

## PM meeting with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon: 29 July 2019

The Prime Minister met the First Minister for Scotland Nicola Sturgeon in Edinburgh today.

The Prime Minister said he was a passionate believer in the power of the Union and he would work tirelessly to strengthen the United Kingdom and improve the lives of people right across Scotland.

On Brexit, the Prime Minister said that while the government's preference is to negotiate a new deal which abolishes the anti-democratic backstop, the UK will be leaving the EU on October 31st come what may. The PM set out the scale of work underway to prepare for our departure and also offered to hold a JMC(P) soon so that he can work with the Devolved Administrations to make sure all corners of the UK are ready to enjoy a bright future outside of the EU.

They also discussed the UK government's pledge to expand Growth Deals with £300m of new funding. The Prime Minister said he looked forward to working with the Scottish Government to see these deals rolled out to every region of Scotland so that more communities could benefit from the funding.

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## Recent violence and prospects for a truce in Libya

Thank you very much, Mr President. Thank you once again to the Special Representative for your briefing and for UNSMIL's continued determination to help de-escalate the situation in Libya and facilitate a return to the UN-led process.

Mr President, we heard this morning a grave and alarming analysis of a descent into violent chaos and the risk of disintegration of a country, as the SRSG alluded to. And I think we all recognise that the coming weeks will be vital for Libya and for our part, we stand steadfast in support of UN leadership and Mr Salamé's efforts to bring about a transition from violence to a renewed political process.

I'm going to keep my remarks short, Mr President, because we have consultations after this. So I just wanted to draw attention to a few areas before getting on to what the Special Representative said about a truce.

We call again on all UN Member States to respect fully their obligations to

contribute to Libya's peace and stability, prevent destabilising arms shipments and to safeguard Libya's oil resources, all in accordance with relevant UNSCRs. Now it's obvious, and as was said, the parties continue to receive external support and arms shipments, which further fuels the conflict. So once more, the United Kingdom calls on all Member States to respect international law and calls on the Security Council to take reports of violations very seriously. And thank you to the German Ambassador for his report as Chair of the Sanctions Committee.

The humanitarian cost continues to be of enormous concern. I won't repeat what the SRSG said, but I think we really do need to find a way to protect migrants and refugees travelling along the central Mediterranean route. And we need to find a way to protect those in detention centers within Libya itself. And we've discussed before in this Council the 3rd of July Tajoura Detention Centre attack.

I want to repeat what the SRSG said about the parties dissociating themselves from violent, extremist elements and what he said about hatred and invective fuelling violence.

Turning to his three part proposal for an Eid al-Adha truce and accompanied by confidence-building measures for a high-level meeting of concerned countries to be followed by an internal Libya meeting, these are obviously very important elements, Mr President, coming at a very critical time. I think the Council will want to discuss them in some detail and work out how best the Council can enhance the UN's efforts.

So I will leave it there, Mr President, but look forward to picking up these important points in consultations.

Thank you.

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## Coordinated efforts to address instability in the Sahel

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you, SRSG Chambas for your briefing.

I can also be quick because, as the German ambassador said, I think there is a good degree of consensus on this topic in the Council. I think I agree with the points made by almost everybody here today. So let me just highlight three issues.

First, on the elections, we very much endorse your assessment of the recent elections in West Africa and welcome all the good work that you have been doing to support those elections. The UK believes that these inclusive, democratic processes are critical not just for international peace and

security, but also for creating an enabling environment for investments and for sustainable development more broadly. And I think it is absolutely vital that all authorities and international partners work together to ensure that future elections in the region are timely, peaceful and credible.

Second, the Secretary-General's Report highlights the devastating effect that the deteriorating security situation in northeast Nigeria is having on the people of the Lake Chad Basin region. I think this is a region that is often overlooked by this Council, particularly in recent years. The UK is discussing with the Nigerian government what more the international community could do to help it tackle the crisis. Clearly, extending state authority into so-called ungoverned spaces will be essential in order to stem the advances of Boko Haram. We welcome UNOWAS' efforts to date, and we encourage further support to the governments in the region to tackle the crisis and to implement UNSCR 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin region.

And then third and finally turning to the Sahel, which of course, remains a major concern for all of us on this Council, I'm pleased to announce that the UK Government has recently announced this week that we will make a future commitment of 250 troops to MINUSMA. But we must all do more to help address the root causes in the Sahel. And as we heard during our recent visit to the Sahel, these include reducing abuses by the Security Forces, helping governments provide basic services, and mitigating the conflicts over resources by helping people to adapt to climate change. And it's a good thing, Mr President, that this Council has become more focussed on the link between climate change and conflict in recent months.

And then I also agree with my Chinese colleague when he says that we need to make better use of international coordination mechanisms on the Sahel. We should be using this Council, the Sahel Alliance, and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to make sure that the international community and our partners in the Sahel are working effectively together to address the long-term drivers of instability and poverty together.

Thank you.

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## **Troika Statement on the South Sudan Peace Process**

The text of the following statement was issued jointly by the governments of the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom:

The Troika (the United States, United Kingdom, and Norway) reaffirm their commitment to the IGAD-led South Sudan peace process and to the lasting peace the people of South Sudan deserve. The

significant drop in political violence and the presence of many opposition politicians in Juba are welcome developments. However, with less than four months until the new deadline for the end of the pre-transitional period in November, time is running out. While there is progress, lack of momentum to fully implement the peace agreement may threaten the successful formation of the transitional government and prospects for the peace process.

We call on the parties to redouble their efforts to resolve the most pressing remaining issues, which include ensuring agreed security reforms are delivered, through the mobilization of necessary support. We join the region and South Sudan's civil society in calling for regular engagement between President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar. Focused discussions on outstanding tasks are critical for progress towards the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, which will set the foundation for effective joint governance. Credible elections in South Sudan in 2022 are another important milestone.

We are encouraged by the appointment of H.E. Stephen Kalonzo as the Kenyan Special Envoy on South Sudan; this is an important demonstration of commitment from an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member state. The Troika also welcomes the commitment made by the AU High-Level Ad hoc Committee (the C5) at the AU summit on 6 July to re-engage in South Sudan's peace process. The role of IGAD countries and the wider international community remains critical, and the Troika stands ready to support the region's engagement.

For the peace process to remain credible, it is important that the parties demonstrate their commitment to peace and meet the assurances they made in May. The Troika stands by the people of South Sudan and looks forward to working with the peace agreement's mandated reconstituted transitional government to support a successful transitional period.

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## [Cumbrian students get construction](#)

## insight from M6 team

Highways England – the government-owned company which operates, maintains, repairs and improves the country's 4,300 miles of motorways and major A-roads – is working to ensure there are enough engineers to help build the roads of the future.

And as part of its support for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in schools and colleges, Highways England staff based in Penrith have been running 'construction schools' to coincide with its package of work which includes resurfacing, a new noise barrier and roundabout improvements along the M6 north east of Carlisle.

Almost 60 students from Lakes College in Workington and William Howard School at Brampton near Carlisle, attended the events with a key focus on construction site health and safety and an insight into highways engineering.

Highways England project manager Jobert Fermilan said:

The current shortage of around 200,000 workers with STEM skills is set to double during the next decade and it's vital we play our part in encouraging children and young adults to look at engineering as an interesting and rewarding career. Without projects like this we risk not having enough surveyors, designers, drainage experts, bridge builders and other skilled construction workers to maintain and improve the strategic road network of the future.

As a regional STEM ambassador and project manager for the M6 scheme I was keen to offer local students the chance to come and talk about a career in our industry and take a look at a real-life scheme in progress. It was great to meet the construction specialists of the future and to pass on what a rewarding sector it can be to work in. There are lots of routes into the industry and the sector is expected to need about 1.3 million new recruits by 2024.

During the two events – hosted by civil engineering and tunnelling firm AE Yates – the students also got to meet construction partners in Highways England's supply chain. Companies like traffic management supplier HW Martin, road marking specialists WJ North and resurfacing contractors Aggregate Industries – who demonstrated an impact protection vehicle, robotic road marker and resurfacing paver and roller – will have their own demands for STEM-skilled staff in future years. Students were also taken on a drive-through of the M6 roadworks between junction 44 and junction 45.

Demonstration of a robotic road marker.

Lakes College Placement leader Rachel Melton said:

Our students really got a lot out of the visit, especially seeing the real-life application of skills they are developing at college. We look forward to working with Highways England and its contractors in the future.

Year 10 students from William Howard attended a second event with a 'women in engineering' focus underlining the message that engineering jobs are not just for men. The students also got a chance to see how technology is helping improve the safety of road workers – by getting their hands on GPS controlled road painting machine.

Teacher Simon Ling who led the school's visit said:

Our students are still talking about the trip. They all came back enthused about the day, what they had learned. For some it has helped cement in their minds the career path that they might follow after leaving school.

AE Yates project manager Ruairi Flynn added:

It was really good to see how keen and enthusiastic the students were to learn about civil engineering. We emphasised a lot on health and safety and explained how people need to be appropriately trained to work in our industry. We also explained the benefits of choosing a career in construction and how rewarding the construction industry can be.

The work along the M6 started in April with resurfacing and major roundabout improvements at junction 44 already delivered and only the installation of a new noise barrier around Todhills left to complete.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.