. The watchdog supports Parliament in holding the UK Government to account on its aid spending.

Previous ICAI reports have led to improvements in the ways UK aid is spent and monitored. It has, for example, it has led to more robust collecting and reporting of results for DFID's maternal health programmes. It also led to DFID providing greater support to other government departments that spend aid.

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# UK military dog to receive PDSA Dickin Medal after tackling Al Qaeda insurgents

During a dangerous operation in 2019, three-year-old Belgian Shepherd Malinois Kuno and his handler were deployed in support of specialist UK and host nation forces on a compound raid against a well-armed and aggressive enemy when they came under attack.

Pinned down by grenade and machine-gun fire from an insurgent, the assault force was unable to move without taking casualties.

Without hesitation, Kuno charged through a hail of gunfire to tackle the gunman, breaking the deadlock and changing the course of the attack, allowing the mission to be completed successfully.

During the assault Kuno was wounded by bullets in both back legs. He was given life-saving treatment by his handler and by medics in the back of a helicopter.

His injuries were so severe he required several operations before he was stable enough to fly back to the UK. Sadly, part of one of Kuno's rear paws had to be amputated to prevent life-threatening infection.

But now he is thriving after becoming the first UK military working dog to be fitted with custom made prosthetic limbs.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Without Kuno, the course of this operation could have been very different, and it's clear he saved the lives of British personnel that day. This particular raid was one of the most significant achievements against Al Qaeda in several years.

Kuno's story reminds us not only of the dedicated service of our soldiers and military dogs, but also the great care that the UK Armed Forces provide to the animals that serve alongside them.

Kuno underwent extensive rehabilitation under the watchful eye of Army vets and is fitted with prosthetics that allow him to run and play

Kuno returned home aboard an RAF plane, receiving in-flight care from a Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC) team. Back in the UK he was transferred to the Defence Animal Training Regiment in Melton Mowbray where he underwent extensive reconstructive surgery, overseen by Professor Dick White, one of the world's leading specialists in canine surgery.

Under the painstaking care of Army vets, veterinary nurses and canine physiotherapists, assisted by staff from the University of Nottingham, Kuno then embarked upon an innovative and lengthy programme of rehabilitation to restore function to his nerves and muscles, just like injured service personnel.

Kuno was a friendly and enthusiastic patient throughout, he loves human interaction and especially enjoyed his sessions on the hydrotherapy treadmill.

Within months, he was strong enough to be fitted with a pioneering custom-made prosthesis to replace his missing paw, alongside an orthotic brace to support his injured limb.

Kuno, who was on his second deployment when he was injured, is the first UK military dog to be fitted with such devices. Lightweight and fully bespoke, they enable him to run and jump as he wishes, securing a great quality of life for many years to come.

Colonel Neil Smith QHVS, the Chief Veterinary and Remount Officer, said

It is important that Military Working Dogs receive a high level of care if they are unfortunately injured, and Defence has military vets and vet nurses to ensure animals receive the care and rehabilitation they deserve. Kuno is an amazing dog in many ways, and we are delighted that the PDSA have decided to award him their Dickin Medal.

Now retired and rehomed, Kuno will receive the PDSA Dickin Medal, the highest animal honour in existence for military animal valour, which will be formally presented by PDSA, the UK's leading veterinary charity who run the world's most prestigious animal awards programme, in a virtual ceremony in November.

PDSA Director General, Jan McLoughlin, said:

Kuno's heroic actions undoubtedly changed the course of the mission and saved lives. He took on the enemy without fear or hesitation, never faltering from his duty despite being seriously injured.

For his bravery and devotion to duty, he is a thoroughly deserving recipient of the PDSA Dickin Medal and we look forward to formally presenting his award later this year.

The world-renowned PDSA Dickin Medal was introduced by PDSA's founder, Maria Dickin CBE, in 1943. It is the highest award any animal can achieve while serving in military conflict. Kuno will become the 72nd recipient of the PDSA Dickin Medal; previous recipients include 34 dogs, 32 World War II messenger pigeons, four horses and one cat.

Kuno has now been rehomed and is living happily with a new family

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## Funding boost for artificial intelligence in NHS to speed up diagnosis of deadly diseases

- Extra £50 million investment in diagnostic centres of excellence which will develop artificial intelligence to diagnose disease
- Centres will boost diagnostic capabilities, improve outcomes for millions of patients, and free up NHS staff time
- Funding will support our long-term response to COVID-19 as part of government commitment to detect three-quarters of cancers at an early stage by 2028

Patients will benefit from major improvements in technology to speed up the diagnosis of deadly diseases like cancer thanks to further investment in the use of artificial intelligence across the NHS.

A £50 million funding boost will scale up the work of existing Digital Pathology and Imaging Artificial Intelligence Centres of Excellence, which were launched in 2018 to develop cutting-edge digital tools to improve the diagnosis of disease.

The 3 centres set to receive a share of the funding, based in Coventry, Leeds and London, will deliver digital upgrades to pathology and imaging services across an additional 38 NHS trusts, benefiting 26.5 million patients across England.

Pathology and imaging services, including radiology, play a crucial role in the diagnosis of diseases and the funding will lead to faster and more accurate diagnosis and more personalised treatments for patients, freeing up clinicians' time and ultimately saving lives.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Technology is a force for good in our fight against the deadliest diseases – it can transform and save lives through faster diagnosis, free up clinicians to spend time with their patients and

make every pound in the NHS go further.

I am determined we do all we can to save lives by spotting cancer sooner. Bringing the benefits of artificial intelligence to the frontline of our health service with this funding is another step in that mission. We can support doctors to improve the care we provide and make Britain a world-leader in this field.

The NHS is open and I urge anyone who suspects they have symptoms to book an appointment with their GP as soon as possible to benefit from our excellent diagnostics and treatments.

Today the government has also provided an update on the number of cancer diagnostic machines replaced in England since September 2019, when [£200 million was announced to help replace MRI machines, CT scanners and breast screening equipment](#), as part of the government's commitment to ensure 55,000 more people survive cancer each year.

69 scanners have now been installed and are in use, 10 more are being installed and 75 have been ordered or are ready to be installed.

The new funding is part of the government's commitment to saving thousands more lives each year and detecting three-quarters of all cancers at an early stage by 2028.

Cancer diagnosis and treatment has been an absolute priority throughout the pandemic and continues to be so. Nightingale hospitals have been turned into mass screening centres and hospitals have successfully and quickly cared for patients urgently referred by their GP, with over 92% of urgent cancer referrals being investigated within 2 weeks, and 85,000 people starting treatment for cancer since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

In June, 45,000 more people came forward for a cancer check and the public are urged if they are concerned about possible symptoms to contact their GP and get a check-up.

National Pathology Imaging Co-operative Director and Consultant Pathologist at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust Darren Treanor said:

This investment will allow us to use digital pathology to diagnose cancer at 21 NHS trusts in the north, serving a population of 6 million people. We will also build a national network spanning another 25 hospitals in England, allowing doctors to get expert second opinions in rare cancers, such as childhood tumours, more rapidly. This funding puts the NHS in a strong position to be a global leader in the use of artificial intelligence in the diagnosis of disease.

The knowledge PathLAKE will unlock, both in the short and long-term future, will completely transform cancer care in the NHS while embedding a world-leading life-sciences and technology sector

across our health system.

Professor Kiran Patel, Chief Medical Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer for University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) NHS Trust, said:

We are delighted to receive and lead this funding. This represents a major capital investment into the NHS which will massively expand the digitisation of cellular pathology services, driving diagnostic evaluation to new heights and increasing access to a vast amount of image information for research.

As a trust we're excited to be playing such a major part in helping the UK to take a leading role in the development and delivery of these new technologies to improve patient outcomes and enhance our understanding and utilisation of clinical information.

Professor Reza Razavi, London Medical Imaging and AI Centre for Value-Based Healthcare Director, said:

The additional funding will enable the London Medical Imaging and AI Centre for Value-Based Healthcare to continue its mission to spearhead innovations that will have significant impact on our patients and the wider NHS.

Artificial intelligence technology provides significant opportunities to improve diagnostics and therapies as well as reduce administrative costs. With machine learning, we can use existing data to help clinicians better predict when disease will occur, diagnosing and treating it earlier, and personalising treatments, which will be less resource intensive and provides better health outcomes for our patients.

The centres benefiting from the funding are:

- London Medical Imaging and Artificial Intelligence Centre for Value-Based Healthcare, which will use artificial intelligence in medical imaging and related clinical data for faster and earlier diagnosis and automating expensive and time-consuming manual reporting
- the National Pathology Imaging Collaborative (NPIC) located in Leeds, which will boost the city's reputation in digital pathology research further by creating a world-leading centre linking up 9 industry partners, 8 universities and 9 NHS trusts
- based in Coventry, the Pathology Image Data Lake for Analytics, Knowledge and Education (PathLAKE) will use NHS pathology data to drive economic growth in health-related AI

Alongside the clinical improvements, this investment supports the UK's long-

term response to COVID-19, contributing to the government's aim of building a British diagnostics industry at scale. The funding will support the UK's artificial intelligence and technology industries, by allowing the centres to partner with new and innovative British small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), boosting our economic recovery from coronavirus.

As part of the delivery of the government's Data to Early Diagnosis and Precision Medicine Challenge, in 2018, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) [invested £50 million through UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\) to establish 5 digital pathology and imaging AI Centres of Excellence.](#)

The centres – located in Leeds, Oxford, Coventry, Glasgow and London – were originally selected by an Innovate UK competition run on behalf of UKRI which, to date, has leveraged over £41.5 million in industry investment. Working with their partners, the centres modernise NHS pathology and imaging services and develop new, innovative ways of using AI to speed up diagnosis of diseases.