

# 37th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on St Lucia

World news story

The UK delivers statement on St Lucia at the 37th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



Thank you, Madam President,

The United Kingdom welcomes St Lucia's engagement with the UPR process, and its progress on human rights. Such progress included its work towards a Domestic Violence Bill, which we encourage St Lucia to pass into legislation as quickly as possible, as well as taking further practical steps to reduce domestic violence against women, men and children.

The UK welcomes St Lucia's positive approach towards media freedom and we urge the government to ensure its correctional system meets international human rights standards.

We recommend that St Lucia:

1. Increase efforts to eliminate human trafficking, including by improving effectiveness of victim identification and support, and improving efforts to investigate, prosecute and sentence traffickers.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
3. Enacts comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation which will specifically prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you, Madam President.

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## [Regulator oversees governance improvements after senior figures in development charity post anti-Semitic and offensive social media comments](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has concluded a compliance case involving Islamic Relief Worldwide after serious concerns were identified about historic anti-Semitic posts made by one of the charity's then trustees last year.



During the course of the case, another then trustee and a now former executive director were also found to have posted similarly offensive and anti-Semitic social media comments some time previously, which ran contrary

to the charity's code of conduct and fell far below the standard the public expect of charity trustees and staff. All three individuals have themselves acknowledged that their conduct was unacceptable and have issued apologies. All parties have cooperated fully with the Commission.

The Commission reviewed the charity's response to these comments and is satisfied that it took swift action, including to condemn the comments and ensure all three individuals left their roles, which the individuals did of their own accord. None has any ongoing involvement with the charity.

The Commission has overseen significant improvements to the recruitment and oversight of trustees and senior staff at the charity. During the compliance case the charity held pre-planned trustee elections and recruited a new board. The Commission has met with the new board and is satisfied that it is making the necessary improvements in terms of the vetting of trustees, and ongoing oversight over their social media activities. The charity has also appointed an Independent Commission to review its wider governance.

The Commission's case established that the former trustees and director did not disclose the existence of their social media profiles or posts to the charity. The Commission is considering the reasons and circumstances surrounding this and whether further regulatory action is appropriate.

The regulatory case concluded in January 2021 with the issuing to the trustees of regulatory advice under s15(2) of the Charities Act 2011, requiring them to take further action in a number of areas, including to review and if necessary update the charity's code of conduct for trustees. The Commission will review progress against those requirements as part of its regular monitoring work.

**Tim Hopkins, Assistant Director of Investigations and Inquiries at the Charity Commission, said:**

The posts made by a number of now former senior leaders within Islamic Relief Worldwide on social media were clearly offensive, and risked damaging public trust in Islamic Relief Worldwide and charities more generally.

There is no place for anti-Semitism or any other form of racism in charity, which is a precious national asset, that we must work together to protect and promote. We welcome the improvements the charity has made to its governance so far and will continue to monitor its progress.

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.

Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

2. The Commission's compliance case began in July 2020.
3. In September 2020, Islamic Relief Worldwide confirmed the appointment of Dominic Grieve QC to chair an [independent commission into the charity's approach to trustee vetting and conduct](#).

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## Encouraging locally-led climate change adaptation

Thank you.

Before I begin the speech I'd prepared for today, I'd like to start by saying that this week, we are expecting significant flooding here in England.

The ground is saturated, previous rainfall and snowmelt means river levels are high, and now a band of heavy rain coming in from the Atlantic threatens parts of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.

Today, my speech will be about global climate trends, and how we prepare in the medium and long terms...

...but this week serves as a reminder that those trends are made up of individual events in local areas.

Flooding is often devastating, sometimes fatal, and while I hope we don't see that here this week, we must always be ready.

The Environment Agency is working with partners across the country to reduce the risks, and we are ready to respond.

We are operating flood defences and flood storage reservoirs, and have put up temporary barriers.

If you are listening in England, I urge you to sign up to our flood warnings and check the latest safety advice – all available for free on the government website.

This information could save your life.

Now, I'd like to talk about history.

Just over 200 years ago – in 1812:

- Napoleon introduced the metric system, and invaded Russia;
- the United States was at war with Britain;
- the first edition of Grimm's Fairy Tales was published;
- an earthquake destroyed Caracas in Venezuela...

...and, the Lower River Otter in the South West of England, was separated from its floodplain to create farmland.

You might have heard about the River Otter, as it is home to England's first wild population of beavers in 400 years...

...but the realignment of the lower part of the river is probably not – for you – one of the key events of 1812.

Yet, it is an example of how we are still rowing in history's wake.

The artificial alignment of the river increases the instance of water pollution from cattle slurry and fertilisers...

... and now, severe and regular storms, brought by the climate emergency, threaten to more regularly overwhelm the embankments...

...as happened in 2012 and 2018.

Ever since 1812, the river has been trying to reconnect with its floodplain – as nature would have it.

To address this, the landowner, Clinton Devon Estates, alongside the Environment Agency, and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, have created a £15 million scheme to help the valley adapt to climate change, and create an internationally important wildlife reserve.

Embankments that separate agricultural land and a cricket club from the river will be breached to allow land to flood at high tide.

The move will involve over 150 hectares of the catchment, including 55 hectares of saltmarsh and mudflats that provide habitat for wading birds, and there will also be areas of reedbed and grazing marsh.

The project is partnered with another in the Saône Valley in France, and if successful the model will be rolled out further.

It is a good example of how locally-led adaptation immediately connects to international collaboration and partnership.

The host of this conference, Saleemul Huq, [director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development], and Clare Shakya, [director of International Institute for Environment and Development's Climate Change research group], recently wrote that:

"The COVID-19 pandemic has made clearer than ever the importance of engaging communities in responses.

“COVID-19 interventions were most effective where people were already connected vertically to policymakers, technical support and finance, and horizontally to develop and share collaborative solutions and learnings across communities and across sectors.

“Together, we can learn from this experience to design a green, inclusive and resilient recovery.”

While we search for new technologies to meet the challenges of the coming century, many of the solutions we need are already understood by local communities.

And... are all around us, in nature.

Last week, at the One Planet Summit in Paris, the UK Prime Minister committed £3 billion for supporting nature-based solutions to climate change, and protecting biodiversity over five years.

The funding will be allocated from the UK’s existing commitment of £11.6 billion for international climate finance.

It will deliver change in protecting biodiversity-rich land and oceans, transitioning to sustainable food production and supply, and tackling climate change, pollution and desertification.

The Global Commission on Adaptation – to which I am the UK Commissioner – will discuss this further at the Dutch hosted Climate Adaptation Summit next week, when it brings attention to nature’s largely untapped role in adaptation.

The work of the Commission to develop a set of ‘locally-led adaptation principles’ will help ensure that nature-based solutions deliver local resilience to climate impacts.

The UK commitment builds on the release of the Government’s 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution, and its adaptation communication, released in December.

The organisation I Chair – the Environment Agency – is delivering these ambitions with local communities in England.

And, we look forward to sharing expertise with, as well as learning from, international partners in the run up to COP26.

For example:

Restoring peatland has many benefits, like reducing downstream flood risk.

It slows the flow while filtering water, meaning water companies can use less chemical treatment.

Working with local authorities, businesses and community groups, we have created 531 hectares of blanket bog, and restored a further 2,148 hectares

across England in 2019/2020.

These projects also lead to an increase in biodiversity to promote our native species, and help store carbon to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Environment Agency has also published a National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management to 2100.

It will seek to adopt a range of innovative flood and coastal resilience measures: from the construction of hard flood defences, river channel maintenance and sustainable drainage systems, to nature based solutions, property level resilience and alternative land management practices.

But, crucially, it does not operate a “top down” approach: we will work with local communities to identify the best combination of measures that tackle the unique risks experienced in specific places.

We rely on local intelligence for our warning and informing on flood risk.

I know this is critical for you in Bangladesh, where deaths from tropical cyclones declined more than 100-fold in 40 years, from 500,000 deaths in 1970 to just over 4,000 in 2007.

This achievement was made possible by developments in early warning systems, cyclone shelters, evacuation plans, coastal embankments, reforestation schemes, and increased awareness and communication.

It is just another example of how local experience can inform global responses.

In a speech to Columbia University in December, UN Secretary General António Guterres said:

“The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation fall most heavily on women. They are 80 percent of those displaced by climate change.

“But women are also the backbone of agriculture and key stewards of natural resources. They are among the world’s leading environmental human rights defenders.

“As humankind devises strategies for natural resource governance, environmental preservation and building a green economy, we need more women decision-makers at the table.”

Dr Tamsin Edwards, a climate scientist at King’s College London, has said:

“When women stay behind [after climate shocks] to care for children and the elderly, and suffer increases in domestic violence, trafficking and child marriage: we cannot ignore the connection between gender inequality and climate impacts.

“But the story to tell here is not just the suffering of women. We have an unprecedented chance to design a better future. We know that policies that

reduce climate change or its impacts can reduce gender inequality, and vice versa, as long as they are truly designed in consultation with women.”

In December, I put my name to an open letter from the campaign group “She Changes Climate” to the UK Prime Minister. It said:

“Inclusion of women also leads to stronger outcomes on implementation. Evidence shows that involving people in decision-making who will be affected by these decisions influences policy support among the public.”

The data shows organisations that embrace gender diversity get better financial results and environmental outcomes.

This applies to locally led adaptation efforts as much as it does to global politics.

For instance: in Niger, where farmers have led reforestation efforts by boosting crop yields, improving soil fertility and lifting communities out of poverty...

...Tree cover has soared ten-fold and the daily time spent gathering firewood – a task that mainly falls to women – has dropped from three hours to 30 minutes.

Of course, in order to scale up such efforts you need a lot more money, and political will.

It is important to emphasise the role that private finance can play building climate resilience in the economy through greater financial disclosure on climate risks.

The Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment was launched in 2019.

It represents a commitment from the global private sector towards the development of practical investment solutions to physical climate risks.

By pricing climate risks (particularly for infrastructure) and including them in upfront financial decision-making, CCRI’s aim is to incentivise a shift towards greater resilience.

It has grown rapidly to 63 members, with more than \$10 trillion in assets under management.

This is good, we need to be talking about trillions of finance – not billions.

The CCRI will be an important part of the adaptation & resilience and finance workstreams for COP26.

It will support the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures, and work alongside the Indian-led Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Ahead of COP 26, the UN launched a race to zero emissions.

The race to resilience has also begun.

We need to point it towards the trillions of finance

Kristalina Georgieva, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, has said:

“Power is the ability to influence the world around us, but more than anything it means responsibility to do the right thing.”

I began this speech by talking about decisions made in 1812.

In another 200 years’ time, I hope that the leadership shown at COP26 will be lived and enjoyed, much more than it is debated by historians.

That leadership must be informed by the expertise of men and women living in the world as it is now.

A fast-changing world.

The impacts of that change are already being managed by local communities.

If we are to do the right thing, their voices need to be heard.

Thank you.

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## [Dstl plays pivotal role in defence missile development](#)

News story

Dstl – the science inside UK defence and security – played an instrumental part throughout the research and development of the new SPEAR3 surface-attack missile.



Graphic showing the F-35 SPEAR3 missile

In a recent announcement the Defence Minister, Jeremy Quin, revealed the signing of a £550 million contract with MBDA for the new weapon for the F-35 aircraft:

The development of this next-generation missile will allow us to protect our personnel and assets on the ground, from thousands of metres in the sky above.

Dstl scientists have played a major and influential role in all stages of development of the weapon for the Armed Forces over many years. The scientists have completed comprehensive analysis to establish the robust evidence required to justify the capability need and to specifically inform the setting of the key user requirements (KURs) for Air Command.

In the early days of the project, Dstl piloted a new way of interacting with Industry based on a close, jointing working approach. The SPEAR Green Box was very successful as it effectively fast-tracked the development of weapons concepts to meet the SPEAR Capability 3 requirement.

During the assessment phase, Dstl built an excellent relationship with the joint Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) and MBDA management team to ensure our operational analysis and scientific know-how could continue to support the programme.

Throughout the weapon development phase and working closely with many experts across Dstl, the Strike Weapons team have provided highly valuable technical advice to support DE&S and MBDA, including the assurance that the missile provides adequate lethality whilst minimising collateral damage.

Recently the team have assured the technical content of the 7-year £550 million contract, for the demonstration and manufacture phase, and are now working with MOD stakeholders to plan the acceptance and release to service activities, such as operational evaluation trials.

Dstl's Chief Executive Gary Aitkenhead said:

This is an excellent example of Dstl playing a pivotal role in defence, from early research all the way through the acquisition cycle to deliver a high-impact, battle-winning military capability for our armed forces.

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## [British Ambassador travels to Quetzaltenango](#)

World news story

The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, will visit Quetzaltenango on January 21-22 to promote collaboration on priority UK policy goals.



Ambassador fights pollution in Guatemala City / Embajador combate la contaminación en Ciudad de Guatemala

The visit will have a particular focus on exploring more economic opportunities to grow the UK-Guatemala trade relationship and that would help the recovery in a post-pandemic world. He will meet with a local entrepreneurship centre (CEN) to see how citizens from Quetzaltenango are working tirelessly and creatively to build prosperity and improve the economy of the department.

Additionally, Ambassador Whittingham will set the record straight on the UK's vision to work with Guatemala to tackle climate change and protect the environment. He will climb "Cerro Quemado" to collect plastic pollution and invite others to rationalize their use of plastic and reduce contamination. The UK is due to host the 2021 global climate change summit, COP26, at the end of the year.

Finally, he will also meet with the Mayor of Quetzaltenango, Juan Fernando López; and Quetzaltenango students who studied a master's degree in the UK. They will discuss on a variety of local priority issues, from the impacts of COVID-19, immigration and opportunities for students to apply to the prestigious UK Scholarships scheme Chevening.

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