

Foreign Office minister co-chairs 14th UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group

The fourteenth meeting of the biannual UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group was held in London on 3-4 July 2019, co-chaired by the UK's Minister for the Middle East, The Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP, and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Khalid Al Jarallah.

The Ministers noted the success of our joint celebrations to mark 120 years since the signing of the Kuwait-UK Treaty of Friendship and were grateful for progress made by officials during the Joint Steering Group discussions.

Ministers agreed to continue to collaborate on a wide range of issues, including trade, investment, migration, security, defence, cyber security, healthcare, education, higher education, scientific research, environment, culture and for the first time, international development. Both sides highlighted the continued relevance of the Joint Steering Group to the bilateral relationship.

The discussions on Defence explored areas where further training and exercising opportunities could be found across the land, air and sea domains.

There were productive discussions on cyber security, while the UK reiterated its continued support for Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority.

Ministers approved joint working in aviation security and migration, with planned exchanges of information and training on terrorism and airport security.

They also acknowledged the importance of British and Kuwaiti businesses in developing commercial relations and increasing trade, as well as participation in trade exhibitions and conferences. It was noted that UK exports were £2.5bn in 2018, with total bilateral trade close to £4bn. Exciting new opportunities were also identified in the Food & Drink sector and both sides are committed to removing trade barriers for this sector.

Ministers also committed to further cooperation in scientific research, education, environmental protection and working to develop Kuwait's creative economy.

Kuwait and UK signed agreements to co-operate in scientific research, the creative economy and in defence.

For the first time, cooperation in international development was discussed with the aim of promoting collaboration between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Development and the Department for International Development.

Minister for Europe praises work of Western Balkans Missing Persons Group

The group comprises representatives of the domestic institutions responsible for missing persons in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

Minister for Europe praises work of Western Balkans Missing Persons Group

The Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, met with representatives of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) and the 'Missing Persons Group' in the margins of the Western Balkans Berlin Process Summit in Poznan.

The Missing Persons Group, comprising representatives of the domestic institutions responsible for missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, was established with UK funding support after the London Western Balkans Summit in 2018. It carries out work across the region to help solve 12,000 cases of persons still missing following the conflicts of the 1990s.

The group reported on its progress made over the past year to the Minister, including establishing operational groups to exchange information and to agree joint actions to resolve individual 'no name' cases, creating a landmark regional public database of active missing persons cases and identifying clandestine gravesites for future joint excavations. The Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

During the conflicts of 1990s, approximately 40,000 people disappeared in the Western Balkans, never to be seen again. Many of them were victims of ethnic cleansing and other atrocities: they were murdered and ended up in anonymous mass graves.

To this day, this remains a heart-breaking, agonising legacy of the conflict. But the region also has an incredible story to tell of accounting for those missing. To date, more than 70 percent of those reported missing at the end of the fighting in the Western Balkans have been accounted for. No other post-conflict region has ever achieved such a high rate of resolving missing persons cases.

There is still scope to do more: through the expert DNA technologies to improve identification, through encouraging public engagement in the search for information and most importantly through cooperation between institutions across the region, for example to uncover clandestine gravesites. The UK is doing everything to fund programmes and shape action, which can make a material difference to this painful legacy of the conflict.

The Minister met Berlin Process Foreign Ministers during the summit where he outlined the UK's enduring commitment to supporting reconciliation and regional cooperation. Prime Minister, Theresa May, will meet Berlin Process leaders on Friday where she will set out how the UK is implementing its pledge to double UK support to £80million and to double UK staff working on security challenges in the Western Balkans region.

Further information

[The AAIB has sent a team to West Sussex](#)

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey [Don't have an email address?](#)

[Honduras invited to participate in the Global Conference for Media Freedom in London](#)

The UK and Canadian governments are working together to defend media freedom and improve the safety of journalists who report across the world. The Global

Conference for Media Freedom is part of an international campaign to shine a global spotlight on media freedom and increase the cost to those that are attempting to restrict it.

It will bring together global leaders and representatives from the media industry, journalists, civil society and academia and is supported by [Luminate](#). The Global Conference for Media Freedom in 2019 will be the first of its kind.

The conference will be structured around four themes:

- protection and prosecution, including impunity
- national frameworks and legislation
- building trust in media and countering disinformation
- media sustainability

Global leaders, representatives from the media industry, journalists, civil society and academia will gather to attend interactive panel discussions. The first day will focus on defining the challenges, the second on framing solutions.

Follow [#defendmediafreedom](#) on social media for the latest news and information.