

Press release: Oman: Middle East Minister attends 15th Oman Joint Working Group

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The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Mark Field, co-chaired the 15th Oman Joint Working Group on 25 April 2019 at Lancaster House with His Excellency Sayyid Badr Hamed Al Busaidi, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This was a key meeting to both highlight and strengthen the excellent bilateral ties between the UK and Oman. It follows the Foreign Secretary's recent visit to Oman where both Foreign Ministers signed the Comprehensive Joint Declaration on Enduring Friendship. As a longstanding friend of Oman, Sir Alan Duncan, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, also joined the meeting and chaired several sessions.

With wide representation from across Whitehall, discussion covered many

topics, including foreign policy, defence, the economy, tourism, education and health, as well as the Comprehensive and Joint Defence Agreements.

Speaking at the meeting, Minister Field noted:

These Working Groups are always important occasions to reflect on our cooperation and discuss issues of common interest. This one took place at a particularly significant moment, coming hot on the heels of the signature of the Joint Defence Agreement between Defence Ministers, which in turn followed the hugely successful Saif Sareea 3, our biggest ever bilateral military exercise.

Both were vivid demonstrations of our commitment to mutual security and the incredible warmth and closeness of our bilateral relationship. In that context, the Joint Working Group was particularly significant, because it helped strengthen that relationship even further and paves the way for implementing the spirit of the Comprehensive Joint Declaration on Enduring Friendship.

News story: Burglary taskforce will drive work to combat house break-ins

It brings together government, police, industry and charities to explore what more can be done to combat this intrusive crime

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The Policing Minister today chaired the first meeting of a new taskforce that will drive work to tackle residential burglary.

The taskforce brings together the police, industry leads, charities such as Crimestoppers and Victim Support and the government to look at what more can be done to combat these crimes and to agree actions.

Themes include making homes more secure, preventing criminals from selling on stolen goods, and improving the wider police and criminal justice system response.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

Being burgled doesn't just mean the loss of valuable and sentimental items – it also makes us feel less safe in our homes and has a damaging effect on communities.

I'm pleased that burglary levels have fallen significantly in recent years, but with hundreds of thousands of people suffering this intrusive crime every year, more needs to be done to combat it.

It's vital that we work with partners, policy and industry on this.

Police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales published by the Home Office last week showed that burglary dropped by 3% compared with the previous year, and by 20% compared with the year to June 2010.

Earlier this month, the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, called for government and industry to work together to design products and buildings so that such crimes are more difficult to commit.

In January, the Policing Minister chaired the first meeting of the vehicle theft taskforce, bringing together industry and police to strengthen the response to this type of crime. Moped crime has already been cut dramatically thanks to the introduction of new anti-theft devices, along with tough law enforcement.

Deputy Chief Constable Chris Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for burglary, said:

Police officers know how distressing a burglary is for victims and are totally committed to tackling these crimes.

The burglary taskforce will help us bring everyone involved to the table so we can continue to work together to prevent burglary – and when it does take place, to bring offenders to justice.

At the first meeting, the taskforce discussed the scale of the threat and methods that can help reduce burglary. It will meet every 6 months.