

News story: Defence Secretary honours allies Australian and New Zealand on Anzac Day

Defence Secretary attended the Wreath Laying Ceremony and Parade at The Cenotaph, Whitehall

Veterans from both countries gathered to mark Anzac Day, which honours the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War.

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The soldiers in those forces quickly became known as Anzacs, taking pride in the name.

After laying a wreath at the Cenotaph the Defence Secretary attended a service of commemoration and thanksgiving alongside military personnel at Westminster Abbey.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson at Anzac Day memorial

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

On Anzac Day, we remember the sacrifice and courage of troops from Australia and New Zealand. Almost a century has passed since the end of the First World War and Britain is proud to have served side-by-side with them in many conflicts over the last 100 years. Our alliance is one of the most constant and enduring military partnerships in history, one which will continue to protect our shared values and commit to make the world a safer, more secure place.

Gavin Williamson has met with his counterparts from Australia and New Zealand earlier this year to examine how allies can continue to work together against evolving threats.

Currently the UK partners with both Australia and New Zealand in a number of ways, including the UN peacekeeping mission to South Sudan, uniting in the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh, committing to establish stability in Syria and Afghanistan, and combining on humanitarian missions such as Ebola in Sierra Leone.

To provide security to the seas, the UK works side-by-side with Australia and New Zealand as part of the Combined Maritime Force, to tackle drug and weapon smugglers. Additionally, as part of our strengthening relationship the Royal Navy ship HMS Sutherland visited Australia in February and March, allowing further opportunities for our naval forces to collaborate.

Alongside the Foreign Secretary, Gavin Williamson laid a wreath to mark the wartime service of Britain's closest allies Australia and New Zealand.

Our shared values with Australia and New Zealand have facilitated more than one hundred people from all three services enrolling on exchanges programmes between countries, to encourage joint learning. Alongside this participation we continue to work together on science, technology and defence equipment.

Press release: Man who raped teenage girl jailed for longer after Solicitor General intervenes

A man who raped a 17 year old girl has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

Ahmed Hassen Abdoule, aged 33, manipulated the young girl into entering his home before using a sharp piece of wood to threaten her. Abdoule then held the weapon to her throat as he verbally abused and raped her.

The victim suffered psychological effects as a result of Abdoule's actions.

Abdoule showed no remorse and continued to deny his actions at the trial heard at Hull Crown Court. He was convicted and originally sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment.

The Court of Appeal has today increased his sentence to 15 years in prison.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

"Abdoule's attack on a vulnerable 17 year old girl was sustained, showing a complete disregard for the victim's obvious and extreme fear and distress.

"I am pleased the Court of Appeal has increased the sentence today and I hope this brings some comfort to the victim and her family."

Speech: Penny Mordaunt speech on education in the Syria region

Thank you all and I'd like to start by thanking our friends in Jordan,

Lebanon and Turkey.

The progress we have made since the London Syria Conference in 2016 to ensure that every child in the region has access to quality education is a reason for hope even in the most trying of circumstances.

More than a million displaced Syrian children now have received access to some form of education since the start of the conflict eight years ago.

In Jordan, a hundred and sixty-five thousand Syrian children are now in education after the Jordanian Government overhauled national education policies.

In Lebanon, the public education system has doubled in size since the start of conflict, and as a result more than three hundred and sixty-five thousand Syrian children are now receiving an education.

And in Turkey. More than six hundred thousand Syrian children are now learning in schools.

The education these children are receiving is helping us build the skills and knowledge needed to power the economies of tomorrow.

However, there are nearly six hundred and ninety thousand children in the region without access to any education.

And we need to work together to reach these children or we risk creating a 'Lost Generation.'

Young people without prospects and without hope. Young people who have a critical role to play in the recovery and rebuilding of the region when peace does eventually come.

As we strive to find a political settlement to the conflict, we must also strive to equip young people with the education they need to find employment.

Currently, the region has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment and lowest rates of female labour market participation.

By helping host countries invest and improve their education systems we can help young men and women transform their economies and spur economic growth across the region.

And this mean donors working with governments to make better use of education data to create better teaching programmes to drive up teaching standards.

And donors making more multi-year pledges. With predictable financing we can create long-term, sustainable programmes that deliver results.

But it's not just more funding but smarter funding that we need.

Funding has to be linked to results and reforms. It must be able to measure progress and see which programmes work and which programmes need to work

harder.

The UK will continue to provide long-term, multi-year support to the region to create the education and employment opportunities that will spur the recovery we all want to see.

But as we do so, we must not forget those most at risk from being left behind.

We must ensure that all our efforts to spur economic development also include refugees and the most vulnerable.

That includes –

Working and undocumented children.

Girls.

And children with disabilities.

This July we will also co-host an international Disability Summit in London, which we hope Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, will attend.

At the summit we will set forth a set of concrete steps to ensure that people with disabilities are given the opportunities to fulfil their potential wherever they are in the world.

Sadly, many Syrian children are living with injuries sustained in the conflict. And it would be an added penalty – and an injustice – if they are now denied the education opportunities we seek to provide other children.

We must ensure that every child in the region has equal access to a quality education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential so we can create the economies of tomorrow, and a future of peace and prosperity.

Thank you.

[News story: Security Ministers commit to tackling modern slavery worldwide](#)

Security ministers from the Group of Seven countries have agreed to coordinate efforts to tackle human trafficking online and eliminate forced labour from supply chains, as part of a series of measures to combat modern slavery across the globe.

At the G7 security meeting, Building a More Peaceful and Secure World, which concluded in Toronto, Canada on Tuesday, Ministers made nine commitments on

behalf of the G7 which will be vital to protecting those vulnerable to trafficking.

These included coordinating and sharing information and intelligence on the emerging threat of online trafficking, working with businesses to end forced labour in our economies, and clamping down on the financial interests of those who profit from trafficking.

UK Minister for Security, Ben Wallace, said:

Modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour are barbaric crimes that devastate the lives of some of the most vulnerable across the globe.

The UK government has led the way in tackling this crime and in 2015 Theresa May introduced the Modern Slavery Act to give our law enforcement agencies the tools they needed to identify and protect victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

But truly ending this global crime demands a global response, which is why I am so proud of the agreements reached with my G7 colleagues this week. These commitments represent a real step forward in the international response to this truly horrendous crime.

At this week's meeting, G7 ministers also recognised that women and girls account for the majority of trafficking victims worldwide and therefore the need to ensure the global response is gender-sensitive and grounded in respect for human rights.

The G7 agreed to:

- work with business and civil society to eliminate trafficking in persons, forced labour, child labour and all forms of slavery, including modern slavery, from G7 economies, by developing legislative, regulatory or policy frameworks, as appropriate
- strengthen procurement practices to eliminate trafficking in persons, forced labour, child labour and slavery from global supply chains and work to build a culture of consumer awareness
- welcome the objectives of the 'Call to Action to end Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking', recognizing that legal definitions vary from country to country
- uphold and promote the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol (Palermo Protocol), consistent with national reservations, understandings and declarations
- combat trafficking in persons by partnering with the private sector and civil society to counter illicit financial flows stemming from trafficking in persons, including by leveraging financial intelligence and the work by the Financial Action Task Force and its Global Network, as well as investigating and prosecuting

- improve information sharing and data exchange within the existing legal framework, explore opportunities for cross-training and draw from best practices and lessons learned from efforts to counter terrorism and efforts to counter transnational organized crime. For example, by continuing to work with the INTERPOL Global Task Force on Human Trafficking
- share information and best practices on support for and reintegration of victims
- coordinate efforts and share best practices on how to address the use of the internet to facilitate trafficking in persons

They also committed to encourage the Roma-Lyon Group on Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism to explore the feasibility of a common public messaging campaign.

[News story: Cygnet sale resolves CMA concerns over mental health merger](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) ordered the company to sell one of four hospitals earlier this year, following its in depth (phase 2) investigation into the merger between Cygnet Health Care Limited and the adult services division of Cambian Group plc.

The CMA found that the merger could result in a substantial lessening of competition in the East Midlands where the companies would be the largest provider of male mental health rehabilitation services.

The sale of The Limes, previously run by CAS Behavioural Health Limited, to Elysium Healthcare was approved by the CMA and the merger investigation has now been closed.

All information relating to this investigation is available on the [Cygnet Health Care/Cambian adult services division merger inquiry](#) case page.