

Interview with Tracy Grimshaw, A Current Affair

TRACY GRIMSHAW:

I spoke with Prime Minister Turnbull a short time ago. Prime Minister thank you very much for your time on a terrible night. We are all bracing ourselves to hear confirmation of the ages of the victims of this awful attack. Judging by your speech today I get the sense that you are feeling the same dread about that.

PRIME MINISTER:

This was a vile, reprehensible attack on innocence.

This was an attack on teenagers. Unimaginably cruel.

TRACY GRIMSHAW:

At this stage it is thought that this was one suicide bomber. How can we protect ourselves from one madman in a crowd of 21,000. How can we as a nation, learn security lessons from this?

PRIME MINISTER:

We are constantly working to keep Australians safe, Tracy. Since 2014, our intelligence and security agencies have thwarted 12 terrorist plots.

I asked the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee, which brings together my federal agencies and all of the states and territories and New Zealand, to work together on a new, upgraded plan to defend places of mass gathering. That is nearly complete.

But I want to say this; above all, our prayers, our sympathy – our heartfelt sympathy – goes out to the victims, to their families, to the people of Britain facing this attack. And above all, our resolute solidarity.

We stand with the people of Britain. We stand with Britain as we always have, defying terrorism.

TRACY GRIMSHAW:

In terms of protecting ourselves though, on a sort of, on a real basis, are we looking at having metal detectors at the entrances to all big sporting events? To all big concert events for example? I mean this was one man, it would appear, with a nail bomb. Is that what we're going to have to do to protect ourselves?

PRIME MINISTER:

I was discussing this today with my counter-terrorism coordinator, with the Director-General of ASIO, and just a moment ago with the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. These are constantly under review Tracy. They will assess each event, in the light of the risk assessment that is appropriate. It's a very dynamic environment. We have to constantly monitor the intelligence and constantly adjust the levels of protection in the light of what we're seeing as patterns developing both here and overseas.

TRACY GRIMSHAW:

We have a military commitment to the war against terror in the Middle East. But if one suicide bomber can cause this carnage at a random event, can we ever win the war against terror?

PRIME MINISTER:

We will win the war against terror. We will crush the terrorists, we will destroy them in the field. We will destroy their co-called caliphate in the field, which they have used as a recruiting method. We will defeat them at home and abroad.

I want to remind you that since September 2014, we have arrested, here in Australia, 63 people on terrorism offences including a person today, as you may be aware, another person today. We have thwarted 12 plots, there have been four terrorist incidents that have occurred during that period. So the protection that our agencies give is substantial but it cannot be 100 per cent, there is no guarantee that a terrorist event cannot occur.

But I have to say to you that we have the best intelligence, security and police agencies in the world. They are constantly working to keep us safe. That's my job, as Prime Minister, to make sure that we keep Australians safe and we have the best men and women on the front line, the best professionals keeping us secure.

TRACY GRIMSHAW:

Okay, thanks Prime Minister. Thanks for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you.

[ENDS]

[President of Sri Lanka to visit](#)

Australia

I look forward to welcoming the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, to Australia from 24 – 26 May.

This will be the first time a Sri Lankan Head of State has made a state visit to Australia and builds on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's successful visit in February.

2017 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Sri Lanka. Our deep and enduring friendship is anchored in shared history as Commonwealth countries and through our shared interests as Indian Ocean nations.

President Sirisena's visit will be an opportunity to advance key areas of bilateral cooperation, including education, defence, science and technology, economic development, medical research and the fight against people smuggling.

President Sirisena will visit Canberra and Sydney. I look forward to meeting with him on this important visit.

Meeting of the Libya Quartet: Joint Communiqué

Download the JOINT COMMUNIQUE:

1. The European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the League of Arab States (LAS), and the United Nations (UN) met in Brussels on 23rd May 2017 to assess developments in Libya since their last meeting in Cairo on 18th March 2017 and further coordinate their efforts to advance the political process and assist Libya in its democratic transition.
2. The meeting was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Ms. Federica Mogherini and attended by the AU High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Martin Kobler.
3. The Quartet reiterated its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya and its institutions under the Libyan Political Agreement signed in Skhirat while renewing its call to

cease contacts with parallel institutions outside the Libyan Political Agreement. It underscored the urgent need for a Libyan-led peaceful resolution of the political crisis and reiterated its rejection of the threat or use of armed force by any Libyan party as well as any foreign military intervention in Libya.

4. The Quartet strongly condemned the unprovoked attack on Brak al-Shati last week and expressed its serious alarm at reports of the high number of fatalities, including civilians, and of alleged summary executions. It stressed that such acts of violence constitute a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law and that the perpetrators must be held fully accountable. It called on all parties to refrain from further violence and any act that may undermine ongoing efforts to find a negotiated solution to the conflict.

5. The Quartet also expressed its concern about recent security incidents and threats of violence in Tripoli. It saluted efforts aimed at consolidating a reduction in tensions in the capital and welcomed the return of calm in the oil crescent. It called on the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord to continue to assert its authority and address security issues in the capital and elsewhere and called for renewed efforts among all parties to consolidate more durable security arrangements throughout the country.

6. Recognizing the importance of consolidating stability and security along Libya's borders, the Quartet reiterated its support for Libyan and regional measures to improve border security and pledged to enhance coordination in this field.

7. The Quartet commended the efforts by the Constitutional Drafting Assembly to finalize a draft constitution and expressed its appreciation for the work made so far, most recently with the draft published on 16 April 2017. It called for the constitution-drafting process to be concluded as soon as possible to pave the way to general and presidential elections.

8. The Quartet continued to encourage all Libyan parties to engage in constructive and inclusive talks to fully implement the Libyan Political Agreement. It welcomed all efforts and encouraging progress resulting from recent meetings between Libyan stakeholders, in particular between Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar in Abu Dhabi on 2nd-3rd May 2017 and between the President of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh and the President of the High State Council, Abdulrahman Sewehli in Rome on 21st April 2017.

9. The Quartet similarly welcomed the appointment of dialogue committees by both the House of Representatives and the High State Council and urged them to seek consensus on outstanding issues to ensure the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. It reiterated its commitment to support these efforts and to work in a complementary manner to advance the UN-facilitated political process towards a comprehensive resolution of the crisis in Libya.

10. The Quartet expressed its appreciation for ongoing regional efforts to

support the Libyan political process. It welcomed the final communique of the 11th meeting of Libya's Neighbours held in Algiers on 8th May 2017, which reaffirmed support for a comprehensive political solution based on the Libyan Political Agreement.

11. The Quartet expressed its concern about the economic situation in Libya, underlining the need for the Libyan authorities to tackle the serious and urgent fiscal and monetary challenges facing the country. It encouraged all concerned stakeholders – in particular the Central Bank and the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord – to further cooperate and address these challenges, including through reforms, as developed within the framework of the Economic Dialogue.

12. The Quartet reiterated its support to the coordination role of the UN and encouraged the UN to take the lead in any effort to facilitate a limited amendment of the Libyan Political Agreement including the development

and facilitation of a roadmap charting the way to a limited set of amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement, which are to be agreed as a package deal through a Libyan-led inclusive process. The Quartet also welcomed the series of activities and events convened by the UN to facilitate a national reconciliation process in Libya.

13. The Quartet recognized the important role of the African Union and welcomed the recent consultations the AU High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete, had with Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, and President of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, in Tripoli, and Bayda respectively. The Quartet looks forward to additional consultations by the High Representative in the coming weeks.

14. The Quartet recognized the responsibility of the League of Arab States to promote a peaceful resolution of the situation in Libya, and welcomed its determination to continue these efforts and achieve national reconciliation among all Libyans based on the Libyan Political Agreement as reiterated by the recent Arab Summit held on 29th March 2017. It also welcomed the mediation efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, including during his recent consultations in Tripoli, Tobruk and Bayda.

15. The Quartet welcomed the continuing support of the European Union aimed at accompanying Libya's transition towards an inclusive democracy, in particular its efforts to foster stabilization and rehabilitation, including its substantial cooperation assistance package, as well as its enhanced cooperation and dialogue with Libyan authorities and institutions and international partners to enhance their capacity to address the challenges of irregular migration.

Liberal Democrats suspend campaigning after Manchester tragedy

Tim Farron, leader of the Liberal Democrats, has announced that the party has suspended all national campaigning until further notice. Tim was due to fly to Gibraltar today as part of the general election campaign but has cancelled the trip.

Tim Farron said: "The country is united in grief after this devastating terror attack. Just as the country is focusing all its thoughts on the victims and their families, so politicians should come together in solidarity and respect for the innocent people caught up in this vile attack.

"The emergency services have shown the highest levels of bravery and professionalism and deserve our deepest thanks.

"The Liberal Democrats will suspend all national campaigning until further notice."

Second EU Day against Impunity

Brussels, 23 May 2017

Today, hosted by the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU in Brussels, the second EU Day against Impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes was held, co-organised by the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the EU Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (the [Genocide Network](#)).

✘ The event's emphasis was on stepping up collective action and cooperation within the European Union when fighting impunity. In attendance were practitioners, representatives from international criminal courts and tribunals, Member States, European institutions, international organisations and NGOs, academics and lawyers. The opening speech was delivered by the Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union, H.E. Marlene Bonnici.

The opening speech was delivered by the Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union, H.E. Marlene Bonnici, who said: *'The universal respect for human rights and the rule of law must be the bedrock in the fight against impunity. At the same time, we must continue to raise international awareness of the importance of prosecuting those who commit genocide and crimes against humanity to the fullest extent possible.'*

In the keynote speech of the President of Eurojust, Ms Michèle Coninx, she said: *'Experience shows that fighting impunity for the most heinous international crimes requires close cooperation between States to close impunity gaps and bring criminals to justice. Eurojust is proud to have been entrusted with hosting and supporting the Genocide Network since its start, back in 2004. The network has contributed to successful prosecutions of perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture.'*

✘ The other keynote speech was delivered by the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Ms Věra Jourová, who said: *'We cannot let crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide go unpunished. We have to put an end to impunity. The contributions by Eurojust and the Genocide Network are crucial to facilitate cooperation within the EU to better prosecute such crimes.'*

Photo: © Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU