

News story: Wight Sky report published

The MAIB report on the catastrophic failure of one of the main propulsion engines on board Wight Sky, which resulted in a fire and the vessel's engineer sustaining serious injuries, on 12 September 2017, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

Press enquiries

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Speech: African Union is a crucial partner for the United Nations

Thank you Madam President.

Let me begin by thanking Commissioner Chergui for his briefing and for the African Union's work to bring peace and security to Africa. I would also like to welcome SRSZ Zewde to her new role, to thank her for her briefing and for the SG's reports and her efforts and the efforts of her office to the African Union. Thank you very much.

I would also like to join other speakers, Bolivia, Sweden and others who have taken this opportunity to pay tribute to the remarkable efforts of Ethiopia and Eritrea in recent weeks in advancing peace and stability between those two countries. This is really positive news for the region, for the African Union and for this Council.

Madam President, the United Kingdom believes the African Union is a crucial partner for the United Nations across many different strands of work, including peace and security. The AU's deep understanding of the issues that the continent is facing makes it uniquely placed to lead efforts in this area. The United Kingdom strongly welcomes the intention for the African Union and United Nations to coordinate more on peace and security, including on conflict prevention and peacekeeping matters. Combining the knowledge and skills from both organisations will mean resources can be deployed more effectively and efficiently.

As set out in the Secretary General's report, Regional Economic Communities

such as ECOWAS and IGAD have positively contributed to peace and security in the region and as such must be considered as part of the AU's reform process. To ensure resources are coordinated effectively, we agree that the AU must retain oversight over these Regional Economic Communities.

Madam President, the UK believes that the AU's Peace Support Operations can play a crucial role in achieving long-term peace, and therefore it is important that the long-term financial sustainability and predictability of current and future missions are considered so that they can keep doing their good work. As Commissioner Chergui has already highlighted today, Security Council resolutions 2320 and 2378 outline the principles of UN-assessed funding for AU-led Peace Support Operations. Resolution 2320 agreed that cooperation between the AU and the UN on Peace Support Operations is key to delivering and maintaining peace in Africa. As set out in the resolution, we look forward to progress towards a UN-AU decision-making process that respects Security Council primacy on mandating and deploying missions.

We support the AU's efforts to ensure robust standards, which are comparable to the UN's and are adhered to across the organisation. In this regard, we welcome the close work between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission on compliance frameworks and that a Conduct and Discipline Policy and a Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy have been agreed. We eagerly await completion of the accountability and oversight frameworks, so that we can move forward in considering the use of UN-assessed contributions to part-fund AU-led Peace Support Operations on a case-by-case basis. In that regard, we warmly welcome the AU's commitment to fund 25% of Peace Support Operations costs by 2020, and I also welcome the detail set out by Commissioner Chergui earlier in this meeting.

In particular, on AMISOM, we note the report of the Secretary-General's Special Envoys on AU financing, on future financing and the recommendation for the AU to lead on funding and for non-traditional donors to contribute. As the report concluded, UN Assessed Contributions are not an option in the short term. Therefore, we need to see the international community step up and provide vital contributions to AMISOM in the short to medium term.

Madam President, the United Kingdom warmly welcomes the cooperation between the African Union and the UN, as demonstrated by the joint field visits between the UN Secretary-General, Chairperson Faki and others. We encourage more joint UN-AU field visits, as well as increased coordination between UN SRSGs and AU Special Envoys – particularly ahead of decision points on mandates or sanctions regimes and ahead of the issuing of reports. The African Union's knowledge of the region is invaluable. With this in mind, we encourage more interaction between this Council and the AU's Peace and Security Council, including on reporting, so we can consider the views of the African Union.

Madam President, the challenges Africa faces remain significant. Only last year, 15,000 people were displaced every day, 75% due to conflict. We must work together to ensure our efforts are complementary so we maximise the impact they can have to give us the best chance to address the enormous challenge of achieving peace and security in Africa and in silencing the

guns.

Speech: Marking 20 years since the adoption of the ICC Rome Statute

Today the United Kingdom is pleased to be participating in this occasion marking twenty years since the adoption of the Rome Statute, the historical founding treaty of the International Criminal Court.

The UK has supported the Court since its inception. We have done so because we recognise the value of an independent and impartial international body empowered to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern in circumstances where States are unwilling or genuinely unable to do so.

Today, as we have heard, also marks the activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in accordance with the decision of the Assembly of States Parties in December 2017. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is for the Security Council to determine when an act of aggression has occurred, as provided for in the UN Charter.

Nevertheless, we recognise that, following the ASP's decision, it is for each State to choose whether to ratify the aggression amendments to the Rome Statute, and thereby accept the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in relation to acts committed by its nationals and on its territory.

The UK continues to believe that the ICC plays an important role in holding to account the perpetrators of atrocities. That is why we continue to provide significant financial, political and logistical support to the Court to help it fulfil its mandate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The ICC has achieved some notable successes in the 20 years since the adoption of the Rome Statute. As we look to the next 20 years, we encourage both the Court and States Parties to draw on the lessons of the past to inform a bright future for this unique institution.

Press release: UK deployment in Mali

reaches the next stage

Three Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters from RAF Odiham, supported by around 90 British troops, are now on the ground and ready to begin providing logistical and troop movement support to our allies.

Armed Forces minister Mark Lancaster said:

“The UK and France have a unique security and defence relationship that has lasted for more than a century and this deployment demonstrates our shared commitment to tackling terrorism, instability and reducing threats to European security”

The Chinooks will provide niche logistical support and will also help improve safety by moving troops by air, rather than ground where they are more vulnerable to attack.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of UN and EU military operations in Mali and has worked with international partners to prevent extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as counter the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

This is in addition to existing wider support to Africa including doubling our UN peacekeeping contribution with additional deployments to South Sudan and Somalia.

News story: New medal unveiled to recognise the fight against Daesh

Sailors, soldiers and airmen received the Operational Service Medal Iraq and Syria, also known as the Operation Shader medal, from Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson. It is the first operational service medal to be created since 2003 and has its own distinct ribbon and clasp.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed today that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the extension of the eligibility criteria for the medal to new groups of personnel. It means that the medal will also recognise those who have made a significant contribution from outside the conventional area of operations in Iraq and Syria, including civilians.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The campaign against Daesh is one that our Armed Forces can be extremely proud of. Eliminating the threat from terrorism is

critical to our security at home and abroad. Our troops have made huge contributions to the fight against Daesh, helping end its tyranny in large parts of Iraq and Syria. Only by defeating this evil and barbaric group for good will we reduce the deadly threat they pose to us.

I am pleased that today those who have bravely fought against such untold evil will get the recognition they deserve. Reflecting the changing nature of warfare I am pleased to announce that the medal will now recognise those making a vital contribution to Op Shader from outside the conventional area of Operations, for example those Reaper pilots taking life and death decisions from back here in the UK.

Since 2014 the UK Armed Forces have taken a leading role in the counter-Daesh Global Coalition. The RAF has so far conducted over 1,700 strikes against Daesh terrorist targets and units from across the Armed Forces have helped train over 77,000 Iraqi Security Forces in infantry skills, counter-IED, engineering, and medical expertise. As a result, their capacity to defeat Daesh has increased considerably, contributing to the success of this campaign.

Despite recent success over the last year the operation continues and fast jets continue to fly out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and remotely-piloted Reaper aircraft continue to provide support to the Syrian Democratic Forces on the ground who are clearing the last remaining pockets of Daesh terrorists in Eastern Syria.

Currently around 1,400 personnel still play an important role in the Global Coalition's counter-Daesh operations in the wider region.