

## **Press release: FCO Minister statement on Rohingya Repatriation to Burma**

I am deeply concerned by the plans to begin repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Burma in the coming days. The United Nations and other international organisations have been clear that conditions for the Rohingya to return to Burma have not yet been met. Violence and impunity persist in Rakhine and refugees continue to flee Burma.

The UK has consistently emphasized that the repatriation of any Rohingya refugees to Burma must be voluntary, safe, dignified, sustainable and uphold their human rights.

Along with many other nations, the UK recognises the way that the people of Bangladesh and the government of Bangladesh have handled one of the biggest humanitarian crises of our time, despite the great hardships this has placed on their own people.

We call on the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma to uphold the internationally recognised principles of voluntary, safe and dignified return, and urge the Government of Burma to guarantee the necessary safeguards for and protection of any returning Rohingya refugees. Ensuring safe freedom of movement, equal rights, access to health and education services, as well as citizenship for all Rohingya is essential.

We continue to call on the Government of Burma to grant full and unimpeded access for UN and international organizations, as well as international observers, to monitor and assess any future repatriation efforts.

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Minister for Asia and Pacific Mark Field deeply concerned by reports of premature Rohingya repatriation efforts.

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## **News story: UK leads Northern Group**

## response to disinformation

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster led discussions on the subject, stating the importance of getting on the front foot against disinformation and warning that the threat of hostile and brazen disinformation is increasing.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

As NATO's biggest exercise in a decade draws to a close, it is clear we are best equipped to deterring threats when working side by side with allies and partners.

However, we face more than just the conventional threats of old, which is why the UK plays a leading role in all areas of defence including debunking the kind of hostile disinformation we saw from Russia following the tragic attack in Salisbury.

Ministers from the 12 Northern Group nations recognised the value in sharing their own experiences of tackling disinformation as well as acting in unity against future fake news campaigns. It was also made clear that the work undertaken by the Northern Group strategic communications experts will complement the existing activity of NATO, the EU, and the Joint Expeditionary Force.

The Northern Group is a UK initiative which aims to promote more coherent, efficient and effective defence and security co-operation in northern Europe. It comprises 12 nations; Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the UK – all of which contributed to NATO Exercise Trident Juncture.

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## Press release: Portreath sea wall repair work starts

The Environment Agency will start repair work on Portreath sea wall this Thursday (15 November).

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# Press release: Portreath sea wall repair work starts

The sea wall protects homes and business in Portreath against the risk of flooding.

A large section of the wall collapsed during Storm Eleanor earlier this year, leaving the village of Portreath exposed to the sea. Cormac, on behalf of Cornwall Council, carried out temporary repairs in the immediate aftermath of the storm and erected a temporary defence.

The permanent repairs are expected to cost £990,000 and will be funded by £950k government grant in aid and a £40k contribution from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Nick Ely, Area Coastal Engineer at the Environment Agency, said:

Following the damage sustained to the sea wall at Portreath during Storm Eleanor last winter, the Environment Agency has taken the decision to step in and repair the wall. We don't own the wall and aren't responsible for it but recognise how valuable it is in protecting the community of Portreath from coastal flooding. We believe it is right to use our discretionary powers in this instance to help protect Portreath and restore the standard of coastal protection to the wider community.

The work will restore the protection from flooding that Portreath had before the collapse. Contractors BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald joint venture (BMM JV) working on behalf of the Environment Agency will access the collapsed section of wall via the Portreath car park and little beach. They will build a new reinforced concrete wall and clad it with stone to match the existing wall, they will also build new concrete access steps, and repair the slipway. BMM JV will also carry out minor works to strengthen the remaining wall.

The current temporary defence will remain throughout the work in order to protect homes and businesses in Portreath. The Environment Agency anticipate work will be completed by March 2019.

## **Notes to editor**

- The Environment Agency, alongside coastal local authorities, builds, maintains and improves sea defences to reduce the risk of coastal flooding.
- In 2018/19, the Environment Agency is investing over £200 million in maintaining existing flood and coastal risk management infrastructure to ensure it continues to protect communities.
- The Environment Agency works in partnership to get the best value for money from government funding. Partnership funding helps schemes to go

ahead, reducing the risk of flooding for homes and businesses.