

Foreign Secretary marks 25th Anniversary of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab remembers the victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords.



On the 25th anniversary of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has reiterated the UK's commitment to supporting reform which improves the lives of citizens and reconciliation in the country and across the wider Western Balkans.

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab said:

Today we remember the victims of the bitter conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and celebrate 25 years of peace.

I know personally from my time in The Hague pursuing those responsible for this dark chapter in European history, how important it is to help rebuild the countries affected.

The UK has played a crucial role in supporting the necessary reform to improve the lives of the country's citizens including helping them deal with the legacy of the war.

The progress citizens want to see is often thwarted by those who profit from fear and division. So I call upon the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to set aside divisive rhetoric and renew efforts to focus on a peaceful future and democratic rights for all.

Twenty-five years ago today the Dayton Peace Accords were agreed in Dayton, Ohio, marking the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and paving the way for peace and democracy in the country. The Accords were formally

signed in Paris on 14 December. Approximately 100,000 people were killed in the 1992-1995 conflict, tens of thousands were victims of sexual violence, and more than 1.8 million people were displaced.

The UK now provides £80 million of support annually to support peace and stability in the region and has introduced a number of initiatives to support citizen focused reform. This includes the digitisation of government services, promoting an independent media, professionalising the armed forces, and supporting war crime prosecution.

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Culture Recovery Fund will bring Blackpool Tower Ballroom back to former glory

- The home of British ballroom dancing will receive £764,000 from the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund
- Funding will restore period plasterwork to bring the Blackpool Tower Ballroom back to its former glory
- Major grant announced as Strictly Come Dancing celebrates iconic venue with studio special

The Blackpool Tower Ballroom is the latest venue to receive a lifeline grant of £764,000 from the Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, the Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden has announced.

The ballroom, located in the Grade I listed Tower Buildings, first opened to the public in 1894 and has a rich history as the home of British ballroom dancing. Millions of viewers will know the spectacular 19th century venue as the site of Strictly Come Dancing's annual ballroom special which airs this evening.

Blackpool's funding builds on more than £115 million which has been awarded to heritage sites across the country from the Culture Recovery Fund, including more than £39 million in grants dedicated to kickstarting construction and maintenance projects that have been paused due to the pandemic.

The £764,000 grant, awarded to Blackpool Council by Historic England on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, will enable the legendary venue to carry out comprehensive repair and restoration work on the ballroom's period plasterwork ceiling. The work will be undertaken during the building's current period of closure and will provide work to local

specialists.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said:

The Blackpool Tower Ballroom has been an iconic home for British dance for more than a century. The Culture Recovery Fund will help restore this beautiful ballroom so that it can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Shirley Ballas, Head Judge – Strictly Come Dancing, 3 x Blackpool British Open Professional Latin American Champion

Blackpool holds a special place in the heart of every ballroom dancer all over the world. It is a town steeped in Ballroom dance history and somewhere everyone hopes to dance one day. For me, I won my 3 British Professional Latin Championships in Blackpool, titles that I cherish. I am overjoyed to learn of the Government's investment to aid in the restoration of one of Blackpool's historic ballrooms, all of which house the memories and history of the ballroom dance industry. Thank you Oliver Dowden MP, I still owe you that cha cha cha lesson!

Anton du Beke, Judge – Strictly Come Dancing

How wonderful to hear the news about the investment in the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool. Such important funding to keep the art of ballroom dancing alive for generations to come! Keep Dancing!

Duncan Wilson, Historic England Chief Executive said:

Blackpool Tower Ballroom has played a hugely significant role in the history and popular culture of our country for over 125 years, as a landmark in British seaside architecture and tourism, to the special place it holds in the nation's heart as the iconic venue for TV's Strictly Come Dancing.

In these challenging times, our shared heritage is more important than ever. This vital funding will allow essential repairs to take place, providing employment for skilled craft workers and ensuring that we preserve this much-loved ballroom for everyone to enjoy, both now and in the future.

Historic sites, arts organisations and cultural venues in all four nations are benefiting from the UK Government's biggest ever one-off investment in culture, with £188 million Barnetted to the Devolved Administrations – £97 million for Scotland, £59 million for Wales and £33 million for Northern

Ireland. This is in addition to £500 million awarded across England already. This funding is enabling them to increase the support already available to the arts and cultural sectors in each nation.

ENDS

Additional quotes:

Sammy Stopford MBE, 5 x Blackpool British Open Professional Latin American Champion, Blackpool Dance Festival Hall of Fame, President World Dance Council Amateur League said:

Blackpool has been home to prestigious Ballroom dance festivals for almost 100 years and is considered by all to be the home of Ballroom dancing. As such, I believe the generous economic contribution towards the restoration of Blackpool's historic ballrooms is a sign of this Government's intent to preserve an art form deeply ingrained within the identity of this country. Thank you, Oliver Dowden CBE MP and the Department for DCMS; we are truly grateful for your actions!

Richard Gleave OBE CBE, 8 x Blackpool British Open Professional Ballroom Champion.

One of the Jewels in the Crown of Blackpool, the legendary Tower Ballroom is one of the most magnificent and famous Ballrooms in the World

Bryan Allen, Former President – British Dance Council

For International ballroom dance relations and overseas visiting ballroom dancers, this is fantastic news!

Marcus Hilton MBE & Karen Hilton MBE

Having won multiple British and World titles in this most iconic, world famous dancing town of Blackpool, Karen and I are absolutely thrilled that this magical arena has been awarded over £750k from DCMS as part of their Cultural Recovery Plan.

Mark Lunn, President – Dance Promoters Association

Wonderful news! The importance of ballroom dance to the town of Blackpool is difficult to quantify. Add to that the historic value of the Tower Ballroom itself. This is a great gesture from the UK

Government

Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Tourism & Culture, Blackpool Council, said:

We are thrilled to be awarded this grant which will help bring the ornate ceiling of the magnificent Tower Ballroom back to its former glory. The ballroom has provided entertainment for generations of people for more than a century and is a national treasure, not least because of its relationship with Strictly.

We are enormously appreciative that its importance to the cultural heritage of this country has been recognised in this way.

Kate Shane, Head of Cluster, Merlin Entertainments, operators of The Blackpool Tower on behalf of Blackpool Council, said:

I am remarkably fortunate to be able to appreciate the splendour of the Tower Ballroom every working day. I see at first hand the sheer joy that it brings to people whether they are ballroom dancing, enjoying afternoon tea or simply taking in the extraordinary surroundings.

The timing of the grant could not be better as the ballroom is currently closed because of pandemic restrictions and we cannot wait to see the work on the restoration of this beautiful plasterwork ceiling to commence.

PM: G20 must work together to defeat the pandemic and protect the planet

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will attend the virtual G20 Summit this weekend.



The Prime Minister will urge G20 leaders to take more ambitious action to defeat the pandemic and address climate change, as he attends a virtual summit this weekend.

Hosted by Saudi Arabia, the G20 Summit will bring together world leaders for two days of discussions on how to drive the global recovery from coronavirus and build back better.

At a session on 'Overcoming the Pandemic and Restoring Growth and Jobs' today [Saturday 21st], Boris Johnson will note the UK's commitment to equitable global access for coronavirus vaccines and encourage others to step up and support the COVAX initiative, to ensure developing countries are not frozen out of the race for a vaccine.

On Sunday [22nd], he will welcome recent Net Zero commitments from a number of G20 countries at a session on 'Building an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Future', and call on others to make the same pledge. Ahead of the Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by the UK on December 12th, the Prime Minister will warn that we risk failing future generations if states do not take bold steps to reduce their emissions.

Speaking ahead of the G20, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The G20 committed in March to do 'whatever it takes to overcome the pandemic and protect lives and livelihoods'. As we meet this weekend, we must hold ourselves to account for that promise.

If we harness the collective ingenuity and resources of the G20, we can chart a path out of the pandemic and build a better, greener future.

The Prime Minister is attending the G20 remotely from Downing Street on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd November. Both sessions are expected to take place in the afternoon.

Supporting an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led peace process

Many thanks your Excellency and I would like to start by thanking you, his Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, and their Excellencies the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Finland, Norway, Indonesia, and Germany – for organising this event.

I'd also like to thank His Excellency President Ghani for his keynote address and the other briefers for their remarks.

Your Excellencies,

We are at an historic moment in Afghanistan.

The start of the Afghan peace talks marks an unprecedented opportunity to end decades of war and to build a peaceful future for all Afghans.

Achieving these goals is not easy. Violence continues to take the lives of innocent Afghans, and this is unacceptable.

Peace will mean taking difficult decisions. President Ghani and his government have taken many courageous steps to reach this point. And the next phase will require more difficult decisions and more courage still.

Your Excellencies,

These decisions are for Afghans to take. It is our role to support these efforts.

First, we should support the peace negotiations.

We should remain ready to provide our assistance to the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

I reiterate here the UK's standing offer of assistance and thank the United Nations as well as the United States, Qatar, Germany, Norway, Indonesia and Uzbekistan for the excellent work they too are doing.

It also involves delivering clear messages to the parties. If the Taliban is serious about peace, the violence must end. Civilians must be able to live in peace.

Second, we should support the aspirations of all Afghans including minority communities and especially Afghan women who are justifiably apprehensive about their future.

As Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, the UK welcomes

Ms Gailani's presence with us here today.

We will continue to advocate for women's participation at every level and at every stage of the peace process.

Third, we should renew our practical support.

The UK is sustaining Afghanistan's security, recently pledging up to \$90m to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces for the next year.

We are responding to Afghanistan's humanitarian needs, contributing over \$75m this year.

And, at this month's pledging conference in Geneva, we will announce our ongoing commitment to Afghanistan's development.

We urge partners here to join us in matching words with deeds.

Your Excellencies,

We face a marathon, not a sprint. We must remain patient, firm, and committed. For the UK, we will play our part.

Many thanks, Your Excellency.

Simon Hart welcomes National Lottery support for Welsh Football

News story

Forty four Cymru League clubs will benefit from financial package



Welsh Secretary Simon Hart has welcomed a £750,000 support package for all 44 Cymru League clubs in Wales in partnership with the National Lottery.

The financial package, established by the FAW and the National Lottery and facilitated by the UK Government will see clubs in three Cymru League divisions receive support while matches continue to be played behind closed doors because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Welsh Secretary said the package would play a key role in ensuring that the clubs can continue to exist and operate during these difficult times.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

Clubs in the Cymru Leagues play a huge role in their local communities and, like many others, they have been struggling in the current climate. I'm delighted that the UK Government could help bring The National Lottery and the football authorities together to deliver for these clubs and for grassroots football in Wales.

From Prestatyn to Taffs Well, this funding package will help enable clubs to keep going until fans can safely return.

The partnership follows a similar National Lottery initiative between the FA and National League in England, facilitated by the UK Government. Work continues on partnerships with the Scottish and Northern Ireland FAs.

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