

## **Press release: Russian Ambassador called to Foreign Office to discuss Syria**

Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Sir Alan Duncan met Russian Ambassador to the UK, Alexander Yakovenko, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office today (27 February) to stress UK concern at the current situation in Syria, particularly the crisis in Eastern Ghouta and the need for a ceasefire as stipulated in Resolution 2401 passed by the UN Security Council last weekend.

Minister Duncan welcomed the fact that all UN Security Council members, including Russia, had voted in favour of a ceasefire and underlined Russia's obligations to adhere to its commitments to ensure that UNSCR 2401 was implemented in full. Minister Duncan reiterated the UK Government's deep concern about reports of continued attacks by pro-regime forces in Eastern Ghouta, where an estimated 400,000 people have been under siege since 2013, including reports of chemical weapons use.

Minister Duncan urged Russia to use its influence to ensure the Syrian regime adhered to the ceasefire in order to allow rapid, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access and non-conditional medical evacuations which are urgently needed across Syria, but particularly Eastern Ghouta. Only one inter-agency convoy has accessed Eastern Ghouta since November, reaching just 2.6% of people in need. Humanitarian pauses of limited duration are no substitute for a sustained ceasefire.

Minister Duncan underlined that the violence in Syria reinforces the urgency of achieving a political solution, as called for by the UN Security Council, and urged Russia to work with the international community to achieve this.

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## **News story: UK aid supports Nursing Now! campaign to empower nurses in the world's poorest countries**

International Development Minister Harriett Baldwin today announced DFID will support the training of nurses and midwives in developing countries, to improve the quality of care, keep their own patients healthy and save more lives.

The support comes as Nursing Now!, a three-year global campaign run in

collaboration with the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization, has been launched to improve health globally by raising the profile and status of nurses worldwide.

Speaking at the launch of Nursing Now! at St. Thomas' Hospital hosted by their Patron, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, in London today, International Development Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

"Nurses make up nearly half of the world's health workforce and their knowledge, skills and motivation play a crucial role in keeping developing countries healthy.

"UK aid is supporting the Nursing Now! campaign by helping nurses build better health systems in the world's poorest countries which will improve the quality of care, keep their own patients healthy and save more lives. In Kenya for example, UK aid has already helped train more than 7,000 nurse midwives with vital skills, which in turn has helped to reduce deaths in childbirth by 10%."

Ms. Baldwin announced DFID will allocate £5million of the Stronger Health Partnerships for Stronger Health Systems programme to train nurses, in support the Nursing Now! campaign.

These partnerships between the UK and developing countries will help to develop the nursing and midwifery workforce to achieve Universal Health Coverage in the poorest countries and access to essential health services for all.

DFID has been a long-time supporter of working with developing countries to strengthen their health systems. At the centre of every health system are health workers and building the capacity of nurses is an important part of this.

UK aid is already helping tutors and lecturers at Kenya's Medical training institutions to improve the quality of the training programmes for their nurses, so the next generation are better equipped with the right skills. One of the key learnings is the importance of leadership skills so those on the frontline feel supported to provide better quality care programmes for mothers and new-borns.

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## **[Press release: Appointments to the Board and Export Guarantees Advisory Council](#)**

Shalini Khemka is the Founder, Chief Executive Officer and Board Director of

E2Exchange (E2E), which champions and connects entrepreneurs, creates communities, invests equity capital and recruits non-executive directors for SMEs. Shalini's background is in financial services, with a specialism in banking. In previous executive roles, Shalini co-founded the world's first online 'bank to bank' trade finance company, after which she served as an Investment Director at LDC, the private equity arm of Lloyds Banking Group.

Shalini also brings extensive advisory experience to UK Export Finance (UKEF), having previously served on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Entrepreneurs and the Development Board of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Currently, she is a fellow of Burton & South Derbyshire College, and a member of both the Mayor of London's Business Advisory Board and the Advisory Committee of the Commonwealth Entrepreneurs.

As a member of UKEF's Board, Shalini will support the Chief Executive and Ministers in developing UKEF's strategy and overseeing its operations by providing advice, challenge and assurance.

John Morrison is the founding Executive Director of The Institute for Human Rights and Business. He holds over two decades of business and human rights advisory experience, including roles with the United Nations, UK government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, General Electric and the governments of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Switzerland.

Dr Roseline Wanjiru is a Senior Lecturer at Newcastle Business School, with interdisciplinary research interests in economic development, trade and industrial policy, foreign direct investment and innovation strategies. She brings over 20 years' experience in the sector, including time spent in the University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield and presently in Northumbria University.

As members of the [Export Guarantees Advisory Council](#), John and Roseline advise the Secretary of State for International Trade on UK Export Finance operations, including environmental, social and human rights risks, as well as sustainable lending, compliance and transparency considerations.

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Exports, said:

As an international economic department, we want to make sure that UK exporters benefit from world-leading export credit agency support. The UKEF Board and Export Guarantees Advisory Council play a vital role in our efforts to achieve our ambitions for UK trade, and will be further strengthened with these appointments.

On joining the Board, Shalini Khemka remarked:

I'm excited to be joining the Board of UK Export Finance, a truly world-leading export credit agency. Thanks to UKEF's support, companies across the UK are realising their export potential in the global marketplace. I look forward to playing a role in this

success, supporting the Government in realising its ambitions for UK trade.

John Morrison, Executive Director of the Institute for Human Rights and Business, said:

The work of the Export Guarantees Advisory Council ensures UK Export Finance remains at the forefront of ethical and sustainable business practices. I'm very pleased to be using my experience in business and human rights to support the government's trade objectives.

Dr Roseline Wanjiru, Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for Business with International Management and Business with Economics, Northumbria University, said:

The government has an ambitious trade agenda, and the Export Guarantees Advisory Council plays a vital role providing policy advice to ministers as they look to realise this agenda. I look forward to playing a part in ensuring best practice in trade finance support for the UK's exporters.

Louis Taylor, CEO of UK Export Finance, said:

Shalini, Roseline and John each bring over twenty years' experience and a wealth of specialist knowledge as leaders in their respective fields. I'm delighted to welcome them to their new roles, and very much look forward to working with them as we continue to enhance and expand our support for the UK's exporting community.

## Background

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the [Department for International Trade](#) as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: aerospace, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.

4. UKEF has a regional network of 24 [export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
  5. Find the [latest information on UKEF's country cover positions]<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators>).
  6. The [Export Guarantees Advisory Council](#) is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by UK Export Finance. Its function is to advise the Secretary of State for International Trade on UK Export Finance's operations.
  7. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
    - Bond insurance policy
    - Bond support scheme
    - Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
    - Direct lending facility
    - Export insurance policy
    - Export refinancing facility
    - Export working capital scheme
    - Letter of credit guarantee scheme
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## **Speech: Call for a Political Settlement to Address the Humanitarian Crisis and Security Threats in Yemen**

Thank you Mr President.

And first I'd like to thank our briefers for their updates on the situation in Yemen.

I also want to thank you warmly Ismail, for your tireless efforts over the last three years to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. We recognise that this has been an incredibly challenging task and we appreciate everything you have done to bring all the parties back to the table and to create the conditions for a sustainable peace, often at great personal risk to yourself, so I thank you on behalf of the United Kingdom.

I would also like to welcome the appointment of Martin Griffiths as the new UN Special Envoy and pledge the United Kingdom's full support for his future efforts.

Mr President,

As we've just heard from the UN, the conflict in Yemen has caused the world's most devastating humanitarian crisis. Over 22 million people – more than three quarters of the population – are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Of these 22 million people, more than half require immediate help to save or sustain life. These people will not survive unless they receive assistance.

The United Kingdom is committed to providing that assistance to the people of Yemen. We are the second largest donor to the UN's Yemen Appeal and the third largest donor to the UN overall. We provided \$286 million to the appeal in the Financial Year of 2017/18. We also continue to work hard towards finding a consensus on a Presidential Statement from this Council aimed at responding to the recent developments on the ground.

Despite the devastating humanitarian situation, last year's Appeal was only 70 per cent funded. This year, as the situation deteriorates further, we've just heard that the UN are requesting a record \$2.96 billion. The recent pledge made by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to contribute \$930 million to the 2018 Appeal is very welcome, as is their commitment to disburse this by the end of March. The upcoming pledging conference hosted by Sweden and Switzerland is also an opportunity to respond to the UN's appeal and help the starving people of Yemen. We call upon all donors to answer this call and ensure all pledges are disbursed in a timely manner.

However, aid alone will not address the needs of the Yemeni people. Imports of food, fuel, and medicine continue to remain well below levels of need. All parties to the conflict must allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen, which is essential to avert the risk of mass starvation.

All plans and efforts to improve access are welcome; however, there can be no substitute for full and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access to the Red Sea ports of Hodeidah and Saleef. Eighty per cent of Yemen's imports enter the country through these ports. Other ports lack the necessary berthing, storage, and milling capacity, and it takes days to transport goods by road across multiple conflict frontlines to reach those in need.

Mr President,

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has not only given rise to the world's largest humanitarian crisis. It's also created ungoverned spaces that terrorists can operate in; posed security threats to regional countries and international shipping; and fuelled regional tensions. This is demonstrated by the ballistic missile launches by the Houthis against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia, and their stated intention to launch attacks against the United Arab Emirates and to "block" the Red Sea international shipping lane.

We agree with the Panel of Experts conclusion that missiles fired by the Houthis of Iranian origin and provided after the imposition of the arms embargo mean that Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of Resolution

2216. We call upon Iran to cease all and any activity which fuels the conflict in Yemen.

Until an enduring political settlement is reached, the sanctions regime is a critical tool to deter those who would otherwise use violence to achieve their political aims.

Mr President,

Humanitarian aid and access will only provide temporary relief for the people of Yemen. Ultimately, a political settlement is by far the best way to address the humanitarian crisis and security threats emanating from Yemen.

We call upon all parties to engage constructively with the incoming Special Envoy and to abandon pre-conditions in order to restart the political process. All members of this Council should employ all their influence over the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation.

Thank you.

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## **News story: Civil news: replacement contract schedules begin 1 April 2018**

We will soon be issuing new civil contract schedules beginning on 1 April 2018.

These will replace the following schedules which are ending on 31 March 2018:

1. 2010 Standard Civil Contract (mediation)
2. 2013 Standard Civil Contract (family, housing and debt, immigration and asylum)
3. 2013 Standard Civil Contract (welfare benefits)
4. 2015 Standard Civil Contract (actions against the police etc, public law and clinical negligence)
5. 2016 Standard Civil Contract (welfare benefits)
6. Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) exclusive schedules
7. Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) exclusive schedules

All schedules will run for 5 months and end on 31 August 2018. The only exception will be the HPCDS schedules, which will be issued for 6 months.

### **Where to find new schedules**

You will be able to view schedules in Contracted Work and Administration (CWA) from 31 March 2018. But HPCDS and IRC schedules will be emailed to you directly and will not be uploaded into CWA.

## Reporting work

Work completed in April can be reported from 1 May 2018.

## Matter start allocations

In most cases, matter starts will be allocated in accordance with paragraph 1.24-1.27 of the relevant contract specification.

This means matter start allocations will be calculated on the basis that providers receive 100% of the matters that they reported in the previous schedule period.

The only exception is where providers reported 80% or less of their previous allocation. In these circumstances, provider will receive 80% of their previous allocation.

The allocation has been made on a proportional basis to reflect that the schedules are only 5 months long.

## Separate matter start allocations

There are a few instances where separate allocation approaches will apply. These are outlined here:

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
2010 Standard Civil Contract (mediation)	50 matter starts
2013 standard civil contract (welfare benefits)	The standard number of matter starts for the relevant procurement area
2016 standard civil contract (welfare benefits)	30 matter starts
HPCDS and IRC exclusive schedules	The same allocation as in the previous schedule, subject to any changes resulting from court closures affecting some HPCDS

Where providers have the power to self-grant a further 50% matter starts they may do so in addition to the amount specified in the schedule.

Where a provider does not have the power to self-grant, they can request up to an additional 50% of matter starts from their contract manager.

## Contract end date

Civil legal aid contracts will end on 31 August 2018. The new 2018 Standard Civil Contract will begin on 1 September and the Housing Possession Court Duty Solicitor Contract will begin on 1 October 2018.