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THE PRIME MINISTER

26 April 2022

Dear Bernard,

During my appearance before the Liaison Committee on 30 March, I said I would write following up on a number of points made by Members. You subsequently followed this up in writing on 8 April.

Details of the recipients of the UK's aid package to Ukraine (Q28)

Sarah Champion asked about a letter she sent to me on 9 March about our humanitarian support for Ukraine.

The Foreign Secretary replied to that letter on 1 April. I have attached a copy for the Committee's information.

Ukraine support schemes (Q43)

Diana Johnson asked how many visas had been issued and how many people had arrived.

We have a proud history of supporting refugees, and our two schemes represent one of the fastest and biggest visa programmes in British history. Published figures on 20 April show that we have issued 71,800 visas and welcomed 21,600 arrivals.

We are fully focused on improving the system to make it as fast as possible while ensuring vital security checks are carried out to ensure the safety of all those involved. That includes action to surge staff across Government to bolster resource and speed up times, alongside extra training for caseworkers to help speed up decision making.

Once in the UK, Ukrainians will be able to work, access public services like healthcare and education, and receive Universal Credit and job support. We are also enabling thousands of Ukrainian nationals to stay in the UK with extensions to existing visas and changes to the standard application processes.

Online safety legislation (Q41)

Julian Knight asked whether the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport intends to bring forward proposals for a new Parliamentary Committee to consider online safety.

We intend to work with Parliament to support post-legislative scrutiny in a way that uses the skills and expertise in both Houses. We will welcome further views during the passage of the Online Safety Bill on the best way to achieve this.

Fertiliser plants (Q61)

Neil Parish asked whether the Government would support the re-opening of the UK's second fertiliser plant. He subsequently followed up on this by letter on 20 April.

CF Fertilisers have two domestic plants, at Ince and Billingham, which produce 40% of the ammonium nitrate fertiliser used in the United Kingdom. Natural gas is the main raw product for ammonium nitrate production and represents about 80% of the cost of production. The price of natural gas therefore largely determines the price of fertilisers, and the feasibility of fertiliser production.

In September 2021, natural gas prices rose sharply, increasing CF Fertilisers' production costs to the point that they temporarily closed their plants at Ince and Billingham. The resulting disruption, particularly to the CO₂ market, was unprecedented and warranted an exceptional, time-limited response from UK government to reopen the Billingham plant. CF Fertilisers and its CO₂ customers then worked rapidly to secure a new industry-led deal in October and again in January, without any further taxpayer support.

I am informed that CF Fertilisers have explained that there has not been sufficient market demand for fertiliser to commercially justify reopening Ince as well as Billingham, given the high cost of production.

Employment statistics (Q76 and Q77)

I agree with the points that Stephen Timms made about the overall employment figures.

The latest statistics show the continued strength of our jobs market. As I said, and I have previously explained in a written PQ to him when he has asked me about the definition I was using, payroll employment, as a measure of people in work, is now at a record high. It is now around half a million higher than before the pandemic. At the same time unemployment, at 3.8 per cent, is below pre-pandemic levels.

We are helping to cushion the impacts of global price rises through over £22 billion of support for the cost of living this financial year. We are also helping people to find new jobs, and ensuring work always pays as this is the best way to support households in the longer term.

Benefits and inflation (Q86)

Mel Stride asked whether the Government would consider an interim up-rating for benefits in response to inflation.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) has been the default inflation measure for the government's statutory annual review of benefits since 2011. It is standard practice for the Government to uprate in line with September CPI. That is because September CPI is the latest available figure confirmed by the ONS prior to the annual review and allows sufficient time for the legislative and complex delivery process to take place.

The level of CPI at the point new benefit rates are introduced may be higher or lower than the September rate used, but using a consistent period for uprating each year means that over time the index balances out.

Written questions from Sir Bob Neill

Sir Bob Neill was unable to take part in the session as anticipated. The following are responses to the points that he had intended to raise during the meeting:

Q1. In light of the compelling evidence of war crimes having been committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, what additional financial support will be given to the ICC beyond the £1 million already promised?

Q2. What additional judicial and legal and investigative support will be given both to the ICC and to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General (in addition to the recent appointment of Sir Howard Morrison QC as Independent Adviser) to assist them in evidence gathering and building robust cases against those responsible?

In addition to our voluntary contribution of £1 million to the ICC, the Deputy Prime Minister has led likeminded States Parties to coordinate an international package of support to the ICC. Several states have now come forward with financial offers to aid the ICC's investigations, bringing total contributions to the Court for this work up to around £4 million.

A dedicated Police War Crimes Officer based in The Hague has been appointed to provide the ICC with access to UK-based technical support from police and military experts. This includes witness protection advice and support; defence intelligence expertise and support, such as specialist intelligence forensic and satellite imagery analysis; ad hoc military expert visits to The Hague; and briefings on request.

We are assessing what additional support can be provided to the ICC, including through exploring military, police and legal expertise we can provide to the ICC's investigation.

Q3. What discussions are we having with our allies to co-ordinate these efforts?

We led efforts to bring together over 40 likeminded states to expedite an ICC investigation into Russian war crimes in Ukraine, through the largest state party referral in the history of the ICC. We are now working with international counterparts to ensure that the Court has all it needs to progress the investigation rapidly.

On 24 March, the Deputy Prime Minister chaired a meeting in The Hague with Ministers from 29 states, as well as high level representatives from a further 10. British diplomats are in regular touch with partners to coordinate this work, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Attorney General continue to discuss it with their political counterparts.

Q4. What discussions is the government having with the judiciary, the legal profession, and our law enforcement agencies about providing this support?

We are engaging with legal representative bodies on offering legal expertise to the ICC. The Metropolitan Police's specialist team have also started seeking, securing and preserving evidential material relating to war crimes in Ukraine. The Met has launched a public appeal to identify those who may have evidence or be witnesses. Other law enforcement and security agencies have also made capabilities available to the ICC via the UK's liaison facility.

Q5. Do you agree that the investigation of these crimes must be pursued along the whole Russian chain of command, from top to bottom, political as well as military?

The ICC is a court of last resort. The Rome Statute is clear that the court operates on the principles of gravity and complementarity. The ICC will focus on the political and military leadership responsible for the most serious crime. This is key to its function in the international criminal order.

For other crimes the Ukrainian prosecutorial authorities are also exploring what cases they can bring under Ukrainian law. The Attorney General has appointed Sir Howard Morrison QC KCMG as an Independent Adviser to support the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova. Sir Howard will provide independent and expert legal advice to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General in relation to the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and other international crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine.

Q6. The ICC will not be able to bring a prosecution for waging an aggressive war without the agreement of the UN Security Council, which Russia will therefore veto. Will the UK therefore support calls for the establishment of an ad hoc international tribunal to investigate this?

The ICC is the right place for those responsible for committing atrocity crimes in Ukraine to be held to account. The international focus should be on securing convictions through an existing and effective mechanism, rather than establishing a new ad hoc court. This view is supported by our allies and international partners.

Q7. It is good that the government strengthened our sanctions regime by amending the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Bill during its passage through Parliament, responding to specific legal concerns raised during the debates. However, experienced lawyers in this field have identified a number of gaps that remain, and these were again detailed in the debates, particularly in the House of Lords. When will the government be introducing further legislation to plug those gaps? Will Ministers immediately take up the offer made by the Law Society to make the specialist expertise of their members available in drafting the legislation to ensure that it is fully effective in practice?

The Economic Crime Act has cracked down on Russian dirty money in the UK and corrupt elites, including amendments to financial sanctions legislation to ensure the government can move at speed and to prevent breaches of financial sanctions.

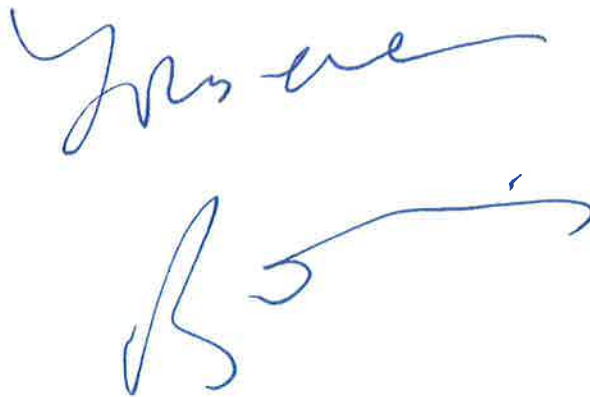
In addition to its updates to the sanctions framework, the Act also introduced the Register of Overseas Entities, on which the Law Society recently commented. Work is currently underway to deliver the register. The Government published the Corporate Transparency and Register Reform White Paper in February, outlining proposals to reform and improve Companies House and corporate transparency following a detailed round of consultations with professionals, civil society, and the public in 2021.

Legislation will be introduced in Parliament in the coming months and will include the following measures:

- Broadening the powers of the Registrar of Companies to become a more active gatekeeper over company creation and the custodian of more reliable data, including new powers to check, remove or decline information submitted to, or already on, the Company Register.
- Introducing identity verification for people who manage, own and control companies and other UK registered entities. This will improve the accuracy of Companies House data, to support business decisions and law enforcement investigations.

- Providing Companies House with more effective investigation and enforcement powers and introducing better cross-checking of data with other public and private sector bodies, as well as new powers to proactively share data with law enforcement and other public bodies.
- Protections for personal information to tackle fraud and identity theft.

I will deposit a copy of this letter in the House of Commons Library.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James' followed by a flourish, and a second signature below it that starts with a large 'B' and ends with a long horizontal stroke.

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Chair of the Liaison Committee



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Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee
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1 April 2022

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 09 March to the Prime Minister about the disbursement of humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine and the surrounding region continues to be of grave concern. The UN estimates that 12 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance within Ukraine. Over 3.7 million people have also now left Ukraine for neighbouring countries.

As I set out in my letter of 17 March the UK has led the way in our response. We were quick to announce £220 million humanitarian funding as part of a wider £394 million package of support for Ukraine, deploy a 13-person field team of UK experts to the region who are now in Poland, Slovakia, Moldova and Romania, mobilise effective supply chains which are helping medical aid reach those who need it most and engage the public through the UK's largest ever aid match contribution of £25m to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, which has raised over £200m to date.

We are working across Government to support Ukraine. On 13 March working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Transport, we brought 21 child oncology patients back to the UK with their families to receive treatment and support in our hospitals and have worked closely with DEFRA on a new package of vital food aid which will deliver more than 300,000 items of dried food, tinned goods and water. This rapid donation is essential, with the window to reach towns and cities already encircled, as well as those at high risk, closing.

We are working tirelessly to disburse our funding quickly and effectively and encourage our international partners to do the same. To date we have disbursed £48.5m to multilateral partners, including the UN, to stand up their response to deliver life-saving assistance to those in most need. A further £9.6m will be spent by the end of March on bilateral assistance, including medical supplies, food aid and shelter and technical assistance including to the UN, with further Departmental spend to follow including £3.5m via DHSC likely within the next week. This spend has been predominantly for programmes within Ukraine itself where the needs are most severe, as well as support to refugees in neighbouring countries. We are scaling up at speed whilst ensuring that risks are managed appropriately and aid is targeted effectively. We are on track to disburse up to £60 million by the end of March.

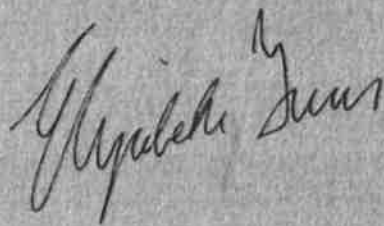
Our funding is delivering real impact on the ground. Working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Devolved Administrations we have delivered more than 3.7 million items of medicines, medical equipment and consumables to the Ukrainian Ministry of Health. 9,468 items (blankets and hygiene kits) were delivered and handed over to the Moldovan Ministry of Labour and Social Protection on 12 March and equipment (including inflatable structures and heaters) for six Internally Displaced People reception centres in Lviv has been flown to Poland and handed over to the International Organisation for Migration. Further consignments of relief items including blankets, kitchen sets, solar lanterns, hygiene kits, and shelter supplies will be arriving in Ukraine next week, alongside essential food assistance for besieged cities and further medical consumables and pharmaceuticals.

In addition, as you know, the UK is a leading contributor of core funding to the UN humanitarian agencies, including the Central Emergency Response Fund, and the Red Cross; this is critical in enabling them to act swiftly to scale up their response whilst appeals are ongoing. .

The UK's humanitarian support for Ukraine will fall within the 0.5% ODA/GNI target. Departmental ODA allocations for financial year 2022/2023 are under consideration. Humanitarian funding for Ukraine for next financial year will form part of the agreed allocations.

We continue to work closely with our international partners to maximise disbursements at speed to support the humanitarian response in Ukraine and in the region. We are calling on the international community and allies to speak as one in demanding that Russia uphold its obligations and ensure humanitarian agencies have safe and unimpeded access to affected populations, and that civilians are allowed safe passage, and access to food and medical supplies.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Truss', is written in a cursive style.

**RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY**