

# PM call with President Joe Biden: 23 January 2021

Press release

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The Prime Minister spoke to Joe Biden, President of the United States, this evening.

He congratulated the President on his inauguration and the two leaders looked forward to deepening the close alliance between our nations.

The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the President's decision to re-join the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as the World Health Organization and the COVAX programme to ensure equitable access for vaccines.

They noted the significant challenges facing the world during the pandemic, but also the unparalleled opportunities to build back better and greener together. The Prime Minister praised President Biden's early action on tackling climate change and commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050.

Building on the UK and US' long history of cooperation in security and defence, the leaders re-committed to the NATO alliance and our shared values in promoting human rights and protecting democracy.

They also discussed the benefits of a potential free trade deal between our two countries, and the Prime Minister reiterated his intention to resolve existing trade issues as soon as possible.

The leaders looked forward to meeting in person as soon as the circumstances allow, and to working together through the G7, G20 and COP26 this year.

Published 23 January 2021

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## **Detention of peaceful protesters in Russia: UK statement**

Press release

UK concerned by detention of peaceful protesters in Russia and urges Russian government to respect international human rights commitments.



An FCDO spokesperson said:

We are deeply concerned by the detention of peaceful protesters and continue to monitor the situation closely. We urge the Russian government to respect and comply with its international commitments on human rights, and release citizens detained during peaceful demonstrations.

Published 23 January 2021

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## **Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance on the new variant of COVID-19 in the UK**

Press release

Government Chief Science Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance comments on the new

variant of COVID-19.



Commenting on the new variant of COVID-19 in the UK the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, said:

The new UK variant comprises a significant number of the our cases. It is spreading 30 to 70% more easily than the old variant. It doesn't differ in terms of age distribution to the original variant.

When we look at severity and mortality, data for patients who are in hospital with the virus suggest the outcomes for those with the original variant look the same as the new variant. However, when looking at the data for people who have tested positive, there is an indication that the rate for the new variant is higher. Although these data are currently uncertain, it does appear that this variant has increased mortality compared to the old virus, as well as increased transmission. For context, with the original variant, if you took a group of 1,000 infected men in their 60s roughly 10 would die. But with the new variant, roughly 13 or 14 of that group might be expected to die.

There is increasing evidence from studies that vaccines will still work against the UK variant.

A paper from the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) on [the new coronavirus \(COVID-19\) variant B.1.1.7](#) explains this further.

Published 23 January 2021

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# UK to host G7 Summit in Cornwall

- Summit will be held in Carbis Bay, Cornwall from 11-13th June 2021
- Australia, India and South Korea invited as guest countries

Prime Ministers and Presidents from the world's leading democracies will come together in Cornwall in June to address shared challenges, from beating coronavirus and tackling climate change, to ensuring that people everywhere can benefit from open trade, technological change and scientific discovery.

The Prime Minister will use the first in-person G7 summit in almost two years to ask leaders to seize the opportunity to build back better from coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous.

The G7 – which is made up of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the USA and the EU – is the only forum where the world's most influential and open societies and advanced economies are brought together for close-knit discussions.

The Prime Minister's ambition is to use the G7 to intensify cooperation between the world's democratic and technologically advanced nations. To that end, he has invited leaders from Australia, India and South Korea to attend as guest countries to deepen the expertise and experience around the table. Between them, the 10 leaders represent over 60% of the people living in democracies around the world.

The choice of Cornwall as the location for the Summit will mean the eyes of the world are on the beautiful, historic and innovative region. The leaders' meeting itself will be held in the coastal town of Carbis Bay, supported by neighbouring St Ives and other towns across the region. The whole of Cornwall will reap the benefits of hosting the G7.

The region is already a powerhouse for green innovation, providing an ideal setting for a Summit focused on building back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

Visit Cornwall estimates the total economic impact for the county will be £50 million, including through an increase in future tourism. The Government will also work closely with Cornish leaders and institutions to ensure the Summit leaves a long term legacy for the region, reaping the benefits of hosting the G7 for years to come.

The UK will also host a number of meetings throughout the year between Government Ministers from the G7, both virtually and in different locations across the UK – ensuring many areas of the country experience the benefits of the UK's G7 Presidency. These ministerial summits will cover economic, environmental, health, trade, technology, development and foreign policy issues.

The Prime Minister said:

As the most prominent grouping of democratic countries, the G7 has long been the catalyst for decisive international action to tackle the greatest challenges we face. From cancelling developing world debt to our universal condemnation of Russia's annexation of Crimea, the world has looked to the G7 to apply our shared values and diplomatic might to create a more open and prosperous planet.

Coronavirus is doubtless the most destructive force we have seen for generations and the greatest test of the modern world order we have experienced. It is only right that we approach the challenge of building back better by uniting with a spirit of openness to create a better future.

Cornwall is the perfect location for such a crucial summit. Two hundred years ago Cornwall's tin and copper mines were at the heart of the UK's industrial revolution and this summer Cornwall will again be the nucleus of great global change and advancement. I'm very much looking forward to welcoming world leaders to this great region and country.

2021 marks a crucial year of international leadership for the UK. In addition to the G7 Summit, during February the UK will assume the Presidency of the UN Security Council, and later this year the UK will host COP26 in Glasgow and a global education conference aimed at getting children in the developing world into school.

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## [Foreign Secretary sets out UK's unique offer to East African nations on visit to region](#)

On a three-country tour of East Africa, one year on from the UK's Africa Investment Summit, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met with political leaders, NGO's and civil society in Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia for important talks on tackling shared challenges including COVID-19, security and climate change.

Starting in Kenya on Wednesday (20 January) the Foreign Secretary and President Uhuru Kenyatta met to discuss further opportunities to boost the UK-Kenya trade partnership – worth £1.4 billion annually – following the signing of one of the UK's first trade agreements in Africa in December.

The Foreign Secretary had meetings with senior politicians including Foreign Minister Raychelle Omamo and announced £48 million of new UK climate initiatives for Kenya as we build momentum ahead of COP26 in Glasgow in November.

On a visit to KEMRI Laboratory in Nairobi the Foreign Secretary heard how Kenyan and British scientists have been working together to develop the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine. Here he signed a new health partnership with Health Minister Mutahi Kagwe, to help maximise knowledge sharing between medical professionals in both the UK and Kenya.

Alongside Defence Cabinet Secretary Monica Juma, the Foreign Secretary met soldiers at the UK-backed Counter-IED centre at the Humanitarian Peace Support School in Embakasi, and heard how joint Kenya-UK efforts are countering terrorism.

On Thursday (21 January) Mr Raab travelled to Sudan – the first visit to the country by a British Foreign Secretary in over a decade. He met Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Foreign Minister Omer Garameldin as well as the Chair of the Sovereign Council, Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to express the UK's commitment to Sudan's democratic transition and confirm the contribution of £40 million of UK funding to the Sudan Family Support Programme – helping Sudanese communities while critical economic reforms are implemented.

The Foreign Secretary also highlighted that, as part of a coordinated international package, the UK stands ready to provide a £330m bridging loan to clear arrears to the African Development Bank if Sudan stays on track with its economic reforms agreed with the IMF, and the Boards of the IMF and World Bank approve similar arrears clearance packages.

Meeting some of the women and young people who played a pivotal role in the revolution, the Foreign Secretary heard how their actions in the protests helped bring about life-changing democratic reforms. In talks with key legal figures working to deliver transitional justice, the Foreign Secretary discussed the incredibly important work they are doing to secure justice for victims of abuses committed during the revolution and under the Omar al-Bashir regime.

At World Food Programme (WFP) sites in Sudan and Ethiopia, the Foreign Secretary saw first-hand the vital role that UK aid is playing in helping those most in need of humanitarian assistance. In Sudan he visited a WFP nutrition centre, where UK funding is providing life-saving food assistance to vulnerable communities, and spoke to families benefiting from this support.

In Gondar, Ethiopia, the Foreign Secretary visited a World Food Programme warehouse, central to distributing humanitarian aid such as food and sanitation supplies to those displaced by the crisis in Tigray. The UK is providing £11.4 million of humanitarian support – with money for healthcare and clean water, as well as shelter, nutrition kits and protection for children. This is in addition to a £94 million package to support Ethiopia's response to the triple threats of COVID-19, climate change and locusts, which are having a devastating impact on the country.

Arriving back in Addis Ababa the Foreign Secretary visited a school with President Sahle-Work Zewde to see how the UK is supporting girl's education

and spoke to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali about humanitarian access and a solution to the Tigray crisis, as well as climate change and prosperity. Mr Raab also signed a climate partnership agreement with Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen for collaboration between the UK and Ethiopia ahead of COP26.

Speaking at the end of his visit, Mr Raab said:

This trip has been an invaluable opportunity to strengthen key partnerships in East Africa, boosting trade, security and our ability to tackle global challenges including Covid-19 and climate change.

We are committed to bringing the best of British expertise to the region, defusing tensions, doing business with integrity and forging strong partnerships on health, climate and other global challenges.