



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
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Baroness Hayter
Chair, International Agreements Committee
House of Lords
London
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26 April 2022

Dear Baroness Hayter,

I am responding to your Committee's request, set out in paragraph 6 of its 18th Report of Session 2021-2022 titled Scrutiny of international agreements: Convention on Marine Aids to Navigation (HL Paper 195), to set out the Government's policy towards the ongoing participation of Russia in international organisations.

We understand the reference to "Russia in international organisations" to mean the Government of Russia's participation in international organisations that may be established by a treaty or be an instrument governed by international law and possessing their own legal personality, and that are comprised primarily of member states.

The unprovoked, unjustified invasion of Ukraine by Russia is a flagrant contravention of the United Nations (UN) Charter and international law and is an attack on global peace and security. It is clear that for as long as Russia continues its aggression, the global community, including international organisations, must respond in the clearest terms to condemn the war and seek its end.

The UK has led efforts across the international system to protest and call out Russia's actions in Ukraine. We have particularly utilised the opportunity of our Presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in April to highlight and condemn Russia's atrocities, rebut its disinformation, maintain international pressure on Russia and give a platform to Ukrainian voices. Within each international organisation in which the UK and Russia participate, we have carefully considered action that can be taken in response to Russia's illegal war, and we will maintain this approach. Specifically, we aim to put pressure on Russia to end its war by condemning its aggression, isolating it internationally and holding it to account.

¹ Bouwhuis, Stephen (1 January 2012). "[The International Law Commission's Definition of International Organizations](#)". *International Organizations Law Review*. **9** (2): 451–465. doi:10.1163/15723747-00902004. ISSN 1572-3747

When considering action to take within an international organisation, we will take into account a multitude of factors, including the legality of the action, coordination with our allies in the international community, and the potential wider policy implications, including the need for dialogue with Russia on global issues of peace and security.

In some instances, we may judge it appropriate to seek to suspend, or exclude, Russia from participating in a given organisation, as we and allies have successfully pursued with regards to several bodies including:

- the Council of Europe (CoE), where the Committee of Ministers unanimously agreed on 16 March to expel Russia with immediate effect;
- the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) where the CEPT Assembly decided that the Russia's membership was suspended indefinitely from 18 March;
- the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), where the Council of Delegates voted to place a temporary suspension on all Russian delegates, members, and experts from participation in ICES activities from 30 March
- the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC), where the UN General Assembly (UNGA) voted to suspend Russia's HRC membership on 7 April (Russia then withdrew fully from the Council);
- the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) where members of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) decided on 12 April to suspend Russia's rights of representation.

Where excluding or suspending Russia from international organisations is not a viable option due to the considerations outlined above, the UK has worked with allies to take a range of other actions to respond to Russia's aggression. These can be categorised as:

Condemnation of Russia's actions by international organisations or by substantial groups of their member states, for example:

- the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Council Statement of 24 February;
- the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Leaders' Statement of 25 February
- the UNGA resolution of 2 March;
- the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors resolution of 3 March;
- the joint statement of 7 Arctic Council members of 3 March (the 8th member is Russia) which also suspended their cooperation with Russia;
- the joint statement of 49 member states of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) of 10 March;
- the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Resolution of 11 March;
- the UNESCO Special Executive Board Resolution of 16 March;
- the UNGA resolution of 24 March;
- the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Resolution of 24 March;
- the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Resolution of 8 April;

Upholding international principles by referring Russia to international monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including:

- the group referral of the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court on 2 March

- the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution on 4 March establishing a commission to investigate violations committed during Russia's military attack on Ukraine
- the launch of an Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) fact-finding mission on 3 March under the Moscow Mechanism to investigate violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, war crimes and crimes against humanity, whose report whose report was published on 13 April.

Isolating Russia, specifically their influence within, and access to benefits from, international organisations, for example:

- formally terminating Russia's accession process to the OECD (OECD Council measure agreed 25 February),
- suspending all World Bank Group programmes in Russia (statement on 2 March)
- replacing the Russian Vice-Chair of the Enforcement Committee within the World Customs Organisation (3 March)
- suspending Russia from the Developed Countries Group in the World Trade Organisation (4 March)
- blocking the appointment of a Russian vice-chair of the ITU's World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA) and Russian candidates for chair and vice-chair positions in ITU 'study groups', the technical committees responsible for developing standards (1-9 March)
- suspending non-humanitarian technical cooperation with or assistance to Russia by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), suspending Russia's attendance at discretionary meetings and seeking the relocation of the Moscow Office (Resolution of 24 March)
- suspending the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) cooperation with Russia (decision of CERN Council 25 March)
- suspending operations of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and closing the EBRD office in Moscow (Governors vote announced 4 April).
- Successfully opposing the election of Russia or Russian officials to positions within international organisations including the Executive Boards of the World Food Programme (WFP, 1 March) the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UN (UNICEF 13 April) and UN-Women (13 April).

In the specific instance of Russia's stated future intention to ratify the Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (the Convention), this is required to facilitate the transition of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), a non-governmental body, to become the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation, an inter-governmental body under international law (which will also be known as IALA). The new inter-governmental organisation is unlikely to be established for some time and, when it is, its role will remain purely technical with the same objectives as its non-governmental predecessor to improve navigation safety and further harmonise marine aids to navigation at an international level.

The UK was a founding member of IALA and has been a staunch supporter of the transition to an inter-governmental organisation, which can only enhance the safety of marine navigation through recognition of the importance of IALA as the leading international expert body for marine aids to navigation.

When the new inter-governmental organisation is established we would intend to take the same stance, as appropriate, in its administrative organs to reiterate, in the strongest possible terms, our objection to Russia's illegal war.

Russia's appalling actions against Ukraine have shocked the world, and the scale of actions taken in and by a variety of international organisations, some of which have been historically unprecedented, reflects this. The UK is proud to be a leading participant in many international organisations and will continue to work with allies to respond to Russia's illegal war via the activity of international organisations, as an important part of the much broader international response.

I am copying this letter to Minister Milling and Minister Cleverly, Ministers of State here in the FCDO and to Minister Courts given his lead responsibility for maritime matters at the Department for Transport.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN and the Commonwealth
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict