

# Second anniversary of fraudulent presidential election in Belarus: Minister Chishti statement

Press release

Minister Rehman Chishti calls for free and fair elections in Belarus.



On the second anniversary of the fraudulent Presidential election in Belarus, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Rehman Chishti said:

Over the last two years, Lukashenko has led a campaign of repression against his own people. There are now almost 1,300 political prisoners in Belarus. The authorities have tried to silence independent media and civil society.

We support the democratic aspirations and human rights of the people of Belarus. We urge the authorities to abide by international law, release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, and permit those in exile to return home without fear of arrest or repression. We also condemn Lukashenko's support for, and complicity in, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We will hold Belarusian authorities accountable for their actions.

This includes through sanctions. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we have designated over 50 Belarusian individuals and organisations who are aiding Russia's reckless aggression towards Ukraine. Furthermore, the legislation we laid in Parliament on 4 July extends recent Russia sanctions to Belarus by introducing new financial, trade and transport measures. These are in addition to the 117 designations we had already made in response to the fraudulent election and subsequent human rights violations.

There must be free and fair elections; the people of Belarus should

be able to enjoy the democratic right to decide their future.

Published 9 August 2022

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## **Russia is violating International Humanitarian Law: UK statement to the OSCE Special Permanent Council**

Thank you, Mr Chair. We welcome the calling of this Special Permanent Council on Russian aggression against Ukraine.

We are appalled by the killing of Ukrainian Prisoners of War held in the Olenivka penal facility. Our thoughts are with the victims' families and loved ones at this terrible time.

We remind Russia again that it voluntarily signed up to, and helped to create, the elements of International Humanitarian Law under which parties to armed conflict are obliged to safeguard the life, dignity and integrity of persons under their power – including Prisoners of War. Russia's denial of access to humanitarian organisations is in direct contravention of these laws. Indeed, Russia's actions are in contravention of basic humanity – even offers of supplies have gone unanswered.

We are not interested in whatever preposterous narrative Russian officials deploy this week. We are interested in urgent humanitarian assistance for those injured at Olenivka. We are interested in the evidenced findings of independent international institutions, including full, unimpeded access for the recently-launched UN fact-finding mission to Olenivka. And we are interested in justice for the victims. We are determined that justice will prevail.

Denial of access to Olenivka is just the latest example of Russia's contempt for International Humanitarian Law. The second Moscow Mechanism report noted concern over 'clear patterns of serious violations of international humanitarian law attributable mostly to the Russian armed forces', including the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians and civilian objects. Russia willingly entered into agreements on International Humanitarian Law, and it cannot shirk its responsibilities.

The Moscow Mechanism report also highlighted the cases of British nationals, Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin, and Moroccan national Brahim Saadoun – sentenced to death by Russian proxies in illegitimate trials. Russia appears to be preparing to take similar action and put Andrew Hill and John Harding,

serving members in the Ukrainian Armed Forces on trial – along with Dylan Healy, a civilian detained while undertaking humanitarian work. All three are entitled to protection under International Humanitarian Law, and their trial by an unrecognised court would be another clear violation by Russia. Attempts to use detainees for propaganda and to force engagement to legitimise Russian proxies are disgraceful. The UK does not recognise or engage with so-called DPR or LPR; we are clear that Russia is responsible and accountable for the treatment of detainees.

Each week, as the devastating consequences of Russia's barbaric tactics bring more death and destruction, evidence builds and charges mount. Russian missile attacks continue across Ukraine – on 28 July, while Russian officials reeled off Kremlin-approved lies and disinformation in the Permanent Council, 5 people were killed and 25 injured following a strike on a flight academy in Kropyvnytskyi. Meanwhile, IAEA Director-General Grossi has described the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, where Russian troops are present, as completely out of control. According to Director-General Grossi, "all nuclear security measures" have been violated. This behaviour is irresponsible and reflects cruel indifference to potential impacts on civilian populations. But after more than five months, this is what we have come to expect from Putin's Russia – a state operating outside of the international laws and standards designed to support everyone – including Russia.

The Kremlin has demonstrated again and again that they set no store by international law, including international humanitarian law. Unfortunately for Russia, the rest of the world does. The international community is watching every transgression, and perpetrators will be brought to justice. We have stood with Ukraine from the start. For the sake of European security, we must continue to support Ukraine militarily, economically and with humanitarian aid, until Ukraine's victory is secured. Thank you, Mr Chair.

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## [Space Accelerator catalyses multi-million pound investment](#)

Space start-ups generated almost £9 million in investment and created 80 new jobs after taking part in a UK Space Agency-backed business support programme.

The [UK Space Agency Space Accelerator Programme](#), delivered by [Entrepreneurial Spark](#), worked with entrepreneurs from all over the UK aged between 18-70, with business expertise in sectors such as aerospace, law, quantum technology, farming, environmental engineering, and healthcare.

Delivered through a series of virtual events led by a range of industry experts, the Accelerator aimed to break down perceived barriers facing under-

represented business founders and open conversations about the opportunities that space can present.

Harshbir Sangha, Director of Growth at UK Space Agency, said:

I'd like to congratulate everyone who successfully completed our Space Accelerator. The UK has a strong entrepreneurial culture and a growing space sector, and there are significant opportunities for new space businesses to start up and thrive with the right support.

The Space Accelerator perfectly encapsulates the value we seek to bring as an agency: catalysing investment, delivering space capabilities and championing space. With record levels of investment flowing into the sector, we want to accelerate the growth in space start ups and create thousands of new jobs across the UK.

Participants included start-up leaders, established businesses in their early stages, and professionals from adjacent sectors who could benefit from space expertise, generating a vast and diverse network of multi-skilled space pioneers.

The UK Space Agency awarded £360,000 to the Accelerator over two financial years. This catalysed a total investment of £8.79 million from other grants and investors, opening up 80 new jobs and directly assisting 88 individual businesses between January 2020 and April 2022.

Since joining the programme, participants have reported an increase in their business turnover and customer numbers, as well as improved confidence in their own leadership skills, strategy planning, business models and partnerships.

James New, Co-founder and CEO of ODIN Space Ltd, said:

Our biggest achievement during the accelerator was raising our first round of investment. We raised £430,000 and it has massively boosted our growth.

The support from UK Space Agency, Entrepreneurial Spark and the delivery partners helped us hone our business model and boost our confidence when pitching to investors. It really felt like we were part of a major industry movement to develop new space businesses.

ODIN Space is now ready to launch and start protecting space assets against orbital debris.

The growing UK space sector is already worth £16.5 billion to the economy and employs almost 47,000 from all over the UK, representing a huge area of opportunity for a range of businesses. The first satellite launches from the

UK, due to take off later this year, will also help to drive growth in the sector and enhance the UK's position as a leader in the global space community.

The Space Accelerator Programme was developed in collaboration with partners including Airbus, Astroscale, the European Space Agency, Department for International Trade, STFC RAL Space and others. Entrepreneurial Spark provided one-to-one support to the participants, specialising in developing entrepreneurial mindsets in technically focused founders. Alden Legal hosted a series of regulatory and access to finance workshops, while AstroAgency delivered space focused market prioritisation and competitive analysis workshops and one-to-one sessions with participants. Grey Consultants provided open access business horizons tech talks to engage new-to-space attendees from all around the UK.

The UK Space Agency is now looking for a partner to design and deliver the next space accelerator phase to run until March 2025. This will include providing a focused package of targeted support to space companies at different stages of development and equip programme participants with the knowledge and skills they need to grow, wherever they are based in the UK.

Entrepreneurial Spark is an impact-led accelerator for entrepreneurs. With a decade of global experience running 22 accelerators, it has supported over 5,000 founders to start, grow and scale their businesses. The Entrepreneurial Spark team members are experts in people, with a focus on helping entrepreneurs overcome the psychological barriers to growth while building great businesses.

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## [World Trade Organization General Council, July 2022: UK statements](#)

### **General Item**

First of all, as I wasn't here on 7th July, let me say a formal congratulations to the DG, Secretariat and Kazakhstan as Chair who played such a vital role at the Ministerial Conference. It was a remarkable result for this organisation and for the trading system, but also for multilateralism, at a time when people have questioned whether multilateralism can stand up to the challenges of those who question the rules-based system.

Let me pick up three small points; the first is about implementation. Let me welcome the work that you Chair and the secretariat are doing to set out how it is we are going to implement the outcomes of MC12 and I think that is a really important piece of work to keep us focused on implementation. And let me, like others, flag two particular areas, one of which is the ratification

of the fisheries agreement which after all, is a ground-breaking agreement for this organisation, our first environmental agreement and one of upmost importance to the world's fisheries and to communities that rely upon them. I agree with others that say we need press on with the work to build on that agreement, at the same time as you work to ratify what we have achieved, but also I would like to echo the Singaporean Ambassador's words on e-commerce. It was vital that we renewed that moratorium. It is vital that we keep our eyes on why that moratorium is so important to businesses across the world, developed, developing, micro-businesses as well as the largest businesses in the global economy. It is an enabler of digital growth across the global economy and one we need to sustain as we move forward.

Second point is about learning lessons from MC12. It was a success but we can do better and we must do better at MC13. Brazil has offered some really helpful suggestions in terms of addressing the frequency of our Ministerial meetings and we warmly welcome those proposals, but they're not enough, they're not enough. But we can and must do better, both in de-dramatising Ministerials but also to prepare better for them. Also to look at our working methods, to ensure that they meet the needs of the organisation of the 2020s.

Third on the substance. Others have already praised those who are departing our shores and welcomed those who are arriving in Geneva. I think the comments this morning remind us of what we are losing in this organisation. Their comments are absolutely on the spot of the substance of the issues that are facing us. And while we are right to congratulate ourselves of what we achieved at MC12, we must also be cognisant of what we did not manage to achieve at MC12, whether that be in agriculture, or in terms of services, digital trade, or green goods and services. As we look outside this room at the challenges we face with climate change, the Horn of Africa facing famine as a result of years of drought. As we face the challenges that have been posed to the global economy by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we need to keep our eyes on that bigger prize, of how this organisation. How global trade and the rules that we set enable the green transition and the transition to net-zero. How we can build respect for multilateral rules and the rules based order and we can ensure that the green transition delivers for everybody. Developed and developing, micro-businesses and bigger businesses for our workers, for our consumers, for our societies and our planet. In our effort to implement MC12, we must not lose sight of that bigger picture of how global trade can contribute to those wider common goals, thank you.

## **TRIPS Council Matters**

First of all, let me start by thanking the Chair, the DG and others involved for delivering the WTO's response to the pandemic including the TRIPS Decision at MC12. That outcome was clearly important in demonstrating how trade can contribute to the response to the pandemic – it was an important outcome both substantively and for the credibility of the WTO.

As others have said today, the pandemic is clearly not over, and significant issues remain with vaccine equity and access.

The UK remains absolutely committed to addressing vaccine inequity and

believes that the WTO is pivotal to help find solutions to address the current challenges we face, like manufacturing constraints and supply chain issues, including export restrictions and tariff barriers on COVID-19 critical products.

We have always maintained that IP is part of the response to the pandemic. We are focused on how the IP framework can continue being used to address real issues we are now seeing as the pandemic evolves.

I recall in that context the comments made on Friday by the Chief Executive of GAVI Seth Berkley, that we are now living in “a world of vaccine abundance” in which they are having to work with pharmaceutical companies to minimise wastage in the system. So we need to keep an eye on what is happening in the real world and not how we perceived the situation to be a year or two years ago.

The UK will continue to engage constructively and in good faith on discussions regarding an extension to therapeutics and diagnostics.

The appropriate forum for these discussions is the TRIPS Council. The UK’s view on this issue and next steps is on the record from the last TRIPS Council, so I won’t repeat it here.

We will be focused on doing our homework over the summer to ensure we can have an evidence-based and informed discussion we resume in September. And I hope that other members of this organisations do the same.

## **Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Graduation**

We continue very much to celebrate LDC Graduation; it is a cause for celebration when a country graduates from that status.

But we do recognise – like others here – the challenges that LDCs face when graduating. And that’s one reason why we will continue to provide a transition period and even more generous preferences on the eagerly awaited Developing Countries Trading Scheme, which we will be unveiling with great fanfare later this year.

And we share some of the frustration in this room in thinking that we probably could have achieved an outcome on this issue at MC12. We, for our part, tried to play our bit to try and establish common ground with other delegations. And we thank the Republic of Korea, amongst others, for their efforts to do the same.

So we thank the LDC Group for their flexibility, and for approaching these discussions in a spirit of compromise. Flexibility, openness, proactive compromises are going to be required from all of us if we are to reach a successful conclusion to this issue.

So we remain committed to working with other delegations here to help LDCs, and LDC Graduates, to integrate further into the multilateral trading system, and to enjoy the fruits of economic growth that flow from that.

Thank you very much.

## **Improved Notifications Compliance Proposal**

Please allow me to say what has already been said, but let me just reiterate it. First of all we thank the work by the United States and the cosponsors, we thank them for the way they have engaged with other delegations on this. Transparency is an essential part of this organisation's work, we do it well, but we could do it better. That is what this proposal is all about, making our existing work better without new obligations but with some new incentives. Just as we came together at MC12, to find agreement on some issues on which different delegations had different concerns, I hope we can come together on this proposal, find consensus and improve the work of our organisation to the benefit of all Members, thank you.

## **Reform Proposal**

It's clear that if you listen to this debate that we all want to see this organisation reformed, but we've all got very different ideas of what reform means, so I take due note of what is in this communication and the comments made by colleagues in this hall this morning. I think we ought to be aware that different Members have different views, different visions, and as we resume this work back in September under your guidance, your consultations, we need to find ways to find common ground as we did again, at the Ministerial, and not assume that any one vision can answer the needs of the organisation as a whole.

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## **[Applications open for fully funded opportunities to study in the UK](#)**

The prestigious Chevening Scholarships and Fellowships offer full financial support for a one-year master's at any UK university and for 8-12 week professional development courses, respectively.

The Chevening programme in India is the largest in the world, benefiting over 3,500 scholars and fellows since 1983. The number of awards on offer in India have increased further, with the Adani Group co-sponsoring 15 additional scholarships in artificial intelligence over three years. The Chevening Fellowships on offer this year are: Chevening India Cyber Security Fellowship; Chevening Research, Science, and Innovation Leadership Fellowship; Chevening Gurukul Fellowship for Leadership and Excellence; South Asia Journalism Fellowship.

The British High Commission in New Delhi hosted a special reception today for the scholars chosen as part of the UK's Government special initiative to offer additional scholarships in celebration of India's 75th year of



Independence – with the support of HSBC India, Pearson India, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Sons and Duolingo – over 60% of this cohort hailed from non-metro cities, and 50% are women

**Alex Ellis, British High Commissioner to India, said:**

Investing in your education in another country is a defining experience; so many congratulations to the next generation of India's leaders going to the UK as Chevening scholar. It was fantastic to hear about the inspiring plans and to share ideas with them about what they should do and where they should go in the UK.

Chevening offers people an unparalleled opportunity to experience the best of the UK, with full financial support. I'm delighted that we have been able to achieve one of our most diverse cohorts this year, with the amazing support from our partners. I encourage even more people from across India to apply for a Chevening Scholarship and Fellowships.

Chevening alumni in India include Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel, Global CEO for Tata Steel T.V. Narendran, and the former Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu Girija Vaidyanathan.

To find a Chevening Fellowship programme, [click here](#). The deadline to apply is 12 October 2022.

Chevening Scholarships include tuition, living expenses and travel cost for a one-year master's. For further details on applying for Chevening Scholarship, [click here](#). The last date to apply is 1 November 2022.

Adani will co-sponsor 15 scholars in the next three years (five per year).

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