

HRC 51: UK Statement under Item 2 General Debate on Acting High Commissioner Oral Update

Thank you Mr President,

Acting High Commissioner,

The former High Commissioner's recent report on Xinjiang included credible evidence of arbitrary and discriminatory detention, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, forced sterilisations and abortions, and the destruction of religious sites. This report provides further compelling and harrowing evidence of the extent of China's efforts to silence and repress Uyghurs and other minority groups in the region including acts that may constitute crimes against humanity. China must allow independent UN experts to conduct unrestricted visits to Xinjiang to verify the findings. The Council must not stay silent as an ethnic and religious minority is so brutally targeted.

Turning our attention to other countries, in Sudan, violence, the killing of protestors and other human rights violations continue. We are disappointed that important progress made on human rights since the 2019 revolution has been lost following last year's coup. The UK urges the Sudanese authorities to allow peaceful protests, to deliver on their commitment to protect civilians, to implement the Juba Peace Agreement, and to hold those responsible for violations to account. All parties must recommit to Sudan's democratic transition to deliver the peace and justice the Sudanese people deserve.

In South Sudan, the human rights situation is appalling, evidenced by harrowing reports of violence, killings and widespread sexual violence. The UK calls on the Government of South Sudan to hold the perpetrators of these abuses to account, end impunity, and protect civilians. A secure, stable and enduring peace is essential. The Government should now implement the 2018 peace agreement, meeting the timelines set out in their recently announced Roadmap.

We are also deeply concerned by the recent violence seen in Libya, most notably on the weekend of 26 August when 32 people were killed and over a hundred injured. The Libyan authorities must prioritise the protection of civilians and respect the human rights of all Libyans.

Thank you

UK Hydrographic Office supports Montserrat authorities with seabed mapping data survey

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has conducted a seabed mapping data survey in Montserrat, to improve the safety of navigation around the island and to help with understanding, managing, and protecting its marine life.

For this project, funded by the UK's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF), the UKHO worked alongside the Montserrat Hydrographic Survey Team to collect data from the waters around the island. This information can be used to assist with inundation mapping, which supports disaster resilience and planning, as well as by environmental departments to update habitat maps and the Royal Navy for relief efforts.

The UKHO data survey team returned to the UK in early September after spending four weeks gathering information from Montserrat's nearby waters. The team will now validate the data, before updating any of its navigational products that cover the waters around Montserrat.

The seabed mapping data survey is the latest in a series of projects where the UKHO, through its Overseas Territories Seabed Mapping Programme (OTSMP) has collaborated with authorities in Montserrat, a British overseas territory. During the past six years, the OTSMP supported local authorities to improve their compliance with international maritime obligations and provided equipment and expertise to undertake seabed mapping surveys.

This latest survey is one of the three workstreams that the UKHO and Montserrat Hydrographic Survey Team have worked on in the 2022/23 financial year. They are also carrying out a Hydrographic Action Plan Review and installing a Marine Environmental Monitoring Station.

Following Montserrat's attendance at the Hydrographic Governance seminar held at the UKHO three years ago, draft governance implementation plans were developed to identify areas of improvement that would support the island's aim to meet the IMO Instruments Implementation Code. The UKHO reviewed the plans in the 2020/21 financial year and subsequently created an action plan.

The UKHO OTSMP Programme Manager visited Montserrat from 22–26 August to review the Hydrographic Action Plan with maritime stakeholders, highlighting completed actions and identifying work that needs to be done. The updated plan is now with the Montserrat Maritime Authority, to continue its good work towards compliance.

Elsewhere, a Marine Environmental Monitoring Station will be installed on the existing jetty at Little Bay in Montserrat to collect tidal data later this year. Tracking the rise and fall of tides over time is key to refining the modelling and prediction of tides.

The Montserrat Hydrographic Survey Team will receive information from the monitoring station to support its data collection operations. The station's data will also be freely available on the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's [website](#) and linked to the regional [Early Warning and Migration Systems for tsunamis](#) just after installation later this year. The scientific community can use this data to understand sea levels over time and any related impact on climate change. The information is also available to local stakeholders, who can share it to enable the safe passage of vessels and secure marine operations.

Sarah Tucker, Governor of Montserrat, said:

The UKHO, through the CSSF, has continued to provide a wide range of support in Montserrat for six years, culminating in this year's programming. The seabed mapping of the eastern side of the island will replace data last collected in 1867.

"Montserrat is the only UK Overseas Territory with its own cross-government hydrographic survey team capable of collecting data that enables informed decisions to be taken in the maritime environment. This is a fantastic achievement by everyone. I commend the Ministries and their public servants who continue to fully engage in this important work for Montserrat."

Kerrie Howard, Hydrographic Programme Manager at the UKHO, said:

For the past six years, we've worked closely with Montserrat's authorities to collect data that enhances navigational safety around the island and protects its environment and marine life. The joint survey between the UKHO and Montserrat reinforces the ongoing collaboration and commitment of the UKHO to ensure that Montserrat authorities are able to survey their waters to international standards.

[North East 'Ark' sites are safe haven for endangered crayfish](#)

The Environment Agency and Northumberland Rivers Trust have relocated hundreds of native crayfish from the abundant populations found in the River Wansbeck in Morpeth, to six refuge sites in North Northumberland.

These refuges, known as 'Ark' sites, give the crayfish new safe places to breed and build their numbers, ensuring several populations remain if disaster strikes on the main Wansbeck.

The River Wansbeck is one of the last remaining strongholds for the white-clawed crayfish, but the survival of the species is threatened by the invasive and highly aggressive American signal crayfish. Signal crayfish are bigger, outcompete for food and can pass on the 'crayfish plague' which is deadly to the native crayfish.

The signal crayfish, which originates from America, was introduced in the 1970s and can also burrow into banksides, causing increased siltation of watercourses.

Crayfish relocated during maintenance work

Over the last few weeks, native crayfish have been moved from the main River Wansbeck at Mitford and relocated to the Ark sites. The opportunity to move a large number of the crayfish has come as a result of maintenance works being carried out at Mitford Dam, which is part of the Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The crayfish were collected by experienced and licenced staff using a combination of traps, stone turning and hand nets, all under a Natural England conservation licence.

It's just one part of the wider Northumberland Crayfish Strategy, which also involves partners including the National Trust and Northumberland Zoo, to ensure 2022 isn't the native species' final year in the county's rivers.

'Very real danger' of native species disappearing from rivers

The Environment Agency's Ian Marshall, Biodiversity Technical Specialist in the North East and white-clawed crayfish National Species Lead, said:

We're in very real danger of this native species disappearing from our rivers. These new Ark sites will give them a chance to breed and build new populations to help secure their long-term future.

It builds on the positive progress already made by ourselves and our partners in Northumberland to protect them.

Pete Kerr, Northumberland Rivers Trust, said:

While Northumberland's rivers do have some of the best remaining populations of native crayfish in the UK, the invasive signal crayfish are a constant and imminent threat.

Many people haven't seen a native crayfish but they are amazing creatures that play a vital ecological role. We need to do all we can to shelter them from harm and these new Ark sites will play a key role.

The Northumberland Crayfish Partnership is calling on people to 'Check, Clean, Dry' their clothing and equipment after visiting local rivers to avoid transferring invasive crayfish and the crayfish plague between rivers which can be transported in damp soles of shoes or within fishing gear.

If you see any crayfish, alive or dead, leave it where it is and report it immediately to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. If possible, take close-up photos of the crayfish to help identify the species. It is illegal to handle or remove crayfish from the water without the correct licences.

New Non-Executive Director of the SIA appointed

News story

Caroline Corby has been appointed a Non-Executive Director of the Security Industry Authority (SIA).



Security Industry Authority

The Minister for Safeguarding has approved the appointment of Caroline Corby to the role of Non-Executive Director with the Security Industry Authority from 19 September 2022.

Caroline is currently the Chair of the Parole Board for England and Wales and the Chair of the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from previous public sector roles, notably in criminal justice and healthcare settings.

Caroline has been appointed to the Authority for a term of 3 years and 6 months.

Published 20 September 2022

MAC commissioned to review shortage occupation list

Published 1 September 2022

Last updated 20 September 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 20 September 2022

Added letter from the Minister for Safe and Legal Migration to the MAC, to allow the use of SOC 2010 data for the SOL commission.

2. 1 September 2022

First published.