

Until Syria gives proper assurances to the international community, we must assume it continues to hold chemical weapons

Thank you President, and thank you to the High Representative for the very helpful briefing.

President, Syria has had nine years to come into compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. But since its accession, it has repeatedly and categorically failed to provide the OPCW with a complete account of its chemical weapons programme. And as we know, the Syrian regime has been independently found responsible for at least 8 chemical weapons attacks by UN and OPCW independent investigations – attacks on its own people.

Syria has failed to assure the OPCW, or this Council, that it is today abiding by its commitments under resolution 2118 and as a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention

There is understandable frustration in the Council about the lack of progress, but we must see this for what it is. The problem here is not how many meetings this Council has. The problem is the behaviour of the Syrian regime in breach of core international laws, including resolutions of this Council. And the problem is systematic disinformation from Syria and Russia in an effort to obscure this behaviour and to avoid accountability. Including deeply irresponsible attempts to attack the OPCW.

We heard from the High Representative today the risks of the erosion of the taboo against using chemical weapons. The OPCW is responsible for preventing the spread of chemical weapons. It is an expert and highly professional organisation, and it is in all of our interests to prevent it from being degraded by disinformation.

President, until Syria gives proper assurances to the international community, we must assume that Syria continues to hold chemical weapons. And given its track record, we must assume that the regime remains willing to use them.

So, it is up to members of this Council to maintain the pressure to resolve this ongoing threat to international peace and security.

Thank you.

UK supports Media Freedom in Central America

World news story

The British Embassies in Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica supported the 12th Central American Journalism Forum organised by the independent media outlet, El Faro.



From 3 to 5 November dozens of journalists from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, met in Antigua Guatemala to participate in the 2022 Central American Journalism Forum ([Forocap](#)) with the help of UK funds.

The journalists took part in five different workshops given by renowned local and international journalists, in which they discussed on the rise of innovative news formats such as Podcasts, the state of media freedom in the region and several open discussions on current affairs in Latin America.

A breakthrough of the agenda was the creation of the Central American Network of Journalists, composed of journalists, several donor countries and international organisations that support media freedom.

This network -by journalists and for journalists- will help them work together to face challenges and provide actions to protect freedom of speech. Similarly, it will also seek to find ways to strengthen journalism and make it sustainable.

The Network of Journalists is the first stepping-stone to a regional collaboration, which will provide alliances to defend civic spaces, support journalists' mental health and bring citizens closer to their right to be informed.

At the opening event of the 2022 Forocap UK Ambassador, Nick Whittingham met with several journalists and exchanged views on the state of media freedom, reassured the UK's commitment to supporting their work in the region and witnessed the launch of the Central American Network of Journalists.

[World Leaders Launch Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership to accelerate momentum to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030](#)

- 26 countries and the European Union – which together account for over 33% of the world's forests and nearly 60% of the world's GDP – will launch the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP).
- This high ambition partnership of countries will build on the Glasgow Leaders Declaration for Forests and Land Use made by 140+ countries to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.
- These 26 countries, including some of the most highly forested countries, have volunteered to lead high ambition efforts to drive delivery and accountability through annual high-level events; during the FCLP's first public meeting at COP27, an alliance of government leaders, companies, financial actors and Indigenous peoples' will report on progress.
- It will be announced that public donors have already spent \$2.67 billion of the \$12 billion committed last year to protect and restore forests. At COP27 a further \$4.5 billion from public and private donors will be committed.
- The UK Prime Minister and leaders of Colombia, Congo, Ghana, France and Germany will address the Forest and Climate Leaders' Summit.

Today at COP27 world leaders will launch the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 in the fight against climate change and as promised in the Glasgow Climate Pact.

The FCLP, launched at the inaugural Forest and Climate Leaders' Summit, is a voluntary partnership of 26 countries committed to delivery, accountability and innovation following the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, which was endorsed by more than 140 world leaders at COP26 last year to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation this decade. If achieved, this would deliver 10% of the climate mitigation action needed by 2030 to deliver on the Paris Agreement.

Chaired by the United States and Ghana, FCLP members represent a range of

regions, major forest areas, and centres of commerce and finance. 60% of global GDP and over 33% the world's forests are covered in this partnership.

All members of the FCLP are united by a common goal; each member must be committed to leading on at least one of the FCLP's action areas. Through the FCLP, countries will lead the initiatives which will scale and drive delivery. The goal is to identify strategic areas where the FCLP can help implement or scale up both new and existing solutions, working closely with the private sector, civil society and community leaders.

As part of this, the United Kingdom has committed £1.5 billion finance for forests over 2021-25, as part of a wider £3bn ring fence for nature. As part of this, the UK is announcing a further £65m for the nature pillar of the Climate Investment Fund, which will place Indigenous people and local communities, who shoulder the burden of climate change, at the heart of forest protection across rainforests, cloud forests and island forests. The UK is also today announcing that we are working on a new programme of £90 million towards the protection of the Congo Basin as part of our promise to support this region. The Congo Basin is the world's most efficient carbon sink, supports the livelihoods of over 80 million people, and is home to 10,000 species of tropical plants – as well as endangered species like forest elephants, chimpanzees and mountain gorillas.

Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak said:

For too long the world's forests have been undervalued and underestimated. They are one of the great natural wonders of our world, and with the loss of our forests accounting for more than 10% of global emissions, protecting them is one of the best ways of getting us back on track to 1.5 degrees.

That's why the UK put nature at the heart of COP26, and countries home to 90 per cent of the world's forests committed not just to halting but reversing forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

Let's build on what we have achieved and together secure this incredible legacy for our children and the many generations to come.

H. E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana, said:

Forest loss can be averted. There is, however, the need for a dedicated space, globally, to provide the needed support and accountability checks to countries that are committed to delivering the Glasgow Leaders Declaration. The FCLP is a first and key step towards this goal, and Ghana supports and endorses, fully, the

FCLP.

Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of Germany, said:

Our joint global commitment to halt deforestation and restore forests needs to be translated into concrete and scaled action on the ground that will benefit people, biodiversity and the climate. Germany has joined the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership today since we are convinced that it provides a strong forum for international collaboration to progress on this front. To underpin our commitment, Germany will support the establishment of the partnership's secretariat and is doubling its initial contribution to the Global Forest Finance Pledge to a total of 2 billion EUR.

At the inaugural Forest and Climate Leaders' Summit, an alliance of government leaders, companies, financial actors and Indigenous peoples' will report on progress. This includes:

- Contributing countries demonstrating unparalleled levels of accountability and transparency. 12 countries will report a combined spend of \$2.67 billion to support activities in developing countries, including restoring degraded land, tackling wildfires and supporting the rights of indigenous communities.
- At least \$4.5bn of newly-mobilised public and private sector funding will be announced.
- Leading financial institutions from Japan to Norway to Brazil, all signatories to the Financial Sector [Commitment on Eliminating Commodity-driven Deforestation](#) have been moving forward with implementation through the Finance Sector Deforestation Action (FSDA) initiative. FSDA members have published shared [investor expectations](#) for companies, are stepping up engagement activity and are working with policymakers and data providers. New members joining in 2022 include SouthBridge Group, the first African financial institution to join the initiative, Banco Estado de Chile, London CIV and GAM Investments.
- In their call to action, the GFANZ co-chairs and vice chair, including Mark Carney, are calling on all financial institutions to embed deforestation into their net zero transition plans.

The FCLP will hold annual meetings to encourage accountability, including leader-level events at climate COPs. Starting in 2023, the FCLP will also publish an annual Global Progress Report that includes independent assessments of global progress toward the 2030 goal, as well as summarising progress made by the FCLP itself, including in its action areas and initiatives.

At the Summit, those who spoke alongside Prime Minister Rishi Sunak included: President Emmanuel Macron of France, President Akufo-Addo of Ghana, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo, President Petro of Colombia, Chancellor Scholz

of Germany, and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

[Flood Action Week: Households urged to prepare in 2022 year of extremes](#)

Communities are being urged to prepare for flooding this winter with the Environment Agency warning of “ignoring the danger at your own peril”.

Amid increased extreme weather events brought on by the climate emergency, the Environment Agency is launching an awareness campaign – Flood Action Week – to encourage those who live in areas at risk of flooding to act now to protect their home, possessions and family.

This year alone, the UK experienced its highest ever recorded temperatures, as the Met Office confirmed that England had its joint hottest summer on record with much of the country still struggling with drought.

Looking ahead to this winter, although the Met Office says the chance of wet and windy weather increases as we go through the season, unexpected flooding could occur at any time and communities are being warned not to be complacent following this summer’s dry weather.

Since 1998 we have seen six of the ten wettest years on record and this year for the first time ever saw three named storms in one week.

One of the key messages coming from COP27, which gets underway in Egypt this week, is that we must plan and prepare for increasingly extreme events.

As we have seen across the globe, the effects of climate change are becoming clearer, with wildfires raging across Europe; China experiencing its worst heatwave in decades; and devastating floods in Pakistan ripping through communities killing more than 1500 people and displacing millions.

This Flood Action Week (7 November – 13 November) the Environment Agency is urging people to take three simple steps:

Caroline Douglass, Executive Director of Flooding at the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is happening now. We’re seeing more extreme weather – in this year alone with three named storms in a week, record-breaking temperatures and drought declared across large parts of the country.

“That is why it is vital that people take the necessary preparations as early as possible to prepare for the worst. Our

recent investment programme has better protected 314,000 homes from flooding and we're investing millions into keeping communities safe, but we can't stop all flooding.

The message is clear – households risk ignoring the danger of flooding at their own peril. Anyone can go online to check if they are at risk, sign up for Environment Agency warnings, and, most importantly, know what you need to do if flooding hits.

Floods Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I know how devastating flooding can be – the loss of your home, the financial stress, and the destruction of irreplaceable, sentimental belongings all place unbelievable strain on those affected.

Simple steps such as checking your flood risk online and signing up for flood warnings can make all the difference in terms of preparing yourself for what may come.

We are committed to pressing ahead with our record £5.2 billion investment in flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027 to ensure more communities are even better prepared for future flooding events.

This year's Flood Action Week comes as the Environment Agency has now expanded its flood warning service to reach almost 50,000 new properties at risk of flooding and hopes to exceed its target to provide new warning capability for 62,000 properties at risk of flooding by this winter. It brings the number of properties registered with the service to 1.6 million.

With over 250 mobile pumps and 5,000 trained staff across the country, the Environment Agency is ready to take action wherever it is needed this winter. The construction and repair of flood defences has also continued throughout the year as part of the record £5.2 billion government investment in flood and coastal defences.

These preparations have already helped to protect communities from flooding. During the storms earlier this year, despite some 400 properties sadly flooding, around 35,000 were protected by Environment Agency schemes.

Will Lang from the Met Office said:

Winters in the UK usually include a wide variety of weather, and this winter looks to be no exception.

Although we expect to see high pressure dominating our weather through much of the early winter, which increases the potential for cold spells, we could still see wet and windy weather at times.

The risk of unsettled weather increases as we head into 2023 with wet, windy, and mild spells a real possibility.

At least one in six people in England are at risk from flooding from rivers and the sea, with many more at risk from surface water flooding.

However nearly two in three households at risk of flooding don't believe it will happen to them, according to analysis produced by the Environment Agency earlier this year.

And despite the research showing that almost two thirds of people (60%) have taken at least one action to prepare for flooding, as many as 1.5 million households, who are at risk, are yet to prepare.

Those at risk are encouraged to follow the advice to 'Prepare. Act. Survive', specifically:

- If there is an initial flood alert – prepare by packing medicines and insurance and other important documents and visit the flood warning information service
- If there is a subsequent confirmed flood warning – act by moving family, pets and belongings to safety. Turn off gas, water and electricity
- If there is a severe flood warning – survive immediate danger by following the advice of emergency services or calling 999 if needed

With just 30cm of flowing water being enough to float a car, drivers are also being warned not to attempt to drive through flood water and take extra precautions in wet weather.

Tony Rich, from The AA said:

It's vital for drivers to be aware of the risks of driving in floodwater and during heavy rain. Roads can quickly become flooded, making your intended route impassable, so allow plenty of time for journeys. It's also important to leave more space than normal between you and the car in front to allow for greater stopping distances.

Drivers should take extra care where roads dip, especially under bridges as these are most likely to flood first. Flood water can be deceptively deep and can easily cause damage to your vehicle's bodywork or worse – the engine, often resulting in hefty repair bills.

Flood water can also mask other hazards in the road, such as displaced drain covers and potholes, so if in doubt turn around and find another route. Doing this may add time to your journey, but as it only takes 30cm of flowing water to float a car – it's better to be safe than sorry.

Outstanding collection of Joseph Wolf animal drawings at risk of leaving the UK

Press release

A temporary export bar has been placed on a set of 120 original drawings of animals by Joseph Wolf



- Export bar is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the collection

A set of 120 drawings of animals worth £119,700 is at risk of leaving the UK unless a buyer can be found to save the collection for the nation.

Joseph Wolf was a 19th century artist who specialised in natural history illustrations. He produced works for the British Museum and the Zoological Society of London and was well known for depicting animals in accurate, lifelike postures.

The norm of painting an animal in its natural habitat was established by Wolf and this set of 120 original drawings of animals demonstrates his outstanding skills and artistry for depiction of animal behaviour.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson said:

Joseph Wolf's magnificent drawings of animals in their natural habitats are a joy to behold as well as a fascinating insight into natural history illustration in the 19th century. I sincerely hope a buyer comes forward to save these for the nation.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#). The committee noted

that the collection of drawings held enormous research potential, particularly as they sit at the intersection of visual arts and intellectual inquiry.

Committee member Christopher Baker said:

Joseph Wolf (1820–1899) played a key role in the development of natural history illustration in Britain by animating and contextualising his subjects and indicating the habitats and behaviours of animals – which was a quite different approach to earlier, more static representations. His fascinating and accomplished work was highly regarded by Victorian naturalists, explorers and artists, and appeared in scientific journals, luxury books with colour plates and more popular, accessible publications. This substantial group of drawings is of particular interest as it allows an intimate view of his working processes and observational skills and has great potential for research on his pioneering practice and its legacy. Securing the drawings for a public U.K. collection would be highly desirable.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds that the collection was of outstanding significance to the study of natural history art and illustration.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred for a period ending on 6 February 2023 inclusive. At the end of the first deferral period owners will have a consideration period of 15 business days to consider any offer(s) to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £119,700 (plus £4,940 VAT). The second deferral period will commence following the signing of an Option Agreement and will last for three months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the collection should contact the RCEWA on 0161 934 4317.
2. Provenance: The Library Collection of Henry Broughton, established by Henry Rogers Broughton between 1927 and 1960, United Kingdom, Lord and Lady Fairhaven, (Acquired through descent from the above. Sold: Sotheby's, London, 18 May 2022, Lot 242). Purchased at the above sale by the present owner.
3. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by the Arts Council (ACE), which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
4. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. They have set out in their strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 they want England to be a country in which everyone's

creativity is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. ACE invest public money from the Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

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