

# UK statement on the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia

## Government response

An FCDO Spokesperson issued a statement on the two-year anniversary of the beginning of the conflict in Ethiopia, two days after the signing of a peace agreement between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.



FCDO Spokesperson:

“ The UK welcomes the important step towards peace taken by the Ethiopian Government and Tigray People’s Liberation Front in signing a cessation of hostilities on 2 November, and commends their choice to end the devastating two-year-long conflict.

“We are grateful to the leadership shown in brokering this critical agreement by African Union Commission Chairperson Faki, African Union High Representative to the Horn of Africa Obasanjo, former South African Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Kenyan President Kenyatta, and the South African Government in hosting the talks.

“It is now crucial that all parties in Ethiopia, with support from its friends in the international community, move to implement the agreement. Most critically, humanitarian aid must be urgently delivered to all those in conflict-affected areas.

“Peace creates opportunities for justice, reconciliation and reconstruction. The UK, as a longstanding friend and partner of Ethiopia, stands ready to work alongside the Ethiopian Government and others to support the recovery of conflict affected areas. We look forward to seeing the benefits of peace for the people of Ethiopia.”

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# Lord Stewart of Dirleton reappointed as Advocate General

News story

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The Advocate General for Scotland is one of the Law Officers of the Crown and advises the government on Scots law matters.

Commenting on his reappointment, Lord Stewart said:

*"I am honoured to have been reappointed as Advocate General for Scotland."*

*"I look forward to working with the Attorney General, the Solicitor General for England and Wales, Government lawyers and the Civil Service to play my part in making the law and politics work together at the heart of the UK constitution."*

Lord Stewart was appointed Advocate General in October 2020. He was reappointed as Advocate General on 27 October 2022.

He was called to the Bar in 1993 and took silk in 2011. He specialises in criminal law, and has advised on other matters including defamation and intellectual property.

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# UK brings carbon market experts together ahead of COP27

World news story

On Monday 10th October 2022, the UK Government and the Government of Ghana held a Carbon Market Development Roundtable at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra.



A panel of experts led the final session of the event.

The event brought together generators, traders, verifiers, and other professionals to review and improve the current climate finance regulations, the market, and understand new and existing ways to support the growth of new networks to make the climate finance market successful in Ghana.

Speaking ahead of the workshop, Mrs Thompson said:

The benefits of carbon markets are two-fold: they bring finance and they bring protection. Ghana's beautiful forests and green spaces put the country in prime position to benefit from a well-functioning carbon market.

Our event today has brought together the right people from across industry, civil society, government, and business to focus on getting Ghana access to the world's growing carbon markets. Together we are making sure that Ghana gets the right investment now to protect the country's vital natural resources for generations to come.

Attendees at the Carbon Market Development event spent time discussing and interrogating information and policies to support the growth of Ghana's carbon market. Discussions were followed by a networking event hosted by the British High Commissioner to Ghana, Harriet Thompson, and key policy officials from the High Commission.

Ghana has already taken important steps towards developing carbon markets as a climate finance opportunity. The country's Environmental Protection Agency has drafted a new National Framework to govern and support carbon markets, while projects to generate carbon credits in Ghana are under development. The UK government recognises the importance of these developments and is working hard, in the run-up to COP27, to bring the right people together to help this market grow.

Organisers hope that the discussion and ideas generated at the event will now help to grow the understanding and support for Ghana's own carbon market. As well as supporting the Environmental Protection Agency's National Framework.

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## **UK invests in West Africa's agriculture sector**

In Ghana, COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have exacerbated the challenges of climate change, including energy, financial, and food security. The UK, Ghana, ECOWAS, and many other partners are working together to ensure that Ghana is playing its role in the West Africa region to produce more rice, facilitate trade, and reduce costs to the consumer.

Through the Africa Food Trade and Resilience programme, the UK government alongside strategic partners is investing £450,000 to establish the ECOWAS Rice Observatory and its national chapter, known as the 'Ghana Competitive Africa Rice Platform'. This new public-private sector platform will identify and spur reforms to increase investment into the ECOWAS rice value chain.

This support for Ghana and other ECOWAS countries will:

- reduce the £2.6 billion annual cost of importing rice to West Africa
- potentially create more than 385,000 new jobs in the rice value chain across West Africa

British High Commissioner to Ghana, Harriet Thompson said:

The numbers speak for themselves: there is so much potential for growing the rice sector here in Ghana and across West Africa. The ECOWAS Rice Observatory will support the growth of the rice industry and increase trade and investment opportunities in the market.

At a time when many countries around the world are facing food insecurity as a result of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, I am

confident this project will strengthen the food system here in Ghana and across the region, now and in the future.

The CARP launched in Accra (1st November 2022), at a ceremony led by its new Chairperson, Mr Yaw Poku, alongside the Chief Director of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Patrick Robert Ankobiah, and the British High Commissioner, as well as representatives of ECOWAS, the German development agency, GIZ, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

The ERO provides a platform for rice stakeholders to understand patterns of demand and production, seize trade, investment, and reform opportunities, understand the impacts of climate change, and work towards resilient food security in the future.

As well as supporting the ERO, the UK is working with international partners to secure finance to respond to the global food crisis driven by climate change, and COVID-19. Now, Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine is exacerbating existing economic fragility and food insecurity.

In October, British High Commissioner Harriet Thompson visited AgDevCo's Babator Irrigated Farming Hub in Ghana's Savannah Region. Engaging 764,000 small-scale farmers and creating or sustaining 15,600 jobs across the continent, AgDevCo is a key investor in African agriculture, backed by UK Government investment. Earlier this year, AgDevCo sold Ghana's biggest active irrigated farmland to regional multi-national company Oba Pack, having spent many years developing the site.

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## **UK grocers and shoppers could face higher prices due to dough merger**

Ready-to-bake products – including staples such as shortcrust and puff pastry, pizza and patisserie dough – are found in all major grocery retailers, with UK consumers spending over £100 million each year on these products. Jus-Rol is by far the largest supplier of branded ready-to-bake products in the UK, while Cérélia is the largest supplier of own-brand ready-to-bake products, making these items on behalf of some of the nation's largest grocery retailers.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched an in-depth review into the deal in June 2022 after an initial Phase 1 investigation identified possible competition concerns. Over the past 5 months, an independent CMA panel has analysed a wide range of evidence from Cérélia and Jus-Rol, grocery retailers and other industry players in order to fully understand the market, as well as the potential impact of the deal.

The CMA's investigation has provisionally found that the merger brings together what are the 2 leading suppliers in the market by a considerable margin. Ready-to-bake items supplied by Cérélia and Jus-Rol account for nearly two-thirds of all such products sold in the UK.

While there are differences between the companies' products, the evidence gathered by the CMA shows that Jus-Rol products compete with grocery retailers' own-brand products supplied by Cérélia for the same space on many supermarket shelves. Evidence from grocery retailers shows that they consider the companies' products to be important alternatives to one another – in particular because there are few alternative suppliers of either branded or own-brand products. Grocery retailers also told the CMA that their ability to trade off Jus-Rol and Cérélia when purchasing these products enables them to get a better deal for customers.

The CMA's investigation provisionally found that the 2 businesses face very limited competition, with all other suppliers being far smaller, and many lacking the capabilities held by the merging businesses. The CMA also provisionally found it is unlikely that any supplier would enter the market, or expand its existing activities, to address the loss of competition brought about by the deal.

On this basis, the CMA has provisionally concluded that the deal would substantially lessen competition. This would risk UK grocers facing higher prices and lower quality products, which could ultimately be passed on to their customers.

Margot Daly, chair of the independent inquiry group carrying out the Phase 2 investigation, said:

Food prices are already increasing, which makes it important that we don't allow a lack of competition to make the situation worse.

Jus-Rol and Cérélia are by far the largest suppliers in the ready-to-bake sector and the competition that takes place between them helps grocers to give shoppers the best possible deals.

Today's decision is provisional, and we will now consult on our findings and listen to any further views before reaching a final decision.

The CMA welcomes responses from interested parties to its provisional findings by 25 November 2022 and its notice of possible remedies, which sets out potential options for addressing its provisional concerns, by 18 November 2022. These will be considered ahead of the CMA issuing its final report, which is due by 24 January 2023.

## Notes to editors

1. For more information, visit the [Cérélia / Jus-Rol merger inquiry page](#).
2. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email

on [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk), or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

3. Members of the general public can contact the CMA for information about this update on 020 3738 6000 or [general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk).
4. The CMA provisionally found that the merger would lead to a Substantial Lessening of Competition (SLC) in the following market: the wholesale supply of dough-to-bake (DTB) products to retailers in the UK.
5. Cérélia refers to Cérélia Group Holding SAS (either directly or through entities under its common ownership or common control or over which it exerts material influence within the meaning of section 26 of the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act).