

News story: Penny Mordaunt calls for continued commercial and aid access throughout Yemen

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt in Djibouti with aid destined for Yemen. Picture: Benet Coulber/DFID

All parties to the conflict must continue to allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen to avert the risk of mass starvation, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt warned today. Yemen is the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the world and has left over three quarters of the Yemeni population in desperate need of assistance.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, who visited Saudi Arabia and Djibouti in December to call for access and meet aid workers, said:

I heard about some of the heartbreaking tragedies suffered by Yemenis when I met with refugees and international aid workers last month.

I am pleased restrictions on access have since been eased at the ports of Hodeidah and Saleef, allowing 19 ships to deliver food and critical fuel. This is already saving lives by ensuring hospitals can continue delivering essential medical care, water can be pumped into major cities, grain can continue to be milled into flour and food transported to those most in need.

But the situation in Yemen remains dire and will deteriorate rapidly unless unhindered access is maintained, especially to the north of the country.

With Yemen importing 90% of its food and fuel, it's essential that Hodeidah and Saleef ports remain fully open to help millions of people who are at risk of starving to death. We recognise Saudi Arabia's legitimate security concerns and will continue to provide support to prevent illegal arms smuggling into Yemen – this does not require stopping humanitarian and commercial supplies from reaching those in need.

The UK Government strongly condemns the continued firing of ballistic missiles from Yemen towards Saudi Arabia. We continue to support Saudi Arabia to strengthen efforts to prevent the flow of illegal weapons by providing extra UK support to the UN's Verification and Inspection Mechanism. We are also engaging with Saudi Arabia's plans to develop an operational

humanitarian plan for Yemen.

Since access reopened, 19 ships have been permitted to enter Hodeidah and Saleef ports, unloading 260,000MT of food and over 95,000MT of fuel. It is vital that commercial and humanitarian supplies of food, fuel and medicine are able to reach vulnerable Yemeni people, particularly in the north where 70% of those in need live. The UK is the second-largest humanitarian donor to the UN's Yemen Appeal and third-largest donor overall, and will continue to support millions of Yemenis affected by the conflict.

Notes to Editors

1. On 20 December, the coalition announced it would fully re-open Hodeidah port to vital commercial imports, including fuel. This was announced shortly after the Secretary of State visited Saudi Arabia.
2. The UK's £205 million of support this financial year (2017/18) is providing: enough food for 1.8 million people for at least a month; nutrition support for 1.7 million people; and clean water and sanitation for 1.2 million people. The latest package of UK support, announced by the International Development Secretary in December, will in addition provide enough food for 3.4 million people for at least a month and provide fuel to support the milling of enough wheat to feed a million people for over a year.
3. The UK is providing £1.3m to the UN's Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to facilitate commercial shipping into Yemen's Red Sea ports and provide assurances against weapons smuggling, and we have seconded British experts into UNVIM in Djibouti to assist with the inspections process.

[News story: Parents and carers advised to inspect Buccolam oral syringes before use](#)

In an alert issued last year, healthcare professionals were asked to speak to parents and carers about carefully inspecting Buccolam pre-filled plastic syringes before giving the medicine.

Buccolam is an epilepsy medicine, which is available as pre-filled oral syringes. A defect with some syringes has been reported. In a small number of cases, the translucent (white) tip-cap can sometimes remain attached to the

syringe after the red cap has been taken off, this is a choking hazard.

Buccolam remains safe to use if the patient/carer instructions are followed. Carefully check the syringe before giving the medicine and remove the translucent tip-cap manually if it is still on the syringe after the red cap has been pulled off. A diagram explaining this can be found in the [alert](#).

If you think the tip-cap is in the patient's mouth, do not attempt to remove it. Instead, turn the patient onto their side (recovery position) and make sure they spit it out when they stop fitting.

This is not a new issue, MHRA previously issued [this alert](#) in December 2017. However, we are now aware of a few rare reports in Europe of a child breathing in or swallowing the tip-cap and the EMA have added guidance on their website.

We want to make sure parents and carers of children who are using Buccolam are aware of the practical steps to take should they need to dispense this medicine. Pharmacists who prescribe and dispense Buccolam have also been asked to share this information with parents and caregivers.

The manufacturer is working to resolve this issue for new syringes.

If patients, parents, or carers have any questions or want to report any side effects, they should talk to a doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. They should also tell them about any occasions in which the translucent tip-cap remained attached to the syringe.

Suspected side effects can also be reported directly to MHRA via the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Cambodia in June 2018](#)

Ms Tina Redshaw has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Ms Tina Redshaw has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia in succession to Mr Bill Longhurst, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Ms Redshaw will take up her appointment in June 2018.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Tina Susan Redshaw

2016 – present Full time language training

2013 – 2016 Chongqing, Her Majesty's Consul General

2011 – 2013 FCO, Deputy Head of Climate Change & Energy Department

2011 FCO, Head of Multilateral team, Asia Pacific Directorate

2007 – 2010 Beijing, Head of Energy, Environment & Infrastructure, UK Trade & Investment

2006 – 2007 FCO, Researcher for FCO Board

2003 – 2006 Timor Leste, Her Majesty's Ambassador

2000 – 2003 Beijing, First Secretary

1999 – 2000 FCO, China, Hong Kong Department

1999 Joined FCO

Further information

[News story: Refresco proposal to sell soft drink factory](#)

Earlier this month, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that the proposed merger of the soft drink manufacturers could lead to higher prices for some supermarkets and leading household brands.

The CMA's initial investigation into the £935 million (\$1.25 billion) merger did not find any competition concerns for the majority of the companies' products.

However, both companies supply juice drinks using a particular aseptic production process, which allows them to be sold preservative-free and without refrigeration. As only one other competitor in the UK currently supplies third parties with juice drinks using this production process the CMA is concerned that, after the merger, the combined business might be able to increase prices or lower quality standards.

Refresco has now offered to address the CMA's concerns by selling the only UK-based Cott facility to use this production process. The factory, located in Nelson, Lancashire, would be sold to a purchaser approved by the CMA.

The CMA has accepted this offer in principle and now has until 14 March 2018 to decide whether to accept Refresco's proposed undertakings or refer the

merger for an in depth investigation.

All information relating to the merger is available on the [case page](#).

[Press release: PM commits to government-wide drive to tackle loneliness](#)

Today (Wednesday 17 January) the Prime Minister will set out how government is tackling loneliness and combating social isolation.

She will announce that the government is accepting a series of recommendations from the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness.

The Prime Minister will host a reception at Downing Street to celebrate Jo Cox's legacy, and the important work of her family, Foundation and the Commission in highlighting how many people are experiencing loneliness.

Research shows:

- more than 9 million people always or often feel lonely
- around 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or relative in more than a month
- up to 85% of young disabled adults – 18-34 year olds – feel lonely

Ahead of the reception, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Jo Cox, her family and to those working for the Foundation and Commission for highlighting the issue.

The Prime Minister said:

For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life.

I want to confront this challenge for our society and for all of us to take action to address the loneliness endured by the elderly, by carers, by those who have lost loved ones – people who have no one to talk to or share their thoughts and experiences with.

Jo Cox recognised the scale of loneliness across the country and dedicated herself to doing all she could to help those affected.

So I am pleased that government can build on her legacy with a ministerial lead for loneliness who will work with the Commission, businesses and charities to shine a light on the issue and pull

together all strands of government to create the first ever strategy.

We should all do everything we can to see that, in Jo's memory, we bring an end to the acceptance of loneliness for good.

The Prime Minister has today implemented the first of the Jo Cox Commission's recommendations – appointing a ministerial lead on loneliness. The Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch will lead a cross-government group which will take responsibility for driving action on loneliness across all parts of government and keeping it firmly on the agenda.

In addition, work has also begun on:

- developing a cross-government strategy on loneliness in England to be published later this year. This will bring together government, local government, public services, the voluntary and community sector and businesses to identify opportunities to tackle loneliness, and build more integrated and resilient communities
- developing the evidence-base around the impact of different initiatives in tackling loneliness, across all ages and within all communities, led by the government's What Works centres
- establishing appropriate indicators of loneliness across all ages with the Office for National Statistics so these figures can be included in major research studies
- a dedicated fund which will see government working with charitable trusts, foundations, and others to:
 - stimulate innovative solutions to loneliness across all ages, backgrounds and communities
 - provide seed funding for communities to come together to develop activities which enable people to connect
 - scale-up and spread existing work offering practical and emotional support to help lonely individuals reconnect with their communities

A number of government initiatives are already in place to help reduce loneliness, including improved mental health support, and the pocket parks programme which has transformed unused spaces into new green areas, giving lonely people the chance to join volunteering groups and interact with neighbours.

New ministerial lead for loneliness, Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch said:

I am privileged to be taking forward the remarkable work done by Jo Cox, the Foundation and the Commission. I am sure that with the support of volunteers, campaigners, businesses and my fellow MPs from all sides of the House, we can make significant progress in defeating loneliness.

This is an issue that Jo cared passionately about and we will honour her memory by tackling it, helping the millions of people

across the UK who suffer from loneliness.

Loneliness can be triggered by a life event, such as a bereavement or becoming a parent, with certain groups, such as young people and carers, particularly at risk.

The Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, chaired by Rachel Reeves MP and Seema Kennedy MP, has spent the last year considering what the government and others can do to help. They have been working with 13 charities including Age UK and Action for Children to develop ideas for change.

Rachel Reeves MP and Seema Kennedy MP, co-Chairs of the Commission said:

We are really pleased to see that the government is taking the issue of loneliness very seriously with its prompt response to our report. Jo Cox said that “young or old, loneliness doesn’t discriminate.

Throughout 2017 we have heard from new parents, children, disabled people, carers, refugees and older people about their experience of loneliness.

We very much welcome that government has accepted the Commission’s recommendations including the appointment of a new ministerial lead who will have the responsibility for creating a national strategy to tackle loneliness. We look forward to working with Minister Tracey Crouch, businesses, community groups and the public to create a world less lonely.

Mark Robinson, Chief Officer of Age UK Barnet said:

Loneliness can kill. It’s proven to be worse for health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day, but it can be overcome and needn’t be a factor in older people’s lives.

Age UK provide a wide variety of services and we welcome the work that the government is doing to support lonely people in communities throughout the country.

Phil Burton, a former Royal Artillery Lance Bombardier, will attend the reception to receive a Point of Light Award from the Prime Minister for his work to tackle loneliness. He founded the Veterans’ Café in Leyland which brings former members of the armed forces together, to talk, share experiences and access support from charities and the NHS. He said:

When I first started the venture with the Veterans’ Café, I never thought it would grow into something this big. I originally wanted to set this up for the veterans, so they had a place to meet, and

talk to like-minded people with the same day to day issues. This has now brought the veteran community together, and is allowing veterans of all ages to get the help where needed. This would never have been possible without the help of South Ribble Council, and the veterans that support the café on a fortnightly basis.