

Press release: Priti Patel will double the next £2 million of public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for people fleeing Burma

In response to the staggering public support for the [Disasters Emergency Committee \(DEC\) Appeal](#) for people fleeing the violence and destruction in Burma, the UK Government will match pound for pound the next £2 million raised, the International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced during a visit to the DEC today (Thursday 12 October).

This is in addition to the £3 million in public donations already matched by the UK, which has helped Britain raise £9 million.

The new support will double the impact of the public's own donations and ensure that charities working on the ground can reach even more innocent men, women and children who have been forced to flee the relentless violence and atrocities in Burma, and make the treacherous journey to Bangladesh to seek refuge.

Moved by the scale of the crisis and the generosity of the British public, Ms Patel visited the DEC headquarters today where she met with British aid workers who have recently returned from Cox's Bazar where they have been helping to save the lives of Rohingya victims of persecution and brutality.

International Development Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The generosity of the British public and the speed in which they have responded to this appeal is overwhelming. Every penny raised is making a significant difference for victims of the ethnic cleansing being inflicted by the Burmese military.

The UK Government is working at every level to ensure that lifesaving aid reaches those in dire need right now. Thousands of shelter kits, sleeping mats and thermal blankets have already been distributed in Cox's Bazar and more aid is on the way to support the half a million people forced to leave everything behind in Burma and make the perilous journey to Bangladesh.

The British public has played a remarkable role and they should know that their donations are saving lives. Malnourished children on the brink of death will now be able to eat, families who have been forced to live out in the open after their villages were burned will get shelter and much needed clean drinking water will

be provided to help stop the spread of disease.

It has been a privilege to meet brave British aid workers who have returned from Cox's Bazar, supporting innocent people who are grieving the loss of loved ones and are uncertain what their futures hold.

The humanity they and the British public have shown is a stark contrast to the inhumanity of the Burmese authorities. They need to stop the inhumane violence, allow people to return to their homes safely and ensure immediate access into northern Rakhine so that UK aid can provide a lifeline to those suffering.

This brings the UK's contribution to £5 million over the course of the DEC appeal and will provide vital and life-saving emergency supplies. Today's new support is on top of support that the UK is already providing to people who are in desperate need of food, water and shelter.

Notes to editors

- The DEC brings 13 leading UK aid charities together in times of crisis: ActionAid, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, CARE International, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam, Plan International UK, Save the Children, Tearfund and World Vision; all collectively raising money to reach those in need quickly.
- As of Wednesday 11 October, £9 million has been raised of which £3 million has been aid matched by the UK Government. DFID aid matches public donations from British taxpayers, but others can contribute including non-British taxpayers and businesses.
- The UK is appalled by the violence taking place in Rakhine State, particularly by the hundreds of thousands of people fleeing that violence and the reports of grave human rights violations taking place. Britain urgently calls upon the Burmese military to end the violence in Rakhine and the Government of Burma to allow immediate and full humanitarian access and support for the people and communities affected.
- As of Sunday 8 October, 519,000 people have fled the violence into neighbouring Bangladesh as a result of Burmese military and militia violence. This looks like ethnic cleansing; we need to see these people able to return to their homes in Burma safely. The Burmese and Bangladeshi authorities are discussing a refugee return process. But we will need to see this agreed and implemented and the Burmese authorities need to show the Rohingya will be safe when they return.
- The UK has been a leader in responding to the crisis – in speed and size – to help meet the urgent humanitarian needs of vulnerable men, women and children in both Bangladesh and Burma.
- Prior to the latest violence which began on Friday, 25 August 2017, we committed £5.9 million to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and the host communities who support them. In response to the latest influx we have provided a further £30 million of humanitarian support.
- Our existing work in the region meant that we were already in position

to provide life-saving support when the crisis flared – without this, aid would have taken much longer to reach those in need. And we are sending more aid to Bangladesh.

- Through our partner, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 10,000 shelter kits, 10,500 mats and 20,000 blankets were distributed recently. Emergency shelter for up to 26,355 people has already been provided since the first refugees made their way to Bangladesh.
- In Rakhine State in Burma, aid workers have been getting British-funded humanitarian assistance to many tens of thousands of people. DFID's partners are ready to provide emergency food to 30,000 people and to treat more than 3,000 severely malnourished children and pregnant women, but the Burmese authorities must stop refusing to grant access.

ENDS

[Speech: Secretary of State's speech at NILGA Annual Conference](#)

Thank you Noel for that introduction, and thank you to Derek and the wider NI Local Government Association for the kind invitation to speak at this conference today.

Local Government is a crucial part of our democratic system and the role played by all of you here cannot be underestimated.

Since 2014, we have seen Northern Ireland's 11 local councils step up to the mark and use their increased powers over planning, investment and tourism to deliver more and better services to local residents, making a real difference to the local economy.

And in the recent absence of an Executive, that role, in making the local voice heard in policy making, has been even more important for the constituents and communities that you represent and serve.

I pay tribute to you for getting on with the job and delivering for the people of Northern Ireland.

There are challenges we face in stimulating the economy, exiting the EU and in restoring a devolved government to Northern Ireland. These are national issues, but it is at the local level that we see their effects take shape.

But we can take comfort, at all levels of government, in knowing that we all share the same ultimate ambition to build a safe, fair, stable and prosperous Northern Ireland for the benefit of all people.

And the only way we can do that is by working together, as partners and

taking confident strides forward, in the knowledge that we have a platform of great success to build upon.

And we should acknowledge and celebrate that success. Nearly two decades since the Belfast Agreement, we have seen Northern Ireland transformed from a place which had struggled to attract investment against a backdrop of terrorism and instability, to becoming one of the most popular locations in the UK for attracting foreign direct investment.

In Northern Ireland alone there are 43,000 more people in work with 10,700 new private sector jobs over the past year alone, bringing private sector jobs to a series high.

Job creation has been supported by Northern Ireland's continued success in securing new Foreign Direct Investment and of course by the strong performance of some key industries such as tourism, pharmaceuticals and Northern Ireland's world leading Cyber Security sector.

Your local council areas will most likely be home to at least one of over 800 international companies located here in Northern Ireland and the UK Government will continue to do all it can to promote Northern Ireland as a great place to live, a place to invest and a place to succeed in business.

So overall, the picture is one of solid growth, increasing output, falling unemployment, and job creation. But we must continue to move forwards.

Future prosperity will be at the heart of our discussions on EU Exit.

The UK voted to leave the EU but that does not mean we are turning our backs on our friends and partners in Europe.

And as a Government we are committed to securing a deal with the EU that works for the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. That was clear from the Prime Minister's speech in Florence last month, and in the position paper on Northern Ireland that was published over the summer.

As we do, we want to continue to hear a wide range of stakeholder views. And on that basis, we welcome your publication on 'Brexit and the Border'.

The paper brings out some key themes.

While it highlights some of the challenges for the border corridor, it also reveals the opportunities arising against a backdrop of better than expected performance in both the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland economies.

And it highlights too the importance of continued engagement with Local Authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that any opportunities arising from Brexit can be grasped.

In response, I want to reassure you all today that this Government wants arrangements to be as seamless and frictionless as possible for moving goods between Northern Ireland and Ireland, to ensure that local businesses can get

on with the job.

As you will know, we have put forward two possible options: a highly streamlined customs arrangement and a new customs partnership.

We also set out in detail in our paper on Northern Ireland/Ireland a range of further measures we want to explore with the EU, including an extensive small business sector carve out, designed to ensure that smaller traders could continue to operate as they do now, with no new requirements in relation to customs processes.

These are bold and imaginative proposals to the issue of free flow of goods across the border with Ireland. And we would encourage everyone to get behind that debate as we look to develop the next stage of detail.

But of course the open border is about more than goods, it is also fundamentally about people and communities. The UK and the EU have committed already in negotiations to protecting the Belfast Agreement and the Common Travel Area.

The UK Government wants to protect the ability to move freely within the UK and between the UK and Ireland with no practical change from now, recognising the special importance of this to people in their daily lives, and the underpinning that it provides for the Northern Ireland political process.

We also recognise that investors, businesses and citizens in both the UK and the EU, and beyond, need to be able to plan ahead. We want to avoid any cliff-edge and it is clear that what would be most helpful to people and businesses on both sides, is for us to agree detailed arrangements for an implementation period, to ensure there is only one set of changes as we move from our membership to our future partnership.

As the Prime Minister said in Florence, and again in her statement to Parliament earlier this week, at the heart of these arrangements, there should be a clear double lock: a guarantee that there will be a period of implementation giving businesses and people alike the certainty that they will be able to prepare for the change; and a guarantee that this implementation period will be time-limited, giving everyone the certainty that this will not go on forever.

I am pleased we have made good headway on agreeing shared principles on the preservation of the Common Travel Area. We have also made good progress discussing the citizenship and identity rights provided for in the Belfast Agreement, as well as scoping the North-South co-operation that currently takes place under the Agreement.

As I have made clear, future prosperity will be at the heart of our discussions on EU Exit.

But if we are to make real progress on prosperity in Northern Ireland we need a functioning, effective devolved government.

A devolved government that can:

- Continue to contribute to the important discussions about how the UK will leave the European Union alongside the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales

One which can:

- Support continued economic growth in Northern Ireland and make the important decisions facing Northern Ireland's public services.

And one that can:

- Engage in the debate with NILGA representatives and councils on the key issues facing its members, such as the future role of local government and the balance of powers between the Executive and councils or indeed local priorities for infrastructure and investment.

The absence of an Executive, and the lack of political direction on these important issues, is simply not in the best interests of Northern Ireland.

It is important for growth, prosperity and for the people of Northern Ireland, that we see devolved Government return and return as soon as possible.

This is why I have been working intensively with the Northern Ireland parties and the Irish Government, consistent with the three stranded approach, towards reaching an agreement which will pave the way for the formation of an Executive.

The DUP and Sinn Fein have been in intensive discussions together and have made some progress in closing the gaps between them, including on issues of language and culture.

I have been clear with them that the window for restoration of devolution in Northern Ireland is short; and that we are reaching a critical point at which I would have to consider next steps. I have been very open about this. Now is the time for the parties to look beyond their differences, harness a spirit of compromise and reach agreement.

It would be with great regret and reluctance that increased political decision-making from Westminster would become a reality. But if a deal is not reached imminently, that greater intervention, beginning with Westminster legislation to set a 2017/18 budget for Northern Ireland, risks becoming inevitable.

This would be a big step backwards, a step I do not want to have to take. But I will not shirk from my ultimate responsibility for good governance and political stability in Northern Ireland.

This can be avoided. Devolved Government can be achieved with political leadership at a central and local level.

With support of the people, communities and businesses of Northern Ireland we can unlock the opportunities that we see in front of us:

With a devolved government in place we can work with the restored Executive on options for the devolution of corporation tax and take forward work on our commitment to work towards a comprehensive and ambitious set of City Deals for Northern Ireland to prosper.

City Deals is a subject close to my own heart, and I will be engaging with Government colleagues to take this work forward in earnest.

Ultimately of course, we need to work closely with the NI departments as well as local Councils and local business stakeholders. And for that, we need an effective, inclusive Executive back up and running again.

I see a bright economic future for Northern Ireland – one that this Government will continue to support.

And as Secretary of State I will remain a strong champion for Northern Ireland.

This includes supporting Bombardier in the ongoing trade case brought by Boeing.

There, we are clear that the unjustified action by Boeing, is simply not what we would expect of a long-term partner of the United Kingdom.

And everyone here and beyond can be reassured that we will continue to work with Bombardier to safeguard the jobs and livelihoods of over 4,000 skilled workers and their families in Belfast and across Northern Ireland, as well as all of those jobs that are linked to the supply chain too.

But unlocking the growth potential of Northern Ireland is not a job for one party alone.

We need everybody working together.

The UK Government.

A restored Executive.

And local leaders as well.

I have very much welcomed the supporting voice of the NI Local Government Association in stressing the need for the return of devolved government.

And to all elected representatives here today I ask you to take this message back to your parties, to play your part in delivering a resolution and underline just how important the restoration of devolved government is:

- for business
- for ordinary people
- for economic progress
- and for Northern Ireland as a whole.

Let us work together, as partners, to respond to the challenges and harness

the clear opportunities ahead, and let's get on with delivering the bright positive future for NI we know we can achieve together.

[Press release: Landmark package to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Manchester](#)

Greater Manchester will receive almost £3.8 million to develop a new city region-wide approach to preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid confirmed today (12 October 2017).

The funding will be used to develop new services and resources across all 10 boroughs of the region. This will include making hub-based services open 24 hours a day across Greater Manchester, to provide high quality support for people when they need it the most, and the adoption of a social letting agency approach across Greater Manchester to help those struggling to find secure accommodation.

These measures will enable the 10 boroughs of Great Manchester to work better together with clear systems in place to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping from happening in the first place.

Visiting Manchester today, the Prime Minister Theresa May also announced that progress was being made on a housing deal with Greater Manchester to accelerate the delivery of new homes. This reaffirms this government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

One person living on the street or without a home to call their own is too many. This package supports this government's aims to transform the way we prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

Greater Manchester has always been at the forefront of devolution and this is a landmark moment – the first devolved homelessness package.

I'm confident that the proposed plan will reach the needs of the city's most vulnerable people and set a precedent for what other ambitious city regions can do.

The Greater Manchester package builds upon the government's commitments to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping. These include:

- investing £550 million to 2020 for support and prevention programmes
- implementing the [Homelessness Reduction Act](#), requiring local authorities to provide support earlier to prevent those at risk from becoming homeless
- investing a further [£2 billion for affordable housing funding](#), bringing total investment to around £9 billion for a new generation of council and housing association homes

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester said:

We very much welcome this announcement by the government. This extra help is well-timed, much-needed and good news for Greater Manchester. It is a recognition of the innovative work underway here to help people sleeping rough, bringing together our public, private and voluntary sectors in a ground-breaking partnership.

This support from the government will help us go further and faster in achieving our goal of ending rough sleeping in Greater Manchester by 2020.

In addition to 24-hour hub services and a social letting agency, the package will:

- develop a shared ICT and database system – this will help to share data across the 10 local authorities so they can better able respond to homelessness and rough sleeping crises
- rollout the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network – this will support practitioners in the sector, connecting the many homelessness organisations across Greater Manchester
- build on the devolution agreement around health – this includes offering tailored health services for homeless people

The funding for the Greater Manchester homeless package will form part of the Greater Manchester Reform Investment Fund, the outcome of a government commitment to support Greater Manchester to establish an investment fund to support the vulnerable towards a brighter future.

The [housing white paper](#) committed to agreeing bespoke housing deals with authorities in high demand areas, which have a genuine ambition to build.

Greater Manchester has already been awarded up to £1.8 million as part of

DCLG's Social Impact Bond fund to provide personalised support for long-term rough sleepers on a payment-by-results basis.

[News story: David Davis' closing remarks at the end of the fifth round of EU exit negotiations in Brussels](#)

Thank you Michel.

At the last round of talks we spoke of a new dynamic and Michel has referred to that.

Our negotiating teams have continued to work constructively together in a professional and determined manner this week.

And they have developed as Michel says, an increased sense of shared political objectives.

Now while there is still work to be done, much work to be done, we have come a long way.

And it is important to recognise the significant progress we have made since June.

Let me, as Michael did, take the issues in turn.

Citizens' rights

On citizens' rights, we have made further progress to give British citizens in the EU and EU27 citizens in the UK the greatest possible legal certainty about the future.

Our legal orders will, in the future, be distinct and different.

So this week we explored ways of making sure the rights we agree now will be enforced in a fair and equivalent way.

And in a way that gives citizens confidence that their rights will be upheld.

We have also explored ways in which we could fulfil the Prime Minister's commitment to implement the Withdrawal Treaty fully into UK law which would give confidence to EU citizens living in the UK that they would be able to enforce their rights – as are set out in the Agreement – in UK courts.

And we have discussed ways of ensuring the consistent interpretation of the concepts of EU law that will underpin much of our Agreement.

While we have not yet arrived at a single model that achieves this we have explored creative solutions and are confident that we'll reach an agreement soon.

We have also focussed this week on the other remaining issues on which we have not yet arrived at a solution and Michel referred to a few of them. These are:

- the right to bring in future family members;
- to export a range of benefits;
- to continue to enjoy the recognition of professional qualifications;
- to vote in local elections;
- to move within the 27 as a UK citizen;
- to leave for a prolonged period and yet continue to enjoy a right to remain or permanent right of residence on return.

These issues are not easy, but we have approached them with a shared spirit of trying to find solutions and both teams will now reflect further on that.

We are taking a pragmatic approach. As demonstrated by our offer of a guaranteed right of return for settled citizens in the UK in return for onward movement rights for UK citizens currently living in the EU. We look forward to hearing the European Union's response to this.

I want to highlight one particularly productive area of our talks this week.

And I recognise that there has been some anxiety about EU citizens rights to settled status in the United Kingdom.

But today I can confirm that we want to reassure those European citizens living in the UK that their rights and status will be enshrined in UK law by the Withdrawal Agreement.

And yes, there will be a registration process but the administration process will be completely new. It will be streamlined, and it will be low cost.

And in addition to that any EU citizen in the UK already in possession of a permanent residence card will be able to exchange it simply for settled status in a simple way. They will not have to go through the full application process again.

And to reassure those affected I can confirm that the tests associated with this process will be agreed and set out in our Withdrawal Agreement.

We will also make sure that citizens rights of review of – and redress for – any errors will be quick, accessible and fair.

I will set out our position on ensuring citizens' future rights in a statement for the Commission, a written statement, which they can share with the European Union 27.

And as a result of our productive discussions, the Commission is also able to offer similar guarantees in return for those British citizens in the European

Union.

This is a very welcome clarification and has built real confidence that the rights of EU citizens in the UK – and British citizens in the European Union – will continue to be accessible in the most straightforward way possible.

In summary, I think that this week of talks has brought us even closer to a deal that gives citizens rights to the legal certainty that they deserve.

Northern Ireland

I welcome the advances too that we have made on the discussions on Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This week we developed the joint principles on the continuation of the Common Travel Area.

Our teams have also mapped out areas of cooperation that operate on a North South basis.

As Michel said, there is more work to do here in order to build a fuller picture of how we overcome the challenges to North-South cooperation once the UK has left the European Union.

But I'm pleased to say we have made further progress here.

We have also agreed, based on critical guiding principles which both sides recognise, we will start working on a common understanding on possible commitments and undertakings necessary to effectively protect the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its dimensions.

I said last time that we were determined to tackle the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland by focusing creatively on specific solutions and we have begun to do so.

As the Prime Minister said in her statement to Parliament this week, "We owe it to the people of Northern Ireland—and indeed to everyone on the island of Ireland—to get this right."

Financial settlement

On the financial settlement, we have continued in the spirit fostered by the Prime Minister's significant statements in her Florence speech.

In line with the process agreed at our last round of talks, we have undertaken a rigorous examination of the technical detail where we need to reach a shared view.

This is not a process of agreeing specific commitments – we have been clear this can only come later.

But it is an important step, so that when the time comes we will be able to reach a political agreement quickly and simply.

Separation issues

On separation issues we have continued to work through the detail on a range of issues.

And while we have made good progress, particularly on those areas relating purely to our withdrawal, we believe these issues are dependent on discussions on our future relationship.

And as I've said before, we are ready and well-prepared to start those discussions.

Conclusion

So, our aim is to provide as much certainty as possible to business, citizens and the European Union.

And on this we are making real and tangible progress.

But I make no secret of the fact that to provide certainty we must talk about the future.

The Prime Minister's speech set out the scale of our ambition for our deep and special partnership with the European Union.

And also laid out the case for a simple, clear and time-limited period of implementation on current terms.

As I said when I stood here last time, I hope the leaders of the 27 will provide Michel with the means to explore ways forward with us on that.

And to build on the spirit of cooperation we now have.

I have always been clear that we would enter these negotiations in a constructive and responsible way.

The work of our teams and the substantial progress that we have made over recent months proves we are doing just that.

As we look to the October European Council next week, I hope the Member States will recognise the progress we have made, and take a step forward in the spirit of the Prime Minister's Florence speech.

Doing so will allow us to best achieve our joint objectives by turning the ideas we have explored into concrete shared proposals.

That's the way that we'll move towards a deal that works for both the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Press release: Traffic officers' bike challenge is a real spin-off for charity

The South West-based traffic officers had set a target of covering 350 miles in a 24-hour spin bike challenge, equivalent to the distance of motorway and major trunk road they patrol in the region – all in aid of the Huntington's Disease Association.

The team, receiving social media support along the way from the likes of actor and TV presenter Shane Richie and singer Tony Hadley, smashed that target by pedalling their way to a total of 502 miles over 24 hours at the South West Regional Operations Centre at Avonmouth.

The team of nine traffic officers, all based at Highways England's Almondsbury Outstation, were Clarke Hobbs, Andy Watts, Lou Stout, Anthony Reeves, Alan Sludden, Barry Thomas, Jolene Britton, Alistair Steel and Lou Quinton.

Splitting the tasks in shifts, and aided by fellow Highways England staff, they reached their target, and more, between 4pm on Monday 9 October and 4pm on Tuesday 10 October – raising an impressive total of £1,640 in the process.

Pictured at the end of the challenge are, from left, Jeanette Allum, Linda Canby, Clarke Hobbs, Chris Caine, Anthony Reeves, Sean Dowding, Tom Bennett and Lou Stout

Avonmouth-based operations manager Sean Dowding said:

The Huntington's Disease Association is a charity close to our hearts and we really wanted to do something to raise awareness of the disease.

We're delighted to raise the amount we did, and also the support we received from our colleagues in the South West and further afield, and also from the the Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, who kindly donated two of the bikes.

We tweeted updates over the 24 hours, which created a bit more interest, and it was really nice to get some social media support, particularly the retweets from Shane Richie and Tony Hadley.

Huntington's Disease is a hereditary disorder of the nervous system that over time causes serious cognitive, emotional and psychological changes. It affects, on average, 12 people in every 100,000 in the UK. For more information go to the [Huntington's Disease Association website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.