

News story: Minister for Africa's statement on Kenyan elections

I have followed closely developments in Kenya over the last few days as the elections have taken place. This is an important moment for Kenya and African democracy. The UK stands together with all Kenyans at this critical time.

I have been deeply concerned by outbreaks of ethnic and political violence. Leaders and politicians should categorically and publicly reject violence and make every effort to ensure their supporters do so as well. I welcome the work of many Kenyans to help keep the peace and assist those affected by the violence.

I urge security forces to exercise maximum restraint and call on protestors who are exercising their constitutional rights to do so peacefully. All allegations of abuses on the part of the security forces should be fully investigated and action taken against security personnel found to have committed violations.

I appeal for calm as the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission prepares to announce the result of the election. I call on all Kenyans to come together at this critical moment in an open and transparent national dialogue, to reject the politics of hatred, and to resolve divisions, so that Kenya moves forward towards greater peace and prosperity.

Policy paper: The Moors at Arne: reducing flood risk and creating habitat

Updated: Link added to exhibition panels used at public drop in October.

This document explains how the Environment Agency, RSPB and Natural England is investigating ways to ensure flood protection is resilient while meeting a legal obligation to provide compensatory habitat to mitigate for losses to conservation sites.

Press release: Upcoming exercise at Worcester City Centre flood scheme

Updated: Date of exercise changed.

On Monday 6 November, the Environment Agency will be carrying out an exercise at the Hylton Road flood defence scheme in Worcester city centre.

The exercise will allow the Environment Agency field operations team to test the barrier deployment process, while also carrying out essential maintenance to parts of the demountable flood barriers which are in the highway.

This will mean that there will be some disruption caused during the exercise as Hylton Road will be closed to traffic between 6:30pm and 8:30pm. The path by the river will remain open to pedestrians.

Barry Killner from the Environment Agency said:

Exercises like this are essential for us to test our procedures and ensure an effective operational response, so that we are fully prepared for when flooding does occur. We are also using the closure of Hylton Road as an opportunity to carry out essential maintenance on our flood barriers across the highway, reducing future impacts to the businesses and residents.

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for the Environment, Councillor Tony Miller said:

Testing the processes and carrying out essential maintenance of our flood barriers, can only be a positive thing for the county. It contributes to the county being able to continue to function as normal as possible, during bad weather, lessening the impacts on the local residents and institutions such as schools and businesses.

Press release: Upcoming exercise at Worcester City Centre flood scheme

Environment Agency to test operational procedures and carry out essential

maintenance on the Hylton Road flood scheme.

On Thursday 2 November, the Environment Agency will be carrying out an exercise at the Hylton Road flood defence scheme in Worcester city centre.

The exercise will allow the Environment Agency field operations team to test the barrier deployment process, while also carrying out essential maintenance to parts of the demountable flood barriers which are in the highway.

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Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Kurdish/Iraq tensions

The Foreign Secretary spoke with both Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government Nechirvan Barzani and the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi on Sunday afternoon. He urged both parties to seek a quick, peaceful resolution within the constitution to the current Kurdish/Iraqi tensions and reiterated the UK's continued support to the Kurds within a unified Iraq.

Last night, I spoke to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani. I encouraged both to continue to de-escalate the situation on the ground in Iraq and to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to conflict. The UK welcomes the willingness of the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government to engage in dialogue on the basis of the Iraqi Constitution. The UK encourages both sides to agree a timetable for talks.

The UK remains committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Iraq and will continue to support all Iraq's people, including Iraq's Kurds, within a unified Iraq.

It is also critical that all parties continue to focus on the fight against Daesh, prevent its re-emergence and work together to rebuild liberated towns, villages and lives.

Yesterday, Masoud Barzani also retired from the office of the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. We welcome the opportunity this presents for leadership of the Kurdistan Region to pass to a new generation of Kurds. They must build strong democratic institutions and resolve the historic differences between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq consistent with the Iraqi Constitution. They will have the UK's full support.

The Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government have been staunch allies of the UK in recent years as we have jointly fought the scourge of Daesh in the region. I want to pay tribute to former President Barzani's leadership in that fight, to his years of service to the Iraqi Kurdish people and to the role he played in the formation of modern Iraq.