



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP**

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth  
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Tom Tugendhat MP  
Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

12 May 2022

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2022.

The answers to the Committee's questions are as follows:

**1. Does the Government consider the invasion of Ukraine by Russia 'a war of aggression' and does the UK support calls for a new, special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression in Ukraine?**

We will hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities that have been committed in Ukraine, including military commanders and other individuals in the Putin regime. The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation is already underway, and we will make every effort to assist it as appropriate. The UK led efforts to refer the atrocities in Ukraine to the ICC Prosecutor. This referral has now secured the support of 42 other states. We have provided the Prosecutor with £1 million of additional funding for his investigation.

We are at the forefront of supporting international efforts to bolster and support Ukraine's national authorities, who are facing an unprecedented burden of cases in the face of Russian aggression. The Attorney General appointed Sir Howard Morrison QC as an independent adviser to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General. A UK team of war crimes experts has been deployed to the region to support Ukrainian investigations and meet with international partners and civil society.

We will maintain a strong focus on accountability. The UK aims to ensure international efforts remain focused on securing convictions through the existing and effective mechanisms of the ICC. An entirely new tribunal would take many years, whereas assisting the ongoing work of the ICC and its investigators and prosecutors will help to bring suspects to Court to face justice sooner. However, we are open to looking at all options for justice, should current mechanisms prove ineffective.

**2. When did the UK Ambassador to Ukraine leave the Country?**

Her Majesty's Ambassador to Ukraine, Melinda Simmons, left Ukraine on 7 March 2022. As the PM announced on 22 April, she returned on 29 April.

**3. How many additional visas have been given to Ukrainians by the UK since the invasion began?**

As of 5 May, 125,100 visas have been issued; 44,200 under the Ukraine Family Scheme and 80,900 under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. 37,400 visa-holders have arrived in the UK (latest arrival figures as of 3 May).



Visa data for the Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme is updated on the following GOV.UK page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data/ukraine-family-scheme-and-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-visa-data>

**4. What are the opening hours of the pop-up visa application centres that the UK has opened since the invasion? Are they open at the weekend?**

The Home Office pop-up centre in Rzeszow in Poland is normally open Monday to Friday from 9.00-17.00. It is open at the weekend, unless there are public holidays, from 9.00-14.00.

The Home Office pop-up centre in Arras in France has also been set up to support customers, and is open Monday to Friday from 12.00-17.00. Arras is also open at the weekend on a referral basis, if needed.

**5. What role does the FCDO play in supporting the Home Office's visa application process? Who is responsible for ensuring co-ordination between the two departments?**

Visa Application Centres are run by the Home Office. Staff in UK Visas and Immigration also worked and continue to work very closely with FCDO counterparts at all levels regarding the operation of the visa system in respect of the Ukrainian crisis response.

**6. We understand that 12,000 Afghans are still living in temporary accommodation, following the withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer. What plans are there to manage demand for permanent accommodation? Will those resettled from Ukraine be in a queue behind those Afghans who are still waiting for permanent accommodation?**

The Home Office takes a tailored approach to each situation, reflecting the needs of those forced to leave their homes, and requirements (including security considerations) in the UK.

The Home Office formally opened the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on 6 January 2022. The scheme will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan as well as vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk. Over 3,700 people have been supported to leave Afghanistan since the end of Op Pitting, and many of these individuals have already started their new lives in the UK.

Over 6,000 Afghans have been placed into homes since June 2021. The length of time that a family will remain in bridging hotels is dependent on a number of factors including the availability of appropriate housing. We are working across government and with over three hundred Local Authorities to allocate the right families into the right accommodation to ensure that their integration into their new communities in the UK is as smooth as possible.

We have a generous humanitarian scheme for Ukrainian nationals with family in the UK. On 4 March, the Home Secretary launched the Ukraine Family scheme. This is open to the following relatives of British nationals and people settled in the UK: spouses, civil partners, durable partners, children of any age, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, and in-laws.

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applications to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. Those joining the scheme will be granted the right to stay in the UK for three years, during which time they can work and access public services.

We are also helping Ukrainians who do not have family here through the new Homes for Ukraine Scheme, launched by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 18



March, that allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

**7. You noted that you have tripled the size of the sanctions team. When did this take place? How many people are now in the unit?**

**8. How many non-lawyers work in the FCDO Sanctions Unit compiling evidence packs? How many of these people are permanent and how many were in the Unit before you trebled its size?**

**9. How many lawyers are there in the Government Legal Service with expertise in sanctions? How many of these work for the FCDO, and how many for HMT?**

JOINT ANSWER FOR Q7, 8 & 9: In December 2021, there were 48 substantive roles in the Sanctions Unit (now Sanctions Taskforce). By the end of April 2022, there were around 150 people in the Taskforce, consisting of an increased number of substantive roles and varying numbers of staff surged into the team on a temporary basis from other parts of the organisation.

Roughly a third of the Sanctions Taskforce are focused on designations. The current numbers will be retained as long as necessary. This number does not include others across the FCDO and in our overseas network, working substantially or partially on sanctions policy/implementation.

Nor does this number include those in the FCDO's Legal Directorate who are working exclusively or partially on sanctions work. There are currently more than 35 lawyers in the FCDO Legal Directorate with sanctions expertise, and 13 in HMT's Treasury Legal Advisers. Lawyers in other departments also have sanctions expertise.

**10. During the session you mentioned that you would be holding an 'extraordinary Privy Council' with the overseas territories to discuss issues such as the openness of registers for corporate ownership. When do you intend to hold this meeting? Will you commit to update the Committee on its outcomes?**

UK sanctions apply in all Overseas Territories either through Orders in Council or through each jurisdiction's own legislation. The Overseas Territories issued a [joint statement](#) on 21 March reiterating their commitment to implementing sanctions against Russia in full. The Privy Council I referred to during the evidence session took place on 13 April, in order to make the legislative modifications required to ensure the effective application and implementation of the sanctions measures across the Overseas Territories. The Russia (Sanctions) (Overseas Territories) (Amendment) Order 2022 came into force on 14 April.

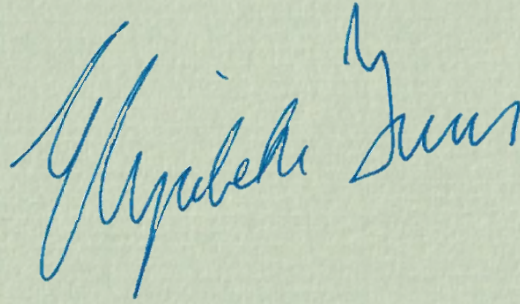
Beneficial Ownership and Open Registers were not discussed during this Privy Council meeting; however, we continue to work extensively with the Overseas Territories in these areas. The Overseas Territories already share confidential information on company beneficial ownership with UK law enforcement bodies and have agreed to introduce publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership. The Overseas Territories are making real progress rolling out publically accessible registers and the FCDO is providing them with technical support, part of which is delivered through Open Ownership, a specialist NGO. An extraordinary meeting of the Privy Council is not required to discuss these issues; the UK already has extensive political and technical engagement with the Overseas Territories on beneficial ownership. On 28 April, Minister Milling wrote separately to the committee on the issue of beneficial ownership which sets out our engagement in further detail.

**11. During our session you agreed to consider publishing a biannual written statement on disinformation, updating Parliament on the changing and emerging threats. We would appreciate if your department could look into the possibility of publishing such updates.**

Evidence shows that disinformation can be less effective when governments and individuals are more aware of the methods used and the state actors behind it. We are therefore working with DCMS and



the Home Office to agree the right way in which to continue to keep Parliament and the committee informed on the evolving disinformation threat.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Elizabeth Truss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Elizabeth" written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname "Truss".

**THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP**  
**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary**



## Foreign Affairs Committee

From the Chair  
**Tom Tugendhat MP**

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
King Charles Street  
LONDON SW1A 2AH

20 April 2022

Dear Foreign Secretary,

Thank you for appearing before the Committee in March and for agreeing to appear again within the next month to discuss wider foreign policy issues. As you will be aware, time did not allow us to ask everything that we intended. I would be grateful if you could provide written answers to the supplementary questions below:

- Does the Government consider the invasion of Ukraine by Russia 'a war of aggression' and does the UK support calls for a new, special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression in Ukraine?
- When did the UK Ambassador to Ukraine leave the Country?
- How many additional visas have been given to Ukrainians by the UK since the invasion began?
- What are the opening hours of the pop-up visa application centres that the UK has opened since the invasion? Are they open at the weekend?
- What role does the FCDO play in supporting the Home Office's visa application process? Who is responsible for ensuring co-ordination between the two departments?
- We understand that 12,000 Afghans are still living in temporary accommodation, following the withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer. What plans are there to manage demand for permanent accommodation? Will those resettled from Ukraine be in a queue behind those Afghans who are still waiting for permanent accommodation?
- You noted that you have tripled the size of the sanctions team. When did this take place? How many people are now in the unit?
- How many non-lawyers work in the FCDO Sanctions Unit compiling evidence packs? How many of these people are permanent and how many were in the Unit before you trebled its size?
- How many lawyers are there in the Government Legal Service with expertise in sanctions? How many of these work for the FCDO, and how many for HMT?
- During the session you mentioned that you would be holding an 'extraordinary Privy Council' with the overseas territories to discuss issues such as the openness of registers for corporate ownership. When do you intend to hold this meeting? Will you commit to update the Committee on its outcomes?

During our session you agreed to consider publishing a biannual written statement on disinformation, updating Parliament on the changing and emerging threats. We would appreciate if your department could look into the possibility of publishing such updates. I would be grateful for your response by 9 May 2022. The Committee intends to publish this letter and your response.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Tugendhat', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**TOM TUGENDHAT**