

Speech: “The UK has consistently welcomed the creation of a G5 Sahel joint force”

Mr President, I want to begin by offering my condolences to all of those affected by the attacks in Burkina Faso and Mali in recent days. The UK condemns in the strongest possible terms the violent actions of those intent on undermining stability in the region. They will not succeed. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his briefing today.

The UK has consistently welcomed the creation of a G5 Sahel joint force and its objectives to tackle terrorism, organised crime, people smuggling and human trafficking. And we are encouraged by the early progress that has been made since the adoption of resolution 2359 and look forward to the joint force mobilising and implementing its operations.

We echo the importance spelt out in resolution 2359 of the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and integration of a gender perspective. In his briefing, ASG Wane described the resource challenges faced by the G5 joint force. It is important that its needs are clearly set out so that the international community can explore supporting its operations and finances, including through the donor conference that we heard about today. The UK is offering training support, including through the European Union and we continue to explore what more we can do.

We welcome the recent announcement by France and Germany of the new Sahel Alliance and fully support this initiative. We urge all Council members to examine how they can further provide assistance as we ourselves are doing.

Mr President, we were reminded again in recent days of the security challenges facing the region. The international community is committed to confronting these problems and the UK believes that the joint force is an important regional component of these efforts.

In addition to military efforts, however, we need to tackle the political challenges. We welcome the progress that has been made, but we urge all Malian parties to speed up the implementation of the peace agreement and to continue their dialogue. Important steps have been taken in recent months, and we hope and believe these will continue.

Mr President, may I conclude on a personal note by thanking you and colleagues around the table for your welcome to me here today and to say how much I'm looking forward to working with you all.

Thank you.

Speech: “We owe it to Zaida, Michael and the rest of the group of experts to continue to use their reporting in our decisions.”

Thank you Mr President. Today we discuss the group of experts work on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tragically this report comes after the murder of two UN human rights experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan.

I'm glad that we're meeting in the open today; this isn't an issue to discuss behind closed doors. We owe it to the families of Michael and Zaida, and their interpreter Betu Tshintela to speak loudly and clearly in this Chamber; to express our deepest condolences and to reiterate our strongest resolve to see their killers brought to justice.

This is a message that needs to go far beyond this room, indeed far beyond the borders of the DRC.

Because, we in this Council asked for the information that Michael and Zaida went to gather. We asked them to be our eyes and ears. Wherever in the world men and women of the UN are murdered, wherever in the world they are harmed or abducted, we cannot stay silent, we cannot stand aside. We must ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes face the fullest consequences for their actions. We need to ensure accountability.

We took a first step through resolution 2360, with new designations criteria for those who kill UN personnel. The Secretary-General took a second step, commissioning a Board of Inquiry which uncovered more detail. But more needs to be done.

So I welcome the Secretary-General's call in his letter to the Council for a follow-on mechanism and we urge him to take action swiftly towards a further investigation so that we can uncover the truth for Zaida and Michael, and for the safety of all UN personnel around the globe.

Because five months on from the murder of Zaida, Michael and Betu, accountability has yet to materialise. Those who ordered their killings remain at large.

Zaida and Michael were two of the most pre-eminent experts on the Kasai regions. Tragically, it appears that their very expertise made them a target. The violence that they sought to illuminate was brutally turned against them. Make no mistake, Mr President, they were killed for shining a light on the horrific human rights situation in the Kasais. And we must not let that light go out.

First and foremost, this means recognising the link between the political and security situations. Uncertainty and inertia over the implementation of 31 December agreement is only fuelling instability and violence. So with the Honourable Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo here today, let us all agree that the December agreement must be fully implemented.

If implementation continues to falter, we worry what will happen next. We need only look to the first half of this year and the 430 officially recorded human rights violations linked to the electoral process. That is more than in the whole of 2015.

And as the report of the Group of Experts shows, such violence is breeding further violence. I'm appalled at the reports of child rape in Kavuma. I'm glad that some of the militia responsible have been caught and put on trial. This is welcome, but without political stability, the tide could turn and these positive trends could be reversed.

There are clear warning signs already, Mr President; warning signs like growing reports of widespread sexual violence, including by FARDC in the Kasais. Or growing reports of widespread recruitment of children by Kamuina Nsapu or of continuing violence in the East. And we should all be concerned that armed groups continue to fund their hateful crimes by stealing natural resources.

These crimes need to stop and those responsible must be held to account.

We need to recognise that we have tools at our disposal to help this happen... tools like sanctions already imposed by this Council. These must be fully implemented if they are to be effective. We also have a responsibility to keep sanctions under close review. Those who engage in or support acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo can and if needed, will be sanctioned by this Council.

The Human Rights Council international investigative mechanism will also play a crucial role in the Kasais so let us all urge the DRC to cooperate fully with its work.

Mr President, I would like to thank the committee, which you chair, for their work and for this report and I would also like to thank you personally for the sensitive and effective way in which you have steered our work.

Finally, Mr President, we owe it to Zaida, Michael and the rest of the group of experts to continue to use their reporting in our decisions. As we have heard so clearly today, it is reporting for which the highest price has been paid. And it must not be a price paid in vain.

Thank you.

Speech: Minister for Europe remarks to media in Ankara, Turkey

Minister for Europe press conference Turkey

Well Minister Omer, if I may, My good friend Omer Celik.

Thank you very much indeed for your warm welcome and I'm delighted to be back here, as you say, for the [fifth time since the coup attempt](#). I hope that illustrates not only my personal commitment to Turkey but also that of the entire United Kingdom government.

The world is a difficult and dangerous place and I think that the friendship between the United Kingdom and Turkey is an essential relationship in that difficult world. And we work together as friends and we speak to each other as friends, sometimes directly on issues that matter, some difficult issues. But always on the basis of trust.

I went just now to the Parliament building, which I went to straight from the airport when I visited just a couple of days after the coup attempt last year. And on that occasion a year ago I saw the bombed out bits of the Parliament building and I went back just now to the very same place in order once again to reaffirm the United Kingdom's understanding of what you went through during the coup attempt and indeed the steps that need to be taken following the coup attempt to restore civility, order and secure a government in the country.

We of course are clear in our view that we want to see proportionate and sensible responses to the challenges you faced within the context of a properly working judicial and democratic system. And that is what we have said from the start and will of course continue to say.

News story: Rules around removal of lost fishing gear clarified

The MMO is reviewing the marine licensing process to ensure that it is as efficient as possible, offers value for money and proportionately manages risks to the marine environment.

As part of this it has become aware that marine licensing guidance for recreational divers, in particular around removal of marine litter and fishing equipment, could be made clearer. The guidance provides interpretation on the relevant sections of the Marine and Coastal Access Act

2009.

The MMO has committed to working with relevant organisations and representative groups to review and improve the guidance.

In the meantime the MMO has confirmed that a lifting bag can be used to remove an object (including marine litter) up to 100kg provided the object has been there for less than 12 months. Beyond that a marine licence is required. It has also clarified that marine litter does not include abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG).

Projects to remove ALDFG should be submitted to the MMO as a marine licensing application, which will allow appropriate consideration of the risks to the historic environment and nature conservation features.

In July 2017 the MMO [introduced a self-service approach](#) for marine licensing which may be relevant in these circumstances. This is making it quicker and easier for applicants in low-risk circumstances, while also enabling the MMO to reduce the licensing fee by more than half to £50. This process has already [been used in relation to fishing gear removal activities](#).

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