

Human Rights Council organisational meeting: UK statement

We have convened this special session, alongside the European Union, with the support of over 20 other Council members. We are grateful for the support of Council members, the President and the Secretariat in making this session possible.

Madam President – we have spoken about our concerns about the human rights situation in Myanmar in the Council on many occasions in regular and in Special Sessions. Our longstanding concerns remain, including about the situation in Rakhine state and of the massive-scale-violations committed against Rohingya Muslims and members of other minorities. We are alarmed by concerned by a recent increase in violence in Kachin, Shan and particularly Kayin, where the Tatmadaw has repeatedly violated the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in recent months.

But our reason for calling for this special session is due to the extremely serious events which have unfolded in Myanmar over the last 10 days.

In the early hours of the 1st of February, Myanmar's military seized power in a coup and detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, as well as other members of the democratically elected government and civil society. A state of emergency has been declared.

Since the military launched their coup, numerous human rights violations and abuses have been documented. These include but are not limited to arbitrary detention, restriction of access to communications, and restrictions on freedom of expression and the right to protest. There has been violence against peaceful protestors. Mass protests continue, the risk of further abuses of human rights remains high. The draft cyber security law raises the spectre of a further clamp down on freedom of expression and access to information.

The Security Council met on the 4th of February and unanimously agreed a statement which stressed the need for human rights to be fully respected. The Security Council also stressed the need to uphold democracy, refrain from further violence and allow safe and unimpeded humanitarian access.

Efforts to urge the Myanmar military to reverse the coup, restore democracy and respect human rights have not yielded results.

As the UN's principal human rights body, it is now essential that the Human Rights Council responds with due attention to the human rights emergency which is unfolding in the country.

In its founding resolution, this Council has a clear duty to promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights.

Therefore, given the imminent and ongoing threat to human rights in Myanmar

is it essential that we convene a Special Session on the human rights implications of the crisis in Myanmar, and seek a resolution responding to the concerns of Council members and observers.

We hope that all delegations will take part in the session and that the Council will support a resolution tomorrow to express our common concerns. We will continue to work with all delegations to this end.

Thank you

£125 million allocated to councils to support domestic abuse victims and their children

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Joint statement by the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Gove and European Commission Vice-President Šefčovič

Press release

Statement following a meeting in London between the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove and European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič.



The co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee on the Withdrawal Agreement – European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove – met to prepare the upcoming Joint Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland and the outstanding issues.

After a frank but constructive discussion, and taking into account the views expressed on 3 February by the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, the two co-chairs agreed to:

- reiterate their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol – protecting the gains of the peace process, maintaining stability, avoiding a hard border on the island of Ireland and impacting as little as possible on the everyday life of communities in both Ireland and Northern Ireland
- spare no effort to implement solutions mutually agreed on 17 December, as they form a foundation for our cooperation
- intensify the work of the Specialised Committee on the Protocol in order to address all outstanding issues, with the shared objective to find workable solutions on the ground
- underpin this work by further joint engagement by the UK and the EU with business groups and civic society in Northern Ireland
- convene the Joint Committee no later than 24 February to provide the necessary political steer and approval to this work in the spirit of collaboration, responsibility and pragmatism

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Respecting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity

- UK condemns Russia's ongoing violation of international law and calls on Russia to stop arming its proxies and fuelling the conflict in Eastern Ukraine

Remarks by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at Security Council briefing, 11 February 2021

I would like to start by thanking our briefers. The United Kingdom reiterates its support for the Minsk agreements and the roadmap they provide for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and for French and German efforts through the Normandy process.

The significant reduction in violence is welcome, but the ceasefire remains fragile. Russia continues to supply arms and personnel to its proxies. Russia and its proxies continue to block new entry-exit points along the line of contact, and the full implementation of plans for disengagement and demining.

We agree that local elections must pave the way for Special Status for Donbas. Yet Russia will not support the security conditions needed to enable these elections.

Russia claims it is not a party to the conflict, but it instigated and continues to fuel the conflict. And innocent civilians suffer because of it. Nearly 3,500 civilians have died, and 3.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

We remind Russia of its obligations. It must withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine, cease its support for the armed formations it backs and stop access restrictions and intimidation of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in areas held by its proxies.

Russia's only objective is to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We urge Russia to match the political will demonstrated by Ukraine so that real progress can be made.

I reiterate the United Kingdom's enduring support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognised borders and territorial waters. The Ukrainian people deserve peace. We will hold Russia to account for this.

E3 statement on attack on Abha International Airport, Saudi Arabia

News story

The governments of France, Germany and the UK have strongly condemned the attack claimed by the Houthis on Abha International Airport, in the South of Saudi Arabia, on February 10.



The E3 (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) strongly condemn the attack claimed by the Houthis on Abha International Airport, in the South of Saudi Arabia, on February 10.

Continued attacks of this nature, including those which target civilian areas in violation of international law, illustrate the seriousness of the threat that the proliferation of drones poses to the stability of the region. We reiterate our firm commitment to the security and integrity of Saudi territory, and reaffirm our strong support for a swift resolution of the Yemeni conflict which will bring much-needed stability to the region.

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