



# HOUSE OF LORDS

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign,  
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

9 June 2022

Dear Liz,

## **Famine in East Africa**

You will recall that in its report on Sub Saharan Africa, and in subsequent exchanges with FCDO Ministers and officials, the International Relations and Defence Committee has registered its concerns about the UK's policies within the region. We also expressed anxieties about the consequences for Africa of the reduction in official development assistance.

In due course we will return to those concerns, but the Committee wishes to raise with you with urgency the deteriorating situation in East Africa.

In a series of crises in an already fragile region which have amplified one another, millions of people are facing an impending famine and starvation. The effects of the worst drought in a generation have been compounded by desert locusts, devastating conflict, the effects of Covid-19, and a surge in food and commodity prices arising from the conflict in Ukraine. The continuing blockade of Odessa and Black Sea ports is exacerbating an already gravely worrying situation.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Horn of Africa Drought Report of 25 April<sup>1</sup> suggests that in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya, 15 million people are now facing food insecurity while the World Food Programme warns that this number may rise to 20 million.<sup>2</sup> Aid agencies advise us that 5.7 million children are expected to suffer acute malnourishment by June this year, and urge the UK to find £750 million to help avert this disaster.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, in parliamentary replies, has highlighted the significant £72.25 million provided to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan and the welcome role of the UK in convening the recent 'UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable' which took place in Geneva, mobilising around US\$400 million in new funding.

We do greatly welcome what has been done thus far. We would, however, like to know what more is being done to meet the shortfall, which is well short of both the projected need and around half of what was needed to respond to the famine in 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/story/donors-pledge-close-14-billion-horn-africa-drought-response>;  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-drought-humanitarian-key-messages-25-april-2022>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/stories/horn-africa-drought-late-rains-ethiopia-kenya-and-somalia-are-inflaming-hunger-warns-wfp>

We would also welcome details of what long term projects are underway to build drought resilience and to combat the effects of climate change and the consequences of conflict and wars within the region.

We would be grateful for a response to this letter by Friday 24 June, which the Committee will study with care and great interest.

Yours, as ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jayce".

Baroness Anelay of St Johns  
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee