

Speech: International cooperation vital in tackling scourge of landmines

Thank you Mr President and thank you to ASG Zouev for your briefing and through you I'd like to extend the UK's appreciation for all the work carried out by UN staff working on mine action, especially in UNMISS.

Mr President, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of Resolution 2365. The United Kingdom reiterates its support for this resolution in which, for the first time, the Council calls for action against the lasting threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices to civilians and peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

Twenty years after the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention landmines remain a major threat. As discussed in the Secretary-General's report, landmines continue to kill and maim indiscriminately. It is civilians, and all too often children, that are the victims of these brutal weapons.

Although a great deal has been done and achieved to rid the world of these horrific weapons, it is clear that there is more to do. Mr President, the United Kingdom fully agrees that instruments of international law provide protection against the proliferation of explosive weapons. We remain fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which we chaired in 2017; the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We call on any states not already party to these Conventions, to accede to these key international disarmament initiatives without delay. It is only when we stop producing these atrocious weapons, that people will stop being killed by them.

The UK will continue to uphold our own commitments under the Convention. We are working to clear landmines in the Falkland Islands, the only part of our territory that is contaminated with landmines. We are also proud to offer substantial international assistance. Last year, we tripled our funding for Mine Action and will spend \$130 million over three years to tackle the humanitarian and development impact of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. This support is making 150 square kilometres of land safe, which will help 800,000 people, and ensure that every year, over 100,000 people – especially children – fully understand the dangers posed by landmines and how to avoid them.

Mr President, we welcome the significant role played by the UN and in particular, the UN's focus on Strengthening National Capacity and the importance of Partnerships. In support of this, we provide funding to the Voluntary Trust Fund of the United Nations Mine Action Service and, through the UK military's Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search branch, have supported the UN to develop the United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Standards. We welcome their completion and recognise the role they

will play to ensure the safety of UN personnel who take part in demining activity.

As identified in the SG's report, there is an appalling trend of increased use of improvised explosive devices by non-state actors. The United Kingdom supports Resolution 2370 which restricts terrorist actor's access to weapons. We the call for more stringent national measures to deny terrorists ready access to weapons and explosive precursors. We also support the second UN General Assembly Resolution on Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices.

Mr President, international cooperation is vital to tackle the criminal and terrorist networks facilitating and using IEDs. The UK is actively engaged in facilitating discussions amongst the international community on the topic of IEDs and Mine Action. The conference we hosted in May considered the challenges of realising a mine-free world, and looked at how we could overcome them. Much of the remaining clearance challenge stems from recent indiscriminate contamination by mines and IEDs. It is vital that we continue to assess the challenges ahead and collaboratively consider the means to meet these challenges. We must augment our efforts where we can so we can collectively tackle the scourge of landmines.

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Press release: Charges in suspected people smuggling investigation

The operation targeted seven addresses in London and Kent aimed at dismantling a suspected organised crime group (OCG) believed to be involved in the facilitation of Georgian nationals into the UK through Ireland.

The investigation, which started in June 2017, is being led by Immigration Enforcement CFI in the UK and supported by the Joint Agency Task Force (JATF). The JATF comprises Immigration Enforcement, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and other law enforcement partners. The task force enables cross-border cooperation across a range of policing areas, as well as intelligence sharing, which helps keep communities safe and secure.

The seven appeared at Uxbridge Magistrate's Court on Wednesday 27 June.

The following were each charged with conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration:

- George Kupatadze, aged 43, of Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12
- Gurami Shariashvili, aged 26, of Carlton Avenue, Bedfont, TW14
- Givi Shariashvili, aged 44, of New Road, Bedfont, TW14
- Mikheil Tshotashvili, aged 34, of Market Street, Newham, E6
- Leri Mgaloblishvili, aged 45, of Talbot House, Ladbroke Crescent, W11

Ilia Diasamidze, aged 34, of Lewisham High Street, SE13, was charged with assisting unlawful immigration. Sidonia Gulbani, aged 26, of Market Street, Newham, E6, was charged with identity document offences.

They have all been remanded in custody to appear at Isleworth Crown Court on 25 July 2018.

Deputy Director Dave Magrath, from Immigration Enforcement CFI said:

Our investigation is targeting an organised network suspected of being involved in a systematic attempt to help individuals evade the UK's immigration controls.

We have been working closely with the PSNI in Northern Ireland and the GNIB in the Republic of Ireland and that vital co-operation will continue as the investigation proceeds with the evidence we have seized today.

Detective Chief Superintendent David Dowling of the Garda National Immigration Bureau said:

This is an example of the continued cooperation between the relevant agencies in our efforts to target all types of criminal activity, including illegal immigration in both jurisdictions.

In addition to the six men and one woman charged, two further arrests were made for identity document offences. The two Georgian men, aged 28 and 31, were given police cautions and detained pending their removal from the UK.

Officers also arrested four people, two men and two women, all Georgian nationals, who immigration checks found had either entered the UK illegally or overstayed. They will have their cases progressed in accordance with the immigration rules and if it is found that they have no right to remain in the UK, steps will be taken to remove them from the country. Approximately £1,800 in Russian currency was seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit the [Crimestoppers website](#).

Press release: Troika statement on South Sudan on 29 June

The members of the Troika (the UK, US and Norway) commend the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) efforts to drive forward the South Sudan peace process, and take note of the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement Between Parties of the Conflict of South Sudan agreed between President Salva Kiir, Dr Riek Machar, and other opposition parties in Khartoum on 27 June. We welcome the Government of Sudan's role in hosting the latest round of discussions.

We hope that the principles outlined in the declaration will help to build confidence between the parties and guide the difficult discussions that must follow to reach a credible and comprehensive wider agreement.

While we welcome the renewed commitment to a ceasefire, all sides must stop fighting now – that is the only secure foundation upon which any agreement can be built. The effects of the renewed commitment to a permanent ceasefire must be seen on the ground. It must allow the return of South Sudan's refugees and displaced people, and the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. It must lead to improved security for communities and an end to the horrendous abuses endured by civilians at the hands of security forces. "Self-monitoring" will not be sufficient to assess adherence to the ceasefire. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) must continue to play a central role, with full access throughout the country and support in publishing timely reports.

The new ceasefire does not negate the need to respond to the continued and repeated serious violations by all sides of the December 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA). We will continue to seek measures at the UN Security Council to return the region to peace and security, including consequences for spoilers to the peace process. The international community therefore stands ready to support action by IGAD and the African Union to signal an end to impunity by delivering punitive measures against those responsible.

The parties must work to solidify this agreement. They need robust security and enforcement mechanisms, inclusion of a wide range of constituencies, and clear limits to executive power. There is a need for specific and realistic benchmarks throughout the transitional period, which lead to free and fair elections that allow for a peaceful transition in leadership in the most expeditious and responsible manner. The international community will encourage any oil arrangement to include transparency and accountability and ensure that new oil revenues directly benefit the South Sudanese people, rather than fuel more conflict.

All this will be critical to ensure that the failures of past agreements are not repeated and the confidence of international donors is secured.

We appreciate IGAD's ongoing efforts and look forward to further progress in the next phase of talks.

Further information

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Further information

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