

Press release: Foreign Secretary hosts further talks with Gulf counterparts on diplomatic tensions

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has held talks with Gulf counterparts this week about ongoing tensions in the region.

Mr Johnson met with the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani, on Monday (12 June) to discuss the diplomatic row between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Today (Friday 16 June), the Foreign Secretary met Khalid bin Ahmed al Khalifa, the Foreign Minister of Bahrain; Adel Al-Jubeir, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia; and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash, at the Foreign Office in London.

On Tuesday (13 June), Boris Johnson spoke to Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Khaled al-Saba, by phone, thanking him for the leading role Kuwait is playing in mediating the current row.

The Foreign Secretary reiterated his concerns about the ongoing tensions, urging Gulf ministers to deescalate the situation and find a swift resolution through mediation.

He called on all Gulf states to refrain from any escalation which could have serious repercussions on the lives of ordinary people in Qatar and beyond. He made clear that the UK is concerned by the collective action taken by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain against an important ally, and urged them to ease the restrictions currently in place on Qatar.

The Foreign Secretary reiterated that Qatar must engage with its neighbours in the region on their concerns about extremism, and build on the progress already made to address the scourge of radicalism and terrorism in the region, in partnership with its Gulf allies.

Alistair Burt, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, also spoke with a number of Gulf interlocutors today.

The UK and the US remain in close contact as they both make efforts to calm tensions in the region.