

## **Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on military action in Hodeidah**

Following the start of military action by Coalition-backed forces to take Hodeidah port back from Houthi militia, I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of civilians.

We are in regular contact with the Coalition about the need to ensure that any military operations in and around Hodeidah are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians, and do not disrupt commercial and humanitarian flows through the port. The Coalition have assured us that they are incorporating humanitarian concerns into their operational plans. It is vital to maintain the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into Yemen. For their part the Houthis must not compromise port facilities or hinder the humanitarian response.

The ongoing Coalition intervention in Yemen came at the request of the legitimate Government of Yemen after Houthi rebels took the Yemeni capital by force in 2014. Houthi forces have consistently failed to adhere to UN Security Council Resolutions, including by launching missile attacks against Saudi Arabia and shipping in the Red Sea. They have obstructed access for humanitarian supplies leading to significant suffering among civilians.

It remains imperative to resume work towards a comprehensive political settlement. Lasting peace and stability in Yemen will require dialogue and negotiation. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is due to update the Security Council soon on his proposals for a negotiated settlement. We call upon all parties to throw their weight behind his efforts, for the sake of the Yemeni people and the security of Yemen's neighbours.

The UK is working with the UN, NGOs and the Coalition to respond to the humanitarian situation. The UK has committed £170 million to the UN's Yemen Humanitarian Appeal for the financial year 2018/2019, making the UK the 4th largest donor.

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## **Speech: Supporting UNOCA's efforts to ensure peace in Central Africa**

Thank you Mr President and may I also thank our briefers today – Ambassador Fall for your report and also for your team's work in this challenging

region. And also Ambassador Allam-Mi, thank you for your comments, and also welcome to the Security Council. It's good to see you today sir because regional organizations like yours are essential and we are pleased you've been able to demonstrate today the cooperation between the regional group and UNOCA.

Mr President, the United Kingdom remains concerned by the security and political situation in Central Africa. Many of those concerns are reflected in the Secretary-General's report, including the threats from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and other groups in the Lake Chad Basin, and the Lord's Resistance Army in Central African Republic and DRC. And we note with horror the use of women and girls as suicide bombers by Boko Haram.

As we've discussed many times before in this Council, both military and non-military action is required to address these threats. We must understand their root causes and the political, economic and humanitarian needs of the population. And it is essential that we take a coherent, "whole of UN" approach to tackle both existing problems and prevent further deterioration in this region.

This year, 10 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the Lake Chad Basin. The United Kingdom has committed £300 million to tackling the crisis over the next five years. And we call upon other international donors to help make up funding shortfalls for humanitarian operations across the region.

Mr President, we are also concerned by the situation in Cameroon and the number of casualties that have resulted amongst both civilians and Cameroon's security forces. Citizens have the right of peaceful protest. It is the government's responsibility to protect demonstrators while also protecting the safety and security of all citizens. We call for all parties to reject violence, pursue dialogue and urgently take action to reduce tensions. Failure to do so will only cause the already concerning situation to deteriorate further. In this regard, we welcome President Biya's New Year's announcement to pursue dialogue, decentralisation and restraint. And we strongly encourage the government to take further steps to give effect to this announcement. We commend UNOCA's support as part of broader international efforts to find a lasting solution to the current crisis, and we would encourage intensification of these efforts and ask that we are kept regularly informed on progress.

Mr President, we recognise UNOCA's efforts elsewhere in the region, including the mobilisation of support for the African Peace Initiative in the Central African Republic with regional partners and we encourage this to continue. UNOCA also has a crucial role supporting states in the subregion to hold timely, transparent and inclusive elections and supporting ECCAS's efforts to lay the groundwork for structural prevention of election-related violence.

We are concerned by the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and we appreciate UNOCA's reporting on this matter. Further, more detailed reporting on the problem and the work being done to combat it should be carried out, given the heightened and significant threat to international shipping and

regional prosperity.

In addition to regional governments, regional organisations – including the African Union, ECCAS, CMAC, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission – are essential to address the challenges to peace and security, promote democratic governance and enhance regional cooperation. Inter-regional cooperation, particularly on issues like the Sahel, are also crucial, and we welcome the announcement that ECCAS and ECOWAS will hold a joint summit in July. We encourage UNOCA and UNOWAS to continue to support this inter-regional approach.

Mr President, UNOCA has demonstrated that it can be a valuable partner for regional governments and organisations. In order to make the best use of the resources available, UNOCA should focus on building the capacity of regional entities to deliver crisis prevention work, such as preventative diplomacy, early warning mechanisms and mediation, and support UN agencies in priority thematic areas including gender.

Mr President, the United Kingdom appreciates UNOCA's efforts in the region and we encourage UNOCA to improve its communication of this good work. This will ensure those outside the UN system can better understand UNOCA's ongoing work and support it whenever possible.

Thank you Mr President.

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## **Press release: World's Fastest 3D Microphone Array Simulation Software**

Based on technology originally developed for the UK Home Office, A3S gives developers the ability to dramatically reduce audio array simulation times, improve the fidelity of results, and increase performance using fewer components. Significantly decreasing simulation times during product development from eight hours to 30 seconds\* (a reduction of 99.9 per cent), A3S calculates in near real-time the physical configuration of the audio array in order to achieve optimum performance.

For the first time manufacturers will be able to fully exploit the potential of audio arrays, and deliver microphone/speaker-based products which:

- Require fewer audio components and reduce device size – tests of an off-the-shelf product reduced the number of microphones by two-thirds, while improving audio performance.
- Minimise development costs – less product development time can be spent simulating and prototyping arrays. It also allows the modelling of more frequencies, resulting in a product with greater confidence in its performance, and potentially removing the need for costly redesigns.

- Are smarter – products can be optimised to cope with changing environments, as near real-time characterisation allows beamforming to be conducted on-the-fly to dynamically focus microphones and cancel out noise.
- Are less power hungry – less processing power required by fewer microphones.

Gerry Scott, Commercialisation Manager at Ploughshare Innovations, said:

A common development approach is to deploy multiple microphones and speakers in a product to achieve an acceptable level of performance. However, without full optimisation, they will still under-perform. The developers of A3S have proven that simulations can be conducted 1,000 times faster than current approaches, allowing developers to create high performing products with more confidence. Reducing the number of components also means that high-end audio products can be created with a smaller form factor and at less overall cost, giving manufacturers potentially significant cost savings. A high-end audio experience will become more widely available to us all.

Examples of what applications could use A3S to improve audio product performance include voice recognition, smartphones, automotive, immersive audio and gaming/home cinema.

- In tests, the simulation time of a 16 microphone array was reduced from eight hours to 30 seconds. In addition, A3S simulated hundreds of frequencies – significantly more than the eight frequencies managed by the conventional method.

About Ploughshare Innovations ([www.ploughshareinnovations.com](http://www.ploughshareinnovations.com))

Ploughshare Innovations is the technology transfer organisation for the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD). It turns 'swords into ploughshares' by enabling businesses to gain access to defence and security technology developed by leading government laboratories. Ploughshare ensures Government technology is put to good use and benefits the UK, society as a whole, and humanity by applying innovative technology to improve people's lives. Since its creation in 2005, the company has licensed 120 technologies and attracted £140 million of investment.

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## **[News story: HM Land Registry to launch new Local Land Charges service](#)**

The first local authority's local land charges (LLC) data to be available will be Warwick District Council's.

After this date, anyone requiring LLC searches for property or land in the local authority area of Warwick District Council will be able to get them directly from HM Land Registry.

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with up to 26 local authorities in England over 2018 and 2019 to migrate their LLC data to a central, digital register as part of a phased migration approach. Once the data is migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results via GOV.UK and the other HM Land Registry business customer channels; portal and Business Gateway.

The official LLC search provided by HM Land Registry will:

- cost £15 for each search – providing a reduction to the current national average price
- provide guaranteed search results
- provide the full spatial extent of every charge on the search result so the exact area affected by the charge is visible
- provide consistent, clear and accurate search results
- allow instant online search result with 24/7 access to the data – reducing delays in receiving searches

- allow unlimited repeat searches for six months to check for any new charges before completing a transaction
- provide a search history dashboard, giving access to previous searches at any time
- provide secure, tamperproof results

For an overview of the new service, watch our video:

[Creating a national Local Land Charges Register](#)

HM Land Registry will be keeping customers informed when each local authority's LLC records are migrated to the new digital register.

For more information, read about our [Local Land Charges programme](#).