

UK calls for ceasefires to vaccinate people against Covid-19

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will today call for local ceasefires across the globe so vulnerable people living in conflict zones can be vaccinated against Covid-19.

He will chair a meeting of the UN Security Council today and urge members to unite and agree a resolution for negotiated vaccine ceasefires, and to support equitable access to vaccines so that the most vulnerable people can be protected from the virus.

The Foreign Secretary will say allowing the virus to spread in areas without vaccination campaigns means a greater risk of new variants taking hold – risking further waves across the world.

More than 160 million people are at risk of being excluded from coronavirus vaccinations because of instability and conflict, including in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Global vaccination coverage is essential to beating coronavirus. That is why the UK is calling for a vaccination ceasefire to allow Covid-19 vaccines to reach people living in conflict zones and for a greater global team effort to deliver equitable access. We have a moral duty to act, and a strategic necessity to come together to defeat this virus.

The UK has been leading the international response to the pandemic, using its diplomatic weight and development expertise to help develop and distribute vaccines, support the global economy and encourage international collaboration. Global equitable access to coronavirus vaccines is the key to eliminating the threat of the virus in the UK as well as overseas. In today's interconnected world, the only way to be protected from Covid-19 is by making vaccinations available to all.

Temporary ceasefires would allow charities and healthcare workers to safely provide jabs to people living in active conflict zones. Alongside this, the UK is pushing for more funding for the UN's response to the pandemic, for the World Health Organisation and for the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), which will distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to developing countries this year.

The UK is one of the largest donors to the COVAX AMC, providing £548 million for the scheme which was launched at the UK-hosted Global Vaccine Summit in June 2020. In addition to this, the UK has used match funding to help raise \$1 billion from other donors for the COVAX AMC.

At the meeting today, the Foreign Secretary will also underline the importance of agreeing international co-operation to resolve long-term logistical barriers to equitable access, such as vaccine storage, delays in regulatory approval and managing complex supply chains.

He will push for sustained protection of humanitarian and health workers in conflict zones to make sure humanitarian help can get to those who need it and will say the international community must be allowed to monitor the progress of vaccination delivery and how well people are protected from violence during the process. He will call on governments worldwide to leave no one behind as they roll out vaccination programmes, so that vulnerable groups such as refugees and people living in conflict zones can be vaccinated.

The UK is using its presidency of the Security Council this month to drive further progress on global access to vaccines and the Prime Minister will be setting out further details at the virtual G7 leaders' meeting on Friday, as we work to build back better together.

Delivering free and fair elections, combatting terrorism and building back better in Iraq

- UK underlines importance of free, fair and credible elections in Iraq in October.
- UK reiterates support for the Government of Iraq's work "to combat terrorism and to implement crucial economic reform".

Remarks by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at Security Council briefing on UNAMI, 16 February 2021

The UK welcomes the work of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq and the work of SRSg Hennis-Plasschaert, and thanks the Deputy SRSg Walpole for her service.

Iraq is at a critical juncture. It is essential that the elections in October are free, fair, and credible. Our commitment to the democratic process in Iraq remains steadfast and we look forward to further discussions on how the UN can support the elections following Iraq's request for UN observation.

Iraq faces an economic crisis: increased unemployment, poverty and food insecurity. The Government of Iraq's proposals for economic reform are welcome. We now call on all parties to put aside their differences and agree

a sustainable budget that allows Iraq to build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last month's devastating attack in Baghdad demonstrates the importance of the ongoing work of the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh in close partnership with the Iraq Security Forces. We also condemn last night's attack on coalition forces and civilians in Erbil.

We are deeply troubled by the short notice and uncoordinated closure of camps for Internally Displaced Persons. We urge the Government of Iraq to coordinate with the UN to ensure that all returns are safe, dignified and voluntary.

We welcome the Government of Iraq's continued efforts to strengthen relations with regional neighbours. We continue to reiterate the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. We commend the shared commitment of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti Governments to make progress on the file of missing Kuwaiti persons and property pursuant to Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

The United Kingdom continues to support the Government of Iraq as it seeks to deliver free, fair and inclusive elections, to combat terrorism and to implement crucial economic reform.

Government Chemist conference 2021: Safe food for tomorrow's world

The Government Chemist conference, 'Safe food for tomorrow's world' took place online on 23 and 24 June 2021.

[Presentations from this conference are available.](#)

You can also read a [short report on the conference](#).

Conference information as published before the event

This conference was originally scheduled to take place in June 2020 and was postponed to June 2021 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. In view of the ongoing restrictions for public events, we have decided to proceed with this conference as an online event.

The conference will be opened by Gideon Henderson, [Chief Scientific Adviser, Defra](#) after a brief introduction by Dr Julian Braybrook, [Government Chemist](#).

Scientists, regulators, enforcement agencies, industry and policy makers are invited to join the Government Chemist on a virtual platform to discuss

future challenges in the manufacturing, packaging, retailing and testing of food that is safe and consumers can trust.

The conference programme will include national and international perspectives on assuring food safety and integrity, advances and challenges in allergen testing, the use of science for improved consumer protection and much more.

Defra Deep-dive workshop session: Consumer confidence in food integrity and authenticity beyond composition

The conference will include a Deep Dive session, between Session 1 and 2, aiming to explore some of the emerging trends impacting on our food system and discuss what the integrity of the food supply looks like in a post pandemic/EU Exit world – from industry, consumer and enforcement perspectives.

23 June, Session 1: Perspectives from the UK's Official Control System

- Welcome address by the Government Chemist, Julian Braybrook
- Keynote lecture – Gideon Henderson, CSA, Defra
- Overview of recent referee cases- Paul Hancock, LGC
- Opportunities and challenges facing the Public Analyst Service – Jane White, Association of Public Analysts
- Actions and impact of the Food Crime Unit – Hayley Ward-Ivan, Food Crime Unit

23 June, Session 2: Regulation for a global market

- Defra Deep Dive. Defra would like to invite participants to think about what the current and future technical challenges for food integrity and authenticity are likely to be beyond the usual compositional authenticity issues (more details further down the page)
- The role of data science in achieving the objectives of the FSA – Julie Pierce, FSA
- Food Standards Scotland – Strategy and approach to science – Geoff Ogle, FSS

- The NIST Food Quality Program: Measurements and standards to support the global food industry – Katrice Lippa, NIST
- Authentication analysis of tonic food products in Hong Kong – Foo-wing Lee, Hong Kong Government Chemist
- The importance of company culture in assuring food safety and integrity- Fiona Humphries, BRCGS
- Achieving business compliance in an international market – Ingrid Fiordaliso, McCormick

24 June, Session 3: Science for improved health outcomes

- The importance of standardization of biomarker measurements in nutrition – Ian Young, Queen's University Belfast
- Current perspectives on food toxicology- Stella Cochrane, Unilever
- Challenges in measuring clinical proteins and allergens – Milena Quaglia, LGC
- CBD and controlled cannabinoids in consumer products – Selvarani Elahi and Christopher Hopley, LGC
- Microbiome for protected status – Marc Kennedy , Fera

24 June, Session 4: Novel solutions for food authenticity and sustainability

- Nuclear and complementary field-deployable technologies to build food authenticity capability – Simon Kelly, International Atomic Energy Agency
- Effective solutions for GMO analysis – Malcolm Burns, LGC
- Desirability and plausibility of meat alternatives – Barbara van Mierlo, Wageningen UR
- Science assurance in a sustainable food system – Professor Robin May, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser

Defra Deep-dive workshop session: Consumer confidence in food integrity and authenticity beyond composition

The aim of this deep-dive session is to explore some of the emerging trends impacting on our food system and discuss what the integrity of the food supply looks like in a post pandemic/EU Exit world – from industry, consumer and enforcement perspectives.

Defra would like to invite participants to think about what the current and future technical challenges for food integrity and authenticity are likely to be beyond the usual compositional authenticity issues.

During the session the participants will have a deeper dive into: – the impacts of climate change, achieving decarbonisation (net zero), sustainable agriculture production (including organic) on food integrity – the current and future scientific challenges and potential solutions to ensure food authenticity including Food origin, Provenance and Protected Food names

Defra will use the outputs to help them identify future priorities for research and innovation to support consumer confidence in the food system.

Download the programme

Surge testing to be deployed in areas around Manchester, Norfolk, Southampton and Surrey

Press release

Further targeted areas will have additional testing made available to control and suppress the spread of a COVID-19 variant.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, additional surge testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to targeted areas within Norfolk

(targeted areas within the IP22 postcode), Southampton (SO15) and Woking, Surrey (GU22) where the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

Following the [deployment of surge testing in Manchester last week](#), testing in Manchester will be expanded to targeted areas within the M40 and M9 postcode districts.

Surge testing is being introduced in addition to existing extensive testing. In combination with following the current lockdown rules and remembering [‘Hands. Face. Space’](#) advice, it will help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus. Positive cases will be sequenced for genomic data to help understand COVID-19 variants and their spread within these areas.

People living within these targeted areas are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test this week, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

People with symptoms should [book a test in the usual way](#), and those without symptoms should [visit their local authority website for more information](#).

Surge testing in parts of Haringey, Merton and Sefton is now complete. Further data on surge testing will be provided in due course.

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[PM call with United Nations Secretary-General: 16 February 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres this evening.



The Prime Minister spoke to the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio

Guterres, this evening.

They agreed on the importance of scaling up the global manufacturing of coronavirus vaccines and increasing international support to the COVAX facility, to ensure vaccine access for developing countries.

Looking ahead to the COP26 summit in November, the PM and Secretary-General committed to work together to encourage states to put forward ambitious plans to reduce global emissions.

They also discussed their concerns regarding the situation in Myanmar, and stressed the need to continue international support for the political process in Libya and for a negotiated solution to the crisis in Yemen.

The Prime Minister looked forward to joining the Secretary-General at the UN Security Council next week for a virtual session chaired by the UK on climate and security, and to welcoming him to the Cornwall for the G7 Summit in June.

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