

Joint statement from COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma and US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry from his visit to London

Press release

Special Envoy Kerry also met with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak, Foreign and Development Secretary Dominic Raab and Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng.



COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma and U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry met on 8 March 2021 in London. They released the following statement:

We resolved today to work closely together to reduce our own emissions and to rally all countries, and most especially the world's major economies, to strengthen their climate ambition. President Biden's upcoming Leaders Summit on Climate and the G7 leaders meeting to be hosted by the UK are both critical opportunities to build momentum on the way to COP26 in Glasgow.

Our countries are fully committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2050. We urge all countries to take the steps needed to keep a 1.5 degree C temperature limit within reach, including through ambitious nationally determined contributions and long-term strategies to cut emissions and reach net zero.

We also resolved to work with other countries to help the world's most vulnerable adapt and respond to climate impacts and to scale up finance and private investment for both mitigation and adaptation. We also look forward to working with all countries to finalise the Paris Rulebook and successfully advance wider negotiations issues. Strong progress on all of these fronts is

critical to ensuring the success we need in Glasgow.

ENDS.

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UK PACT South Africa announces project portfolio of over £3M

Following the launch of the programme's first call for proposals in South Africa on 10 July 2020, the British High Commission is pleased to announce the allocation of more than £3 million in grant funding to 10 climate change mitigation projects under its UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) Programme.

The projects were selected through a competitive process and respond to the climate change mitigation priorities of a number of key government institutions, in an effort to support South Africa's just transition to a low-carbon, inclusive, climate-resilient economy and society. The organisations leading the projects and their partners will build capacity, raise awareness and offer technical assistance to a range of national, provincial and municipal government stakeholders. The projects will be implemented by a number of local and international organisations from the private and non-governmental sector, civil society and academia.

Nigel Casey, the British High Commissioner said:

As host of COP 26 and a long standing development, trade and investment partner, I am delighted that we are launching this range of projects aimed at supporting green, resilient and inclusive economic growth in South Africa. The world is focusing on both climate and COVID-19 recovery and we want to support South Africa to be at the forefront of the movement to build back better.

As COP 26 President Designate, the UK is committed to ensuring that an ambitious and equitable outcome is achieved at Glasgow in 2021. This means attaching equal priority to the three pillars of the Paris Agreement – mitigation, adaptation and finance. Despite the challenge that COVID-19 has brought to all economies, the UK has committed to double its International Climate Finance (ICF) over the next 5 years to £11.6 billion. Through its ICF commitment, the UK can support green recovery efforts in more than 100 countries, including South Africa, and results to date demonstrate the

transformative impact that ICF programmes like UK PACT can have.

The selected projects focus on three priority areas of climate change action and greenhouse gas emissions reduction: * Energy: As arguably the most salient challenge confronting South Africa's energy sector, four projects have been selected focussing on the just energy transition. These projects will support beneficiaries at municipal, provincial and national government levels to formulate energy transition pathways that are inclusive of vulnerable communities, identify new employment opportunities within the green economy and which capacitate various actors in the energy sector to implement low-carbon energy technologies. In addition, two projects have been selected which will work to support the implementation of higher energy efficiency standards in buildings and the uptake of renewable and alternative clean fuels such as hydrogen. * Sustainable Mobility: Two projects will work to support the policy framework set out in the country's Green Transport Strategy, particularly with regard to ramping up South Africa's transition towards electric vehicles and low-carbon mobility. * Sustainable finance: Two projects will help drive access to green finance and scale up sustainable investment in South Africa through transparency and climate-related risk management.

Note for editors

Full list of projects, implementing partners and beneficiary organisations:

Project Title	Implementing Partners	Beneficiaries
Distilling the Just Energy Transition in SA: Harmonising Conflict and Seeking Opportunities	TIPS (Lead), NALEDI, Peta Wolpe, GroundWork	eMalahleni Local Municipality, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Trade Unions (through NALEDI), Mpumalanga Provincial Government
Climate Transitions Protocol	National Business Initiative (NBI)	NBI Private Sector Membership, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), DEFF
Building the Green Hydrogen Economy Just Energy Transition: Co-creating a Just Labour Transition through the TVET College System in SA	SAIIA (Lead), TIPS, UCT Energy Research Centre, KPMG, Bambili Energy	DSI, South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI), DTIC and Energy and Water SETA (EW SETA)
The Development of a Green Economy Cluster Organisation to Support Mpumalanga's Role in the Validation, Implementation and Follow-on Research of the SAREM	GreenCape	Mpumalanga Provincial Government, DTIC, DSI and Renewable Energy Industry Associations (SAREC, SAWEA, STASA, SAPVIA)

Project Title	Implementing Partners	Beneficiaries
Alternative Financing Models for Embedded Generation of Renewable Energy in South African Municipalities	ICLEI Africa (Lead), Rebel Group and 3E	DBSA and a number of secondary municipalities
Operationalising Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) in South Africa	Carbon Trust (Lead) and GBCSA	SANEDI
Driving the green agenda through aligning South Africa's climate-related financial disclosure with global best practice	DNA Economics (Lead), the GreenHouse, Vivid Economics and WWF-SA	National Treasury, Association for Savings and Investment in SA (ASISA), Council for Retirement Funds for South Africa (BATSETA), Banking Association of South Africa (BASA), Government Employees Pension Fund and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)
Expanding the South African Green Finance Taxonomy and Embedding its use	NBI (Lead) and Carbon Trust	The National Treasury (NT), DEFF, JSE, Banking Association of South Africa (BASA) and the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA)
Shifting the Transport Paradigm – Electric Vehicles	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and CENEX	DoT, DEFF and Western Cape Provincial Government
Electric Vehicle Readiness in City of Johannesburg	Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA)	City of Johannesburg, South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and Department of Transport (DoT)

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[Government publishes first ever](#)

[national action plan to protect journalists](#)

- Plan sets out how journalists will be protected from threats of violence and intimidation
- Includes new measures to research the problem and training for police forces and journalists
- Broadcasters, publishers, social media companies, law enforcement, industry bodies, unions and the government all make pledges

It follows reports to the government from journalists who have suffered abuse and attacks while going about their work, including being punched, threatened with knives, forcibly detained and subjected to rape and death threats.

A survey of members of the National Union of Journalists in November also found more than half of respondents had experienced online abuse while nearly a quarter had been physically assaulted or attacked.

The plan will increase awareness of the safety challenges faced by journalists operating in the UK and introduce measures to tackle them in a joint effort by law enforcement, broadcasters, publishers, industry bodies, unions and the government.

Measures include new training for police officers as well as aspiring and existing journalists, and commitments from social media platforms and prosecution services to take tough action against abusers – including responding promptly to complaints of threats to journalists' safety.

The plan has been endorsed by the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, membership of which comprises industry stakeholders including the National Union of Journalists and Society of Editors.

It will be reviewed as necessary on an ongoing basis and supports the wider work the government is doing to uphold freedom of speech, in particular protecting journalistic content from censorship and takedown online. The Government is also publishing a broader update today on its ongoing work to tackle intimidation in public life.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

“Freedom of speech and a free press are at the very core of our democracy, and journalists must be able to go about their work without being threatened.

“The cowardly attacks and abuse directed at reporters for simply doing their job cannot continue.

“This action plan is just the start of our work to protect those keeping the public informed, and defend those holding the government to account.”

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

“Attacks on journalists are not only horrendous for those individuals but an assault on our democracy. Today’s action plan will make sure journalists can go about their vital work without fear.

“But just as we protect the physical safety of journalists we must protect their freedom to write and report too. Tackling worrying trends on online censorship of journalistic content and controversial views, we will ensure our forthcoming online safety laws build in robust protections for journalism.”

Minister for Media and Data and Chair of the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, John Whittingdale, said:

“We will not tolerate a world where journalists are silenced through fear or censorship and want the UK to set an international example for the respect, treatment and protection of those working in the field. This plan is the first step towards achieving those aims.”

The plan sets out a series of commitments from relevant organisations focused on protecting the safety of journalists based in the UK.

The government

The Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) and the Home Office will shortly issue a call for evidence to build a better understanding of the volume and type of threats and abuse against journalists. It will build on existing reports from journalists – for example, of hospital admissions following assaults and online death threats – to develop a targeted approach to tackling the issue.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will use its global network, including its co-chairship of the Media Freedom Coalition, to share insights and strategies on the protection of journalists, with the aim of strengthening approaches in other countries.

Online platforms

With online abuse being one of the biggest challenges facing journalists today, particularly for BAME and female journalists, Facebook and Twitter have committed to respond promptly to complaints of threats to journalists’ safety.

The government is already tackling online abuse through the forthcoming Online Safety Bill. All social media users, including journalists, will be better able to report abuse and be supported by the platforms if they do so.

Online platforms will be required to protect users and enforce their terms and conditions or face sanctions – including fines of up to 10 per cent of their annual turnover or having their services blocked. The Bill will also enshrine in law protections for journalistic content and free debate online.

Police

The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) will work with the police which will provide training for journalists reporting on police operations, initially through a workshop at the University of Portsmouth.

The police will engage with the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Society of Editors and others to update their training offer for police around journalists covering demonstrations and investigating crime against journalists.

Every police force is to be given access to a designated journalist safety liaison officer while the National Police Chiefs' Council has appointed a lead officer – Chief Constable Gavin Stephens – to take responsibility for crime against journalists at national level.

Media organisations

Organisations such as the Media Lawyers Association will produce further guidance to help journalists recognise and understand when abuse breaks the law and what they can do about it. The NCTJ will provide safety training for student journalists while the NUJ and Society of Editors will collate and host a free online support pack for journalists.

Publishers and broadcasters have committed to providing new training for staff and freelancers on managing threats. They will review and collaborate on safety policies and ensure they are well publicised, and establish designated safety officers within their organisations.

Prosecution services

Freedom of expression and the right to receive and impart information are recognised and protected by law. Criminal offences committed against journalists exercising those rights jeopardise both the right to free speech and public service, and prosecutors rightly take such offences extremely seriously.

In the plan, the separate UK prosecution services for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland reaffirm their commitment to taking a robust approach to crimes against journalists and bringing those responsible to justice.

Ian Murray, executive director of the Society of Editors said:

“The Action Plan recognises the urgency of protecting journalists carrying out their vital role in protecting democracy.

“Due to their role in holding the powerful and those in authority to task journalists attract strong reactions. But this should not manifest itself in ways that threaten journalists and their families. This action plan makes that clear.”

NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said:

“Attacks on journalists are designed to silence and intimidate those who work to uphold the public’s right to know. NUJ members have shared horrific experiences of being attacked, abused and threatened – on and offline – simply for doing their job.

“It’s clear that reported incidents are the tip of the iceberg and that harassment and abuse has become normalised. This action plan, with its range of practical measures and protections, is an important step towards changing that and ensuring journalists can get on with their vital work free from harassment or intimidation.”

News Media Association chief executive David Newell said:

“The coronavirus crisis has thrown a spotlight on the importance of trusted news and information yet abuse of journalists, often on social media, has risen markedly over the same period.

“There can be no place in our democratic society for abuse and attacks on journalists, which constitute a threat to free speech, and the national action plan is a welcome development to help address this.”

Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s Communications Advisory Group, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens said:

“Journalists are a vital cog in a functioning society and deserve to be respected for the role they play in providing a public information service and holding authorities to account.

“Any restriction of those values severely impacts public confidence and trust both of which are core principles in policing and what drive the communities we serve to be safe and feel safe.

“I’m committed to raising awareness within policing of the long term damaging impact that targeting journalists can have and will be doing so through my new role. The impact of these crimes is not just on individuals and their welfare but also on press freedom itself, which has to be upheld and protected.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- In 2020, the first meeting of the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists took place and plans were made for the development of the National Action Plan. This was in response to a recommendation from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world’s largest intergovernmental security organisation.
- The Commitments in the plan are applicable throughout the UK.
- The National Committee is co-chaired by the Minister for Media and Data and the Minister for Safeguarding and includes representatives from policing and prosecution services, journalism organisations, and non-

governmental organisations.

Relaunch of the Act FAST campaign to improve stroke outcomes

The Act FAST campaign urges everyone to take immediate action on seeing any stroke symptoms to save lives – the NHS is open.

Data from the lockdown period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic last year show that admissions to hospital for stroke fell – a [12% drop](#) between March and April 2020.

Stroke is a medical emergency and anyone experiencing symptoms should seek urgent help.

Early treatment not only saves lives but results in a greater chance of a better recovery, as well as a likely reduction in permanent disability from stroke.

Public Health England (PHE), supported by the Stroke Association, is today relaunching the Act FAST campaign reminding people of the symptoms of stroke and why urgently calling 999 is vital in saving lives.

Stroke is a time sensitive condition which means that any hesitancy and delay in getting treatment kills brain cells and has sadly and unnecessarily proven to be fatal in the early phase of the pandemic.

The signs of stroke are:

- Face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- Arms – can they raise both their arms and keep them there?
- Speech – is their speech slurred?
- Time – time to call 999

Clare Perkins, Head of the Cardiovascular Disease Programme at PHE, says:

Stroke is a medical emergency and is still one of the leading causes of death in England.

It is vital people know how to spot the signs of stroke and if they have any concerns about any early signs whatsoever to call an ambulance immediately – don't wait until a second potentially more fatal stroke hits. The most common signs of stroke are changes to the face, arms and speech. Acting fast and getting treatment will help save lives and prevent people from severe disability.

The NHS is open, safe and if you suffer a stroke will want to see you as soon as possible – don't hesitate, just call 999.

Around 1.9 million nerve cells in the brain are lost every minute that a stroke [is left untreated](#), which can result in slurred speech and paralysis. If left untreated, a stroke can result in permanent disability or death.

There are around 100,000 strokes a year in the UK – at least [one stroke every 5 minutes](#), sadly causing about 34,000 deaths per year.

Stroke is the fourth single leading cause of death in the UK and the [single largest cause of complex disability](#).

Black people are twice as likely to have a stroke than white people. On average, people of black African, black Caribbean and South Asian descent in the UK have strokes at an earlier age.

With COVID-19 disproportionately affecting these groups, there's an even greater need to ensure that they aren't being affected by other conditions. The campaign includes specific activity targeted at communities from ethnic minorities.

Juliet Bouverie, Chief Executive of the Stroke Association, says:

Every 5 minutes, someone in the UK will have a stroke. Stroke kills tens of thousands and leaves others with complex and severe disability every year. Acting FAST is the biggest thing you can do to save a life. As soon as you see any of the signs of stroke in yourself or someone else, you need to call 999.

Last year we saw thousands of people with suspected stroke put off calling 999 due to fear of catching COVID-19 or being a burden on the NHS. People could now be living with more severe disability than they otherwise would because they put off calling 999. That's why you need to know that acting FAST and calling 999 saves lives.

Some other signs of stroke or mini stroke can include:

- sudden loss of vision or blurred vision in one or both eyes
- sudden weakness or numbness on one side of your body (including in your leg)
- sudden memory loss or confusion
- sudden dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden fall, especially with any of the other signs

The Act FAST campaign includes TV, Video on Demand, radio, social media, partnerships and PR activity.

Activity will also be targeted to ethnic minorities, working with community groups and using multicultural radio and TV channels.

Radio ads are available in English, Hindi and Punjabi.

We are working closely with charities who provide support to people who may be at risk of stroke and those who provide support to people who have had a stroke.

For more information on stroke, visit the [NHS website](#).

Justice overhaul to better protect the public and back our police

- punishments to reflect severity of crimes with police given stronger powers and protections
- child sex abuse laws extended to cover sports coaches and faith leaders
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill introduced to Parliament today

Cutting crime and building safer communities will be at the heart of new legislation unveiled in Parliament today, as the government delivers on its pledge to restore confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill seeks to equip the police with the powers and tools they need to protect themselves and the public, while overhauling sentencing laws to keep serious sexual and violent offenders behind bars for longer, and placing greater emphasis on rehabilitation to better help offenders to turn their lives around and prevent further crimes.

Measures include widening important laws which prevent adults in 'positions of trust' from engaging in sexual relationships with young people under the age of 18, bringing sports coaches and religious leaders in line with other occupations such as teachers and doctors. The move follows an extensive review which raised concerns that predators could exploit the particular influence these roles can often have in a young person's life – making them vulnerable to abuse.

Meanwhile, new court orders will boost efforts to crack down on knife crime, as well as make it easier to stop and search those suspected of carrying a blade. New laws will also enable police to better tackle unauthorised encampments, and safely manage protests where they threaten public order or stop people from getting on with their daily lives.

The Bill will also enshrine a Police Covenant in law, strengthening the support received by serving and retired officers, staff and their families. In addition, maximum penalties will be doubled from 12 months to 2 years for those who assault police or other emergency workers, such as prison officers, fire personnel or frontline health workers – helping to protect those who put their lives on the line to keep communities safe.

Other sentencing reforms – first outlined in a landmark government white paper last year – will also be brought into legislation to ensure punishments fit the severity of crimes. These include Whole Life Orders (WLOs) for child killers, with judges also allowed to impose this punishment on 18 to 20 year olds in exceptional cases – for example, acts of terrorism which cause mass loss of life. The Bill also introduces life sentences for killer drivers who wreak havoc on our roads, ends the automatic halfway release for serious violent and sexual offenders, and ensures community sentences are stricter and better target underlying causes of crime such as mental health issues, alcohol or drug addiction.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Robert Buckland QC said:

This government has pledged to crack down on crime and build safer communities. Today we are delivering on that commitment.

We are giving the police and courts the powers they need to keep our streets safe, while providing greater opportunities for offenders to turn their lives around and better contribute to society.

At the same time, we are investing hundreds of millions to deliver speedier justice and boost support for victims, and will continue to do everything it takes to build back confidence in the criminal justice system.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

On becoming Home Secretary, I vowed to back the police to cut crime and make our streets safer.

This Bill delivers on that promise – equipping the police with the tools they need to stop violent criminals in their tracks, putting the thugs who assault officers behind bars for longer and strengthening the support officers and their families receive.

The government has already recruited over 6,600 of the additional 20,000 police officers and every single one of them has my full support. This Bill enshrines my commitment to those brave officers who put themselves in danger to keep rest of us safe into law.

Further changes will see tougher penalties for those who vandalise memorials, and a statutory duty placed on local authorities and criminal justice agencies to tackle serious violence through better sharing of data and intelligence.

The legislation builds on extensive work already underway to deliver a smarter, fairer justice system as the country builds back safer from the pandemic. This includes hundreds of millions being invested in courts to

deliver speedier justice and reduce court delays, unprecedented funding for victim support services, the recruitment of 20,000 police officers and a £4 billion investment in extra prison places.

The APCC's Criminal Justice Lead David Lloyd said:

The public needs to have confidence in the criminal justice system, or else they will lose faith in reporting crime. By ensuring those who commit the most serious violent crimes spend the bulk of their sentences in prison, we send a clear message that we are on the side of victims.

But we must look to reduce re-offending through more effective community sentences, for lower level offenders where they are appropriate.

New laws to reform sentencing, the courts and offender management:

- Whole life Orders for the premeditated murder of a child as well as allowing judges to hand out this maximum punishment to 18 to 20-year olds in exceptional cases to reflect the gravity of a crime. For example, acts of terrorism which lead to mass loss of life.
- New powers to halt the automatic early release of offenders who pose a danger to the public.
- For children who commit murder, introducing new starting points for deciding the minimum amount of time in custody based on age and seriousness of offence, and reducing the opportunities for over 18s who committed murder as a child to have their minimum term reviewed.
- Ending the halfway release of offenders sentenced to between four and seven years in prison for serious violent and sexual offences such as rape, manslaughter and GBH with intent. Instead they will have to spend two-thirds of their time behind bars.
- Changing the threshold for passing a sentence below the minimum term for repeat offenders, including key serious offences such as 'third strike' burglary which carries a minimum three-year custodial sentence and 'two strike' knife possession which has a minimum 6-month sentence for adults, making it less likely that a court will depart from these minimum terms.
- Reforming criminal records disclosure to reduce the time period people have to declare previous non-violent, sexual or terrorist convictions to employers – covering both adult and youth offences.
- Introducing life sentences for killer drivers.
- Tougher community sentences which double the amount of time offenders can be subject to curfew restrictions to 2 years.
- Extended 'positions of trusts' laws to protect teenagers from abuse by making it illegal for sports coaches and religious leaders from engaging in sexual activity with 16 and 17-year-olds.
- New rules to end the need for participants to travel unnecessarily to court by allowing criminal courts to maximise the use of video and audio technology as it develops.

- Enshrining open justice principles by allowing for remote observers – using video and audio technology – across the vast majority of our courts and tribunals improving public access and transparency.
- For the first time enabling profoundly deaf people to sit on juries. Current laws ban the presence of a ‘stranger’ being in the jury deliberation room – this will be scrapped and instead allow a British Sign Language Interpreter into the room.
- Increasing the maximum penalty for criminal damage of a memorial from 3 months to 10 years.
- Stronger youth community sentencing options, including greater use of location monitoring and longer daily curfews, providing robust alternatives to custody.

New protections and powers for the police include:

- Serious Violence Reduction Orders – new stop and search powers against convicted knife offensive weapons offenders designed to ensure offenders are steered away from crime and if they persist in carrying a knife or an offensive weapon, that they are more likely to be caught and put in prison.
- A legal duty on local authorities, the police, criminal justice agencies, health and fire and rescue services to tackle serious violence through sharing data and intelligence.
- Homicide reviews following deaths of adults involving offensive weapons to better understand the drivers of violent crime and stop it happening in the first place.
- Enshrining the police covenant in law.
- Doubling the maximum sentence for assaulting an emergency worker from 12 months to 2 years.
- A new law to allow police to obtain a search warrant for evidence related to the location of human remains where it is not possible to bring about a prosecution, for example where a suspect is dead, unfit to plead, or has already been convicted of the offence in the absence of a body
- Strengthen police powers to tackle non-violent protests that have a significant disruptive effect on the public or on access to Parliament;
- Reform pre-charge bail to better protect vulnerable victims and witnesses. Known as Kay’s Law this will put victims of crime at the heart of police decision making and support the timely progression of investigations.
- Strengthen police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments that significantly interfere with a person’s or community’s ability to make use of the land

Notes to editors

- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will be introduced to Parliament today (9 March 2021). The full list of measures will be available on the Parliament website on Tuesday 9 March 2021.
- The majority of the MOJ measures will apply to England and Wales only, with road traffic offences and driving disqualification measures applying to Great Britain and certain courts and tribunals measures

relating to virtual hearings applying UK-wide.